



**Statement by Sweden in the  
interactive dialogue on  
Democratic Republic of the Congo**

*Delivered by Counsellor Anna Jakenberg Brinck*

*Geneva, April 29, 2014*

**Mr President,**

Sweden welcomes the delegation of the DRC.

Important steps have been taken to combat sexual violence. Over the last year, legal processes against perpetrators of sexual violence have taken place.

It is important to note that sexual violence is not purely a consequence of conflict, but an expression of social inequality and of a lower human value afforded to women than to men.

A draft Family Code is currently debated in Parliament, and its article 426 gives men legal status as the heads of households. While the Code notes that a man should coordinate household decisions with his wife, it formalizes a practice whereby people are given unequal social status by virtue of their sex.

The DR Congo has made important progress in addressing impunity for security sector actors. Several members of the national police and armed forces (FARDC) have been tried and sentenced for various human rights violations. This indicates a commitment by the government to address impunity. Still, security agents remain responsible for a large number of violations, particularly in conflict zones.

The overall reform process in the justice sector should continue in order to strengthen the rule of law. An important impediment is that complementarity with the Rome Statute has not yet been implemented in national legislation. It is recommended that legislation for complementarity is adopted urgently, and that means for implementation are provided.

Human rights defenders are vital for the improvement of the human rights situation in DRC. Yet they remain subject to threats and violence. Sweden recommends that the law protecting human rights defenders should be adopted as soon as possible.

**Thank you, Mr. President**