

Check against delivery

Italian intervention

**UPR – Saudi Arabia
(21/10/2013)**

Thank you, Mister President.

Italy welcomes the distinguished delegation of Saudi Arabia and congratulates it for its comprehensive report, which updates also on the adoption of a national plan for human rights education that we recommended during the previous cycle of UPR.

Few weeks ago, in Rome, the Italian-Saudi Forum celebrated 80 years of bilateral diplomatic relations. The two Ministers of Foreign Affairs acknowledged that the differences between the two countries in the field human rights should be an encouragement to strengthen our bilateral dialogue in this area.

In this spirit, Italy reiterates its **recommendation** that Saudi Arabia observe a de facto moratorium on executions, in line with the international trend. Italy also **recommends** that Saudi Arabia carry out further efforts to increase the transparency and openness of legal proceedings contemplating death sentences.

While welcoming the progress achieved regarding political empowerment of women, Italy **recommends** Saudi Arabia:

- to repeal the legal guardianship system for adult women,
- to redouble its efforts to tackle the practice of forced and early marriage.

To conclude, Mr. President, we appreciate the attention paid by Saudi Arabia to religion, as a central and intimate part of human beings. In this respect, we encourage Saudi Arabia to accept the following **recommendation**: to continue enhancing the legal protection of freedom of religion and belief, aiming at gradually allowing the public practice of all faiths and beliefs.

I thank you.