

Statement by Her Excellency Ambassador Graça Andresen Guimarães
Permanent Representative of Portugal
13th session of the Universal Periodic Review Working Group
South Africa

Vice President,

Portugal warmly welcomes the delegation of South Africa led by HE Andries Nel, the deputy minister of Justice and Constitutional Development, and thank him for the presentation of the National Report. Portugal commends South Africa's historical leadership in the fight against discrimination, namely racism, racial discrimination and related intolerance, let me reiterate Portugal's commitment to work with your country to combat this scourge.

Vice President,

South Africa has an internationally admired Constitution which protects and makes justiciable all the rights it guarantees, including economic, social and cultural rights. In this regard we would like to recommend that South Africa ratifies the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and signs its Optional Protocol allowing the right of individual petition.

Portugal would also like to recommend that South Africa:

- ensures timely, universal and non-discriminatory access to quality healthcare service to all, namely to treatment for chronic illnesses and pays particular attention to the situation of migrants and refugees, in line with South African law;
- closely collaborates with UNICEF and UNAIDS in order to implement programmes aimed at reducing the cases of Mother-to-Child HIV Infections;
- promotes awareness-raising campaigns and human rights education programmes particularly directed to law enforcement officials and educators that address the problematic of sexual violence against women;
- considers suspending the enactment of the Protection of State Information Bill, approved last November;