

Human Rights Council

New Zealand's Statement during Zambia's UPR.

Delivered by Alana Messent, October 2012

Thank you, Madame President.

New Zealand welcomes this opportunity to again engage with Zambia on its human rights situation. It is clear that since 2008 Zambia has continued its commitment to enhancing and protecting human rights. Some things stand out - in particular the decision to enact a new constitution and the continuing efforts to translate international human rights obligations into domestic legislation, such as the Persons with Disabilities Bill. We encourage the Government to use the constitution drafting process to ensure that international human rights standards are fully incorporated into and protected under domestic law, in particular principles of non-discrimination. We welcome the proposal in Article 125 to establish an autonomous Human Rights Commission as a positive step in this direction. In further developing the new constitution, New Zealand recommends that Zambia take steps to abolish the death penalty.

New Zealand welcomes the Government's identification of health care services as a national priority. We commend Zambia for developing a National Community Health Worker Strategy in line with recommendation 58.16 made by New Zealand in 2008. We also commend Zambia's commitment under the Abuja Declaration to raise the health budget to a minimum of 15% of the nation's budget. We were therefore disappointed to learn that the health budget decreased in 2012. New Zealand recommends that Zambia take all necessary steps to honour its commitments under the Abuja Declaration. We further recommend that Zambia allocate specific funding within its health budget for child, maternal and reproductive health.

New Zealand understands demographics play a role in the high volume of pregnancy and child-birth complications in Zambia. However, we remain concerned about Zambia's high maternal mortality rate. We welcome Zambia's participation in the Campaign for Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Africa and would be interested to hear what other steps Zambia is taking to reduce these high rates? New Zealand recommends that Zambia strengthen efforts to reduce maternal mortality rates, in line with CEDAW's recommendation to it of 2011. In particular New Zealand recommends that Zambia consider implementing the technical guidance produced by OHCHR in A/HRC/21/20, as appropriate, in its design, implementation and monitoring of policies and programmes to reduce maternal mortality.

Thank you Madame President