



MINISTÉRIO DOS NEGÓCIOS ESTRANGEIROS
DIREÇÃO-GERAL DE POLÍTICA EXTERNA

MR. NUNO CABRAL

Statement by His Excellency Ambassador Pedro Nuno Bártolo

Permanent Representative of Portugal

18th session of the Universal Periodic Review Working Group

55

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Afghanistan

Mr. President,

Let me start by extending a warm welcome to the delegation of Afghanistan lead by H.E -----, and thank him/her for the presentation of Afghanistan's national UPR report which highlights the Afghan Government's efforts to improve the human rights situation in the country.

Portugal welcomes the legislative changes that took place in Afghanistan since the last UPR review with a view to enhancing the protection and promotion of human rights, particularly the adoption of the Law on the Elimination of Violence against Women, in 2009. The establishment of the Special Prosecution Office for Elimination of Violence against Women was also an important step in this regard. Nevertheless, Portugal is seriously concerned with the widely reported setbacks in women's rights and the persistently high number of acts of violence against women and girls in Afghanistan. Portugal therefore recommends that the Afghan authorities ensure the full implementation of this Law and refrain from approving any new legislation which will further compromise the implementation of the Convention on the

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Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, to which Afghanistan is a party.

We also welcome the adoption of the Education Law in 2008 and the increase, in the last years, in the number of children enrolled in school, including girls. We note, however, that inequality still prevails in this field and recommend that the Afghan authorities step up measures to ensure girl's right to education, namely the reinforcement of security, hiring of more female teachers and improvement of schooling facilities.

Portugal also recommends that Afghanistan implements a moratorium on the use of the capital punishment and ratifies the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR, aiming at the abolition of this penalty.

In closing, Portugal would like to further recommend that Afghanistan ratifies the Optional Protocol to the ICESCR and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure.

Thank you Mr President.

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