

13th SESSION OF THE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW – SOUTH AFRICA

Intervention by Denmark

Madame President,

Denmark warmly welcomes the South African delegation to Geneva and would like to thank them for their comprehensive presentation given here today.

Denmark welcomes in particular the constructive steps taken by the Government of South Africa to combat discrimination and violence on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity, as enshrined in its Constitution. We would further like to commend and express our continued support to South Africa for its leadership in the framework of the Human Rights Council to promoting the rights of all persons without discrimination of any kind, including on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Denmark remains concerned however, over the persistence of violent attacks committed against women on account of their sexual orientation. In this regard, we would encourage South Africa to continue combatting incidents of homophobic and trans-phobic violence.

Denmark would therefore recommend that the Government of South Africa ensure that law enforcement officials and other relevant actors, are adequately trained to investigate and prosecute hate crimes on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, including through the promotion of awareness-raising and sensitization campaigns.

In this connection, Denmark is further concerned over the persistence of sexual violence against women and girls, and would like to ask the Government of South African what measures are being taken to ensure that victims of gender-based violence have effective access to justice and social support services.

Finally, Denmark welcomes steps taken to give effect to recommendations from the first UPR cycle in the field of torture, including the recent approval by the cabinet of the Prevention and Combating Torture bill, an important break-through for the prevention of torture in the region. We would be grateful for further information on the timeframe of the enactment of the bill by Parliament.

Denmark would also like to recommend that the Government of South Africa deposit at the earliest possible date, its instrument of ratification to the OPCAT.

Thank you, Madame President.