



Statement by Sweden in the interactive dialogue on Qatar

*Delivered by Minister Counsellor Irina Schoulgin Nyoni
Geneva, May 7, 2014*

Mr President,

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

Sweden welcomes Qatar's ratification of CEDAW (the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women) in 2009. We take positive note that Qatar has established public institutions for empowering women and made efforts to promote gender equality. Women are represented on senior positions in the private and public sector, however it seems that women are facing discrimination and are underrepresented within the justice system.

Sweden recommends Qatar to continue its efforts to end discrimination against women by taking all necessary measures to eliminate obstacles for women to access all fields of society, including the justice system.

In 2013 Qatar issued a media law to combat cybercrime. Sweden is concerned that, although freedom of expression is guaranteed in your constitution, in practice, the law could restrict freedom of expression, including on the Internet. The vaguely phrasing of the law opens the possibility for a broad interpretation.

Sweden wishes to emphasize that freedom of expression is just as relevant on the Internet and recommends Qatar to take immediate measures to ensure that the national regulations concerning the Internet guarantees freedom of expression.

Through the Qatar Foundation and the 2022 Supreme Committee, Qatar has taken some encouraging steps to address migrant workers' mistreatment. However, Sweden is concerned about reports that the kafala sponsor system is still applied in the hiring of migrant workers, which puts them in a vulnerable position towards their employers.

Sweden recommends that Qatar reviews the kafala sponsorship system in order to comply with international standards.

Thank you, Mr. President