

Statement by Her Excellency Ambassador Graça Andresen Guimarães
Permanent Representative of Portugal

14th session of the Universal Periodic Review Working Group
Gabon

Madame President,

Let me start by extending a warm welcome to the delegation of Gabon lead by the honorable Minister of Justice, thanking her for the comprehensive presentation of the UPR National Report.

Portugal welcomes the progress achieved by Gabon in the promotion and protection of human rights since the first cycle of the UPR in 2008, reflected in the ratification of several relevant human rights instruments and the strengthening of the national human rights mechanisms. In this regard, we are particularly pleased to underscore the abolishment of the death penalty in February 2010.

Madame President,

Nevertheless, as it is the case for all countries, several challenges in the field of human rights still lay ahead. Portugal would like to pose 1 question and to formulate 3 recommendations:

Portugal attaches great importance to the issue of trafficking of persons. Acknowledging that Gabon is a country of destination and transit for trafficked persons we would like to know what further measures is the Government planning to take in order to fully implement the recently adopted legislation to combat this scourge.

[According to reports, prison conditions, namely the lack of adequate hygiene and nutrition, remain an issue that needs to be further addressed. We would be therefore interested in receiving further information about state policies to improve detention conditions and, in particular, measures to ensure that minors are effectively separated from adults in prisons and detention centers.]

Portugal would like to *recommend* that Gabon ratifies the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economical, Social and Cultural Rights.

We would also like to *recommend* that Gabon issues a standing invitation to all special procedures of the Human Rights Council and increases its efforts to obtain the A status in conformity with the Paris principles for the National Commission of Human Rights created in September 2011.

I thank you Madame President