

(Check against delivery)

28



MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN
AFFAIRS OF FINLAND

First Secretary
Stefan Lee

17th Session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review

Finland's recommendations to Malta
30 October 2013

Mr President,

Finland wishes to thank Malta for the national report and its presentation today.

During Malta's previous Universal Periodic Review in 2009, Finland paid particular attention to sexual and reproductive health and rights. We therefore appreciate the information provided in the national report on developments in this regard.

Finland welcomes the adoption of a National Sexual Health Policy in 2010 and a Sexual Health Strategy in 2011, as well as the establishment of a follow-up mechanism for them. In this context, we would like to invite the Government to elaborate on the measures it intends to take to further improve the provision of and the access to services and information on sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Also referring to encouraging data that universal access to services as well as youth-friendly information on sexual health and rights diminishes adolescent pregnancies, **Finland recommends that Malta take concrete steps in ensuring comprehensive sexuality education for children and young people.**

Finland continues to share the concern of the *Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (CESCR), the *Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW) and the *Committee on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) that in Malta abortion is illegal in all cases under the law and that women and girls who choose to undergo abortion are subject to imprisonment. In this regard **Finland recommends that Malta fully implement the recommendations of the CEDAW and CRC on the decriminalization of abortion and on exceptions to the general prohibition of abortion for cases of therapeutic abortion and when the pregnancy is the result of rape or incest.**

Thank you.