

UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW
16th Session
22 April – 05 May 2013

UZBEKISTAN

Mister President,

The Republic of Cyprus welcomes Uzbekistan's participation in the second cycle of the UPR Working Group and appreciates its engagement in the Review Process.

My delegation wishes to take this opportunity to commend the Government of Uzbekistan for having implemented a significant number of recommendations of the first UPR-cycle. We also note with appreciation the legislative as well as constitutional reforms that have been undertaken by Uzbekistan, with a view to addressing its human rights challenges.

Further, Cyprus wishes to welcome Uzbekistan's ratification of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, the ILO Convention concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment and the ILO Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour.

However, we are concerned about reports on continued forced labor of children in the cotton sector and the coercive mobilization of school children aged 15 to 17 by provincial government offices to meet the yearly harvest quotas. While we do acknowledge the measures announced by the Uzbek Government so as to curb forced child labour in the cotton fields, including the issuing by the Prime Minister of an order prohibiting child labour during the cotton harvest, we would encourage Uzbekistan to try and effectually address the issue at hand.

We have also been gravely concerned by a recent announcement by the Director for General of the International Committee of the Red Cross of its decision to terminate all visits to detainees in Uzbekistan because "the ICRC is unable to follow its standard working procedures when it visits detainees to assess the conditions in which they are being held and the treatment they are receiving". We would, thus, encourage measures by the Government of Uzbekistan to address the aforementioned subject-matter and make such ICRC visits again possible.

Cyprus would like to ask the following question:

Does the Government of Uzbekistan intent to allow ILO monitors to gain access to visit the country and assess Uzbekistan's compliance with its international obligations as regards the minimum age of employment, et cetera?

I thank you Mister President.