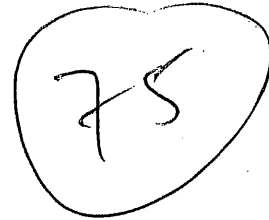




MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN
AFFAIRS OF FINLAND



13th Session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review

Finland's question and recommendation to South Africa
31 May 2012

Madam President,

Finland wishes to thank South Africa for the presentation of its national report today. Finland welcomes South Africa's active role internationally in promoting human rights, especially the rights of LGBT persons.

Finland welcomes South Africa's progressive approach to sexual orientation and gender identity. In South Africa, prohibition of discrimination based on sexual orientation is enshrined in the Constitution.

However, the number of cases of violence, including hate crimes, against LGBT individuals that have been reported in recent years, is worrying. Both the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women have expressed their concern for this. Finland welcomes the commitment of the Government of South Africa to conduct a swift and thorough investigation of these crimes. Preventing future violence is equally important – what measures is the Government taking to prevent hate crimes against LGBT individuals?

Finland recommends that South Africa publicly denounce all violence based on the sexual orientation or gender identity, and adopt effective measures to raise public awareness concerning the constitutional protection of LGBT individuals.

Thank you.