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Madame President,

Norway wishes to commend Switzerland for its strong commitment to improve the human rights standards in the country during the review period.

However, Norway is concerned with what Swiss NGOs have described as weak institutional guarantees against discrimination.

- ✓ We recommend that Switzerland adopt federal legislation in order to provide protection against all forms of discrimination, including on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Although the political system in Switzerland is among the most democratic in the world, Switzerland does not have institutional guarantees against popular initiatives incompatible with international human rights standards. Both the Human Rights Committee and the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief have regretted the outcome of the vote on the initiative to prohibit construction of minarets in Switzerland, noting that a ban on minarets amounted to an undue restriction of the freedom to manifest one's religion.

- ✓ Norway recommends that Switzerland put in place institutional guarantees to ensure that its human rights commitments are protected against popular initiatives that may violate these commitments.

Our last point refers to gender equality. According to UN reports there is an under-representation of women in decision-making positions in public office, political parties, the diplomatic service and the judiciary.

- ✓ Norway recommends Switzerland to take measures to increase the representation of women, including through temporary special measures.

Thank you.