**U.S. Intervention at the UPR of the Democratic Republic of the Congo,**

**19th Session, April 29, 2014**

The United States welcomes the Congolesedelegation to the UPR Working Group.

We welcome the DRC’s signing of the Nairobi Declarations, which formally ended hostilities with the M23. Elements of those agreements aim to ensure accountability for crimes against humanity and other human rights violations and abuses, and are important steps for improving the DRC’s human rights record. We encourage the government to continue taking steps to implement the 2012 UN-backed action plan on child soldiers.

We welcome the Congolese investigation into the 2012 mass rapes in Minova and efforts to hold implicated military personnel accountable, but remain concerned by the slow pace of judicial and security sector reform. We support establishing mixed chambers, which would formally appoint international judges, prosecutors, and investigators alongside their Congolese counterparts in a domestic judicial chamber to prosecute war crimes and crimes against humanity, as the best mechanism to improve accountability.

The DRC also faces the monumental challenge of holding local, provincial and national elections between now and 2016. To overcome the flawed 2011 elections and ensure democratic progress, the government must ensure a transparent and credible electoral process and fully protect citizens’ rights to freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly.

The United States makes the following recommendations:

1. Hold accountable security forces who commit human rights violations including those involving child soldier recruitment and sexual violence;
2. Create a strong, independent judiciary by training more judges, prosecutors, and court clerks and establishing mixed chambers;
3. Assure transparent and credible elections by ensuring freedoms of peaceful assembly and expression for all persons, including members of political parties, candidates, and members of the press.