

**Recommendations made by Iceland to Malta
17th session of the Universal Periodic Review**

Thank you Mr. President,

Iceland welcomes the honourable delegation of Malta to the UPR.

We applaud the signing by Malta of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. However, we express concern at the prevalence of violence against women, and the persistence of sociocultural attitudes condoning domestic violence and deterring women from reporting cases to the police. Iceland encourages Malta to continue to put emphasis on comprehensive measures to address violence against women in the family and in society, and to review the definition of rape as a crime against physical and mental integrity, placing lack of consent at the centre. We also urge Malta to strengthen its measures to combat all forms of trafficking in women and children.

Furthermore, Iceland wishes to make the following recommendations to Malta: To raise the minimum age of marriage from 16 to 18 years; to improve the availability of sexual and reproductive health services, including family planning; to consider exceptions from the general prohibition of abortion and remove punitive provisions for women who undergo abortion; and to withdraw its reservations to CEDAW.

We welcome the recent extension of the remit of the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality, as well as the intention of the Government to introduce civil unions for same sex couples.

Iceland invites Malta to pursue comprehensive policies to overcome traditional stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and society, to ensure equal opportunities for women and men in the labour market, and to strengthen women's representation in leadership roles and decision-making positions.

I thank you.