



**Universal Periodic Review: 17th session
Review of Israel, 29 October 2013
Delivered by Deputy Permanent Representative
Carl Reaich**

New Zealand welcomes the delegation of Israel to the Council today.

The greatest strengths of the UPR process lie in its universality and the forum it provides for a constructive two-way conversation between States. New Zealand therefore welcomes Israel's decision to re-engage with the UPR mechanism, as we place great importance on being able to hear from the State under review itself.

New Zealand recognises progress made in the enjoyment and protection of human rights since Israel's last review. We also recognise Israel's vibrant democracy, independent judiciary and active civil society. We welcome Israel's ratification of the CRPD during the reporting period, strengthening its already developed legislative and policy framework for protecting disability rights. However, as high rates of unemployment of persons with disabilities remain, New Zealand recommends that Israel takes further steps to **overcome the obstacles faced by persons with disabilities in accessing the labour market, including through positive action measures.**

While we recognise that Israel offers good-practice examples in many areas of rights protection, as identified in its national report, we have on-going concerns about the human rights challenges in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In this context, we are concerned by reports of increased violence directed at Palestinians in the West Bank by Israeli settlers, since the last UPR. We therefore **recommend that Israel strengthen its efforts to ensure all violent attacks in the West Bank are investigated, and prosecuted, by competent authorities.**

New Zealand welcomes the commitment in Israel's national report to increasing equality between different communities in its diverse population. We note, however, the concern of CEDAW that discrepancies remain in the infant and maternal mortality rates across Israeli society. We therefore recommend that Israel strengthen its efforts **to close the gaps in the infant and maternal mortality rates of Jewish, Israeli Arab and Bedouin women and children.**

In concluding, New Zealand thanks Israel for its engagement today, and for its consideration of our recommendations.