UPR 19, April 30, 2014

Recommendations by Canada

**Bhutan**

**Question:**

In 2010, Bhutan took note of a recommendation by Canada to resume dialogue with Nepal to resolve the question of Bhutanese refugees, including by voluntary return, with particular attention to family reunification and other humanitarian cases.Could the delegation of Bhutan elaborate on steps taken through dialogue with Nepal over the last four years to resolve the question of Bhutanese refugees, of future steps being planned, and inform the Working Group of the Council if and how it enhanced cooperation with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in this respect?

**Recommendations:**

Canada recommends that Bhutan:

1. Accede to the 1951 Convention of the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol and the 1961 Convention of the Reduction of Statelessness
2. Strengthen measures to ensure inclusion of and respect for the rights of all ethnic and religious communities
3. Continue its efforts to raise awareness in rural communities about marriage laws and the dangers of child, early and forced marriage

**Observations (if time allows):**

Having committed to resettle nearly 6,500 Bhutanese refugees, Canada is concerned by the longstanding plight of those refugees remaining in the camps in Eastern Nepal and believes that a comprehensive and durable solution, including voluntary repatriation to Bhutan, is the best way to address the situation.

Canada applauds Bhutan’s peaceful transition to a constitutional parliamentary democracy, noting the country’s first democratic transfer of power to the opposition in July 2013. The government’s demonstrated commitment to good governance has contributed to positive human rights trends in Bhutan, with legislative development building a solid framework of law and order.

Canada welcomes Bhutan’s achievement towards its Millennium Development Goals, notably eradicating extreme poverty and hunger; increasing access to education; and promoting gender equality and empowering women.

Finally we observe that child, early and forced marriage has become less common in urban areas and encourage Bhutan’s efforts to similarly raise awareness in remote rural villages.