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Universal Periodic Review of the United Kingdom, 24 May 2012
Intervention by the delegation of Estonia

Estonia warmly welcomes the high level delegation of the United Kingdom to the 13th session of the UPR and thanks them for the presentation of the national report.

Estonia acknowledges the fact that the United Kingdom has made advances in its international human rights commitments since the last review in 2008. Its government has successfully concluded the ratification procedures of the CRPD and its Optional Protocol and Second Optional Protocol to the CRC. The United Kingdom is thus part of nearly all the main international human rights instruments and is fully cooperating with the special procedures of the UN Human Rights Council as well as with treaty bodies. We recommend that the United Kingdom also ratify the First Optional Protocol of the ICCPR.

Estonia commends the United Kingdom for implementing the policy suggestions made during the previous review, particularly with respect to the rights of vulnerable groups in society. We welcome the adoption of the strategy on the reduction of poverty among children and intentions to increase the role and political impact of the Children's Commissioner. We encourage the British government to continue the reforms of the social support system that would advance children's social and economic rights further. We note with appreciation the efforts United Kingdom has made in reducing gender inequalities and tackling the problem of human trafficking.

Furthermore, Estonia would also like to recognise the United Kingdom for its persistent commitment to safeguarding the freedom of expression, both off and online. During the public disorder in 2011, social media turned out to be instrumental in bringing communities together after the riots. We also welcome the efforts of the United Kingdom in tabling the Defamation Bill that seeks to address the freedom of expression concerns regarding the current legislation on libel.

Finally, the United Kingdom deserves special recognition for the contribution it has made to the protection of human rights around the world. We would here like to stress the United Kingdom's commitment to international development aid and the reforms of the European Court of Human Rights, which they led during their presidency of the Council of Europe.

Thank you.