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**Statement by Sweden in the interactive dialogue with Congo**

*To be delivered by Minister Counsellor Irina Schoulgin Nyoni*

*Geneva, October 30, 2013*

(Allocated speaking time: 1,35 min.)

Mr President,

Sweden wishes to welcome the delegation of Congo to the UPR and to express its appreciation for the presentation of the national report.

Despite existing legislation, Sweden is concerned that minority groups, including indigenous populations, continue to be marginalized. In many cases, indigenous groups are not aware of their human rights and rights under national legislation. Can the delegation elaborate on what is, or could be, done to ensure that these groups are fully informed of – and capable of exercising – their rights?

Sweden recommends the government of Congo to take additional steps for civic education and promote human rights awareness and ensure access to justice for indigenous groups.

Sweden welcomes that legislation is in place to ensure gender equality and protect women against sexual violence. Nevertheless, domestic and sexual violence against women continue to be widespread with very few cases processed through the formal justice system. There is also concern about lenient sentences for those convicted. How does the government plan to increase the number of investigations and prosecutions of sexual violence, and ensure that adequate sentences are enforced?

Sweden recommends the government of Congo to improve the implementation of national legislation on sexual violence and to ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice.

Thank you, Mr President