

**UN Human Rights Council**

**17<sup>th</sup> Session of the Working Group of the Universal Periodic Review**

**Review of CHINA**

**Geneva, 22 October 2013**

## **Statement by AUSTRIA**

*Check against delivery*

Thank you, Mr. President.

We welcome H.E. ... and the delegation of China to the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of the UPR and thank them for their report.

We note that China's constitution contains not only guarantees regarding the human rights of ethnic minorities, but also regarding special preferential policies, particularly autonomy. We note that our recommendations from the first UPR round are in the process of implementation. We would like to reiterate our recommendation to China to take further legislative and practical measures to allow ethnic minorities to fully exercise their human rights, to preserve their cultural identity and to ensure their participation in decision-making, in accordance with the Chinese constitution.

We are concerned about reports of discrimination and harassment of persons who exercise their right to freedom of religion, including Christians, Muslims and Tibetan Buddhists. We recommend that China takes effective measures to protect the right to freedom of religion or belief.

We are equally concerned about reports of increased limitations to the freedom of expression, in particular the prosecution of bloggers. We recommend that the Government takes steps that all persons, including bloggers, journalists and human rights defenders, can freely exercise their right to freedom of expression, online as well as offline, without fear from censorship or persecution.

Finally, we welcome that China has agreed in principle to an official visit by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. We recommend that China takes the necessary concrete steps to facilitate this visit as soon as possible.

I thank you.