



**Statement by Sweden in the
interactive dialogue on South Africa**

*Delivered by Minister Counsellor Irina Schoulgin Nyoni /
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Bruck*

Madam President,

Sweden wishes to thank XX and her/his delegation for the presentation of your national report and to welcome you to the UPR session.

Sweden would like to commend South Africa for the establishment of the Ministry of Women, Children and Persons with Disabilities, as well as for reinstating the specialized Family Violence, Child protection and Sexual Offences Unit (FCS). Initiatives such as the 16 days of Activism on Violence against Women and Children continue to play an important role. At the same time reports, for example from the South African Human Rights Commission, speak of continued widespread violence against women and girls.

Sweden would therefore like to recommend the Government of South Africa to undertake continued and enhanced efforts to protect and provide redress to women suffering from violence and to continue raising awareness, through training and other means, in the judicial system, including police, of the necessity to act against this violence.

Since South Africa became a democracy, its government has promoted freedom of expression and transparent access to information. Access to information is instrumental in eradicating the impact of poverty and to promote equality and human rights. Sweden welcomes the way that the Protection of Access of Information Act (2000) enables this. At the same time, we note that the South African government has introduced the Protection of State Information Bill that might allow for a broad classification of information from the state and its authorities. This Bill could lead to restrictions on media freedom and freedom of expression.

Sweden would like to recommend the Government of South Africa to remain a promoter of freedom of expression, at national and international levels, and to review the current text of the Protection of State Information Bill.

If time permits: Sweden highly appreciates the way South Africa has worked with the rights of LGBT individuals, both nationally and internationally. Notably through the resolution in this Council but also through national initiatives such as the joint government-civil society “task team” as well as the process of developing a “hate crimes” legislative framework. Despite these efforts, and a constitutionally-entrenched right, violent, targeted attacks against LGBT-persons persist. Sweden wishes to encourage you to continue your efforts as we acknowledge the difficulties you face.

Thank you, Madam President