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18<sup>th</sup> Session

NEW ZEALAND

Mister President,

The Republic of Cyprus cordially welcomes [*head of delegation*] and the rest of the members of the New Zealand delegation to this session of the second-UPR cycle and thanks them for their thorough and informative presentation.

We would like to commend the Government of New Zealand for doing well in protecting human rights and for meeting international human rights standards in many respects. New Zealand admittedly has most of those elements which are essential for the effective promotion and protection of human rights, including the rule of law and an independent judiciary, specific processes for monitoring human rights and other forms of accountability, recognition of the vulnerability of particular groups and individuals, et cetera.

Allow us to take this opportunity to make a special reference to (a) the significant progress that has been achieved in New Zealand in advancing the rights of the Maori people and; (b) the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

Logically, there are still a number of on-going challenges, one of which concerns the rights of women. Despite New Zealand's history in addressing women's rights and the legislation that is in place to ensure the protection thereof, we understand that the levels of violence against women, including sexual violence, remain noteworthy. In this respect, we would like to enquire as to whether New Zealand has collected sufficient statistical data on violence against women, including Maori women, migrant women and women with disabilities, which would enable it better tackle the issue.

Cyprus would like to make the following two recommendations:

- That New Zealand continues and increases efforts to combat all forms of violence against women; and
- To consider further improving existing legislation in order to close the gaps in the protection of women against discrimination.

I thank you Mister President.