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98

Statement by Sweden in the interactive dialogue on Ethiopia

*Delivered by Minister Counsellor Irina Schoulgin Nyoni
Geneva, May 6, 2014 (speaking time 1 min.)*

Mr President,

Sweden wishes to welcome the delegation and thank you for the information related to our advance questions.

While Sweden welcomes the adoption of the National Human Rights Action Plan (NHRAP), the exclusion of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the drafting of the Plan raises concerns.

Sweden recommends Ethiopia to take measures to ensure full rights of association, by reviewing the Charities and Societies Proclamation (CSP) as regards funding restrictions imposed on Civil Society Organisations working with human rights.

The Ethiopian Constitution as well as the ICCPR (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights) and the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights guarantee freedom of expression and assembly as well as rights of due process. The Anti-Terror Proclamation includes an unusually broad definition of terrorism. We are deeply concerned at the arrest and prosecutions of journalists and political opposition members, limit their peaceful and legitimate rights to freedom of expression and association.

Sweden recommends Ethiopia to remove vague provisions in the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation that can be used to criminalise the exercise of right to freedom of expression and association and ensure that criminal prosecutions do not limit the freedom of expression of civil society, opposition politicians and independent media.

Thank you, Mr. President