**UN Human Rights Council**

**14th Session of the Working Group of the Universal Periodic Review**

**Review of PAKISTAN**

**Geneva, 30 October 2012**

**Statement of AUSTRIA**

Austria welcomes H.E. ... and the delegation of Pakistan to the 2nd cycle of the UPR and thanks them for the submission of the national report.

At the first round of the UPR, Austria made recommendations with regard to the human rights of women and the protection of IDPs. We welcome the adoption of legislation to prevent acid attacks on women and against sexual harassment. Could the government provide more details on the implementation of these laws? Which measures have been taken to prevent other forms of extremist violence against women and girls?

Austria condemns all acts of violence and discrimination against religious minorities, including Hindus, Christians, Ahmadis and Hazaras. What efforts has the Government undertaken to curb extremist violence against ethnic and religious minorities and to prevent forced conversions and misuse of the so-called blasphemy laws?

Austria would like to offer the following recommendations to the Government:

* To ratify the Rome Statute of the ICC, the 1951 Refugees Convention and its 1967 Protocol, as well as the conventions on statelessness;
* To enact legislation ensuring freedom of religion and belief for all religious groups and to consider abolishing the so-called blasphemy laws;
* To introduce strong legislation prohibiting attacks against journalists, to effectively investigate such acts and prosecute the perpetrators;
* To take effective measures to prevent forced or early marriage, in particular with a view to ending rape, sexual exploitation and forced conversions;
* Finally, to start a national dialogue, with the aim of enacting a national IDP policy consistent with the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.

Thank you.