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Statement by Her Excellency Ambassador Graça Andresen Guimarães
Permanent Representative of Portugal

16th session of the Universal Periodic Review Working Group
Uzbekistan

Let me start by extending a warm welcome to the delegation of Uzbekistan lead by H.E. , and thank him for the presentation of the Uzbekistan's National Report. Portugal welcomes Uzbekistan's cooperation with the UN Human Rights mechanisms and, in this regard, recommends that Uzbekistan extends a **standing invitation** to the special procedures of the Human Rights Council.

Mr. President,

We are particularly concerned with the alleged cases of harassment, intimidation and house arrest of **Human Rights Defenders, journalists and opposition members** in Uzbekistan. Portugal recommends that Uzbekistan adopts effective measures to ensure that representatives of NGO's work freely in the country and to guarantee that journalists and human rights defenders enjoy the freedoms of expression, assembly and association. In this regard we recommend as well that the provisions on defamation and insult in articles 139 and 140 of the Criminal Code are reviewed.

We are deeply worried about the alleged cases of **torture**, harsh conditions and mistreatment of prisoners. We are particularly concerned with the alleged practices of torture in Jaslyk Prison. Portugal therefore recommends that Uzbekistan puts an end to all practices of torture, aligns its definition of torture with article 1 of CAT, ratifies the Optional Protocol to CAT and establishes an independent mechanism responsible for investigating the alleged cases of torture.

Mr. President,

Before finishing, allow me to make these additional *recommendations*:

- a) That Uzbekistan revokes article 120 of the Criminal Code that criminalizes, with up to ten years of imprisonment, consensual



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sexual activities between adult males and takes measures to stop all cases of violence and discrimination against **LGBTI** persons;

- b) that Uzbekistan ratifies the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (**OP - ICESCR**);
- c) that Uzbekistan considers acceding to the Rome Statute of the **International Criminal Court**.

Thank you.