Sinet unf



Universal Periodic Review of GHANA, 23 October 2012 Intervention by the delegation of Estonia

Estonia warmly welcomes the high level delegation of Ghana to the 14th session of the UPR and thanks them for the comprehensive presentation today. Estonia recognizes that the human rights agenda has become more important in the domestic policy of Ghana. We are glad to note that Ghana has extended a standing invitation to the UN Special Procedures.

Estonia commends Ghana for having become part of the Rome Statute. Ghana has reiterated their national commitment to the global efforts at promoting the universality of the Rome Statute which shows their strong faith in justice and the rule of law to fight against impunity. Thus, we welcome Ghana's increasing role in the protection and promotion of human rights over their borders, which makes their example highly valuable in the region.

We are concerned about the situation of the violation of women's rights in Ghana. Discrimination in law and in practice as well as FGM and other harmful practices still exist. We encourage Ghana to take further steps to protect women's rights and to promote and increase women's participation in political life and in other decision-making positions in society. In our view additional human rights protection mechanisms could be developed to fight against violence and mistreatment of all vulnerable groups in the country.

Education is the most powerful tool to exercise one's human rights; it empowers individuals to strive towards more democratic societies and tackle poverty. Estonia notes with appreciation that compulsory and free basic education in Ghana has contributed to the increase in the school enrolment rate.

We commend Ghana for having welcomed the UN special rapporteur on the **right to health** last year and encourage the government to tackle the key challenges pointed out in his report, namely maternal mortality and mental healthcare. Much use could be made of his recommendations. We are glad of the government's promise to stay committed to realizing the right to health of the citizens.

Freedom House has assessed Ghana's overall climate for **freedom of expression** and determined the press to be free. Use of the Internet is growing and remains unrestricted; however, the access remains low. Estonia commends Ghana for being a good example of an African country that puts Internet freedom into practice – the right to information cannot be underestimated.

Furthermore, Estonia would like to make the following recommendations:

- We recommend that Ghana proceed swiftly with the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (**OP CAT**);
- We recommend that Ghana protect the rights of its most vulnerable **children** and ensure their full participation in **education**.

Thank you!