

United Kingdom of Great Britain & Northern Ireland National Statement

Universal Periodic Review – Tonga

Thank you Mr President,

The UK welcomes the positive steps taken by the Tonga Government over the last five years, demonstrating its commitment to human rights, particularly the implementation of reforms to democracy. The UK is impressed by the high level of consultations with civil society in the preparation for the Universal Periodic Review. However, we encourage Tonga to establish a National Human Rights Institution in compliance with the Paris Principles.

The UK echoes the calls made in the reports provided as basis for the review of Tonga, to take urgent steps to advance the legal position of women. It seeks further information on how Tonga plans to address rules that discriminate against women.

The UK welcomes measures that Tonga has taken to develop its Police and Prison service by enacting the Tonga Police Act 2010 and Prisons Act 2010. However, it is concerned to learn of allegations of manslaughter against five Tonga Police officers. We encourage implementation of education programmes for Tonga Police officers and urge Tonga to ensure the Police force acts in an appropriate and proportionate manner in line with human rights standards.

We urge that Tonga repeal all provisions that criminalise consensual same-sex conduct and ensure that anti-discrimination laws also cover sexual orientation.

We have two recommendations:

1. To ratify the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention Against Torture (CAT);
2. To ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and its Second Optional Protocol

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