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Check against delivery**Italian intervention****UPR – Democratic Republic of the Congo
(April, 29th 2014)**

Thank you, Mr. President.

We welcome the distinguished delegation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and thank them for the comprehensive national report.

Italy is well aware of the difficult situation of security and instability which affects several areas of the DRC and commends the efforts deployed so far by the Authorities to improve the overall situation of human rights. We particularly appreciate the ratification of several international Human Rights Conventions, the creation of the Protection Unit for Human Rights Defenders, the establishment of the National Strategy against sexual and gender-based violence and the de facto moratorium on capital executions.

We would like to present to the kind consideration of the Authorities of the DRC four **recommendations**:

1. To enhance the engagement towards increasing the role of civil society, especially by widening the space for political debate and ensuring the right of human rights defenders, opposition parties and journalists to freely carry out their activities.
2. To strengthen the ability to prevent and contrast the impunity that often surrounds sexual violence, first of all by prosecuting and bringing to justice those responsible for these crimes.
3. To increase efforts to prevent and punish episodes of extrajudicial executions and illegal or arbitrary detentions.
4. To take again into consideration the possibility to soon abolish de jure the death penalty.

Finally, Italy would like to ask if the DRC is envisaging any targeted measures to protect the human rights of the most vulnerable categories. In particular, we would like to know if budgetary and human resources will be allocated to address the situation of women victims of sexual violence, abandoned children (especially if previously involved in armed conflicts) and detainees held in harsh conditions.

I thank you Mr. President