

Permanent Mission of India,
Geneva

New Version

Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Working Group
20th Session (27 October – 7 November 2014)

2nd Review of The Gambia under UPR – Interactive Dialogue
[0900-1230 hrs, 28 October 2014]

Statement by India

Mr. President,

India warmly welcomes the delegation of The Gambia led by H.E. Mr. Basiru V.P. Mahoney, Attorney General and Minister of Justice and thanks it for its national report and the presentation made today providing an update on action taken on the UPR recommendations received during its first cycle.

2. We fully acknowledge the challenges faced by The Gambia in strengthening institutional framework for better protection and promotion of human rights of its people. We encourage the Government of The Gambia to continue its cooperation with the United Nations and other relevant International Organizations to further strengthen its national laws and align them in conformity with international human rights law.

3. It is encouraging to note that The Gambia is in the process of establishing a National Human Rights Institution and draft legal framework is under consideration. We **recommend** that The Gambia accelerate the process of consultations and ensure that the institution functions in accordance with the Paris Principles.

4. An independent judiciary is one of the essential prerequisites of 'rule of law' and protection of human rights. The drafting of the Judicial Officers Bill 2014, which aims to strengthen financial autonomy and security of tenure of judges, is step forward in this regard. We hope that it is enacted early and **recommend** that The Gambia actively pursue further reforms to ensure judicial independence.

5. We commend The Gambia's efforts in meeting the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) with respect to primary

school enrollment as well as the significant gains achieved in reducing maternal and infant mortality rates and increasing immunization coverage. We recognize the huge constraints it faces in tackling poverty, reducing unemployment and expanding basic health and education facilities and encourage The Gambia to seek capacity building and technical assistance from relevant UN organizations for the effective implementation of its national programmes like the Programme for Accelerated Growth and Employment (PAGE).

6. We appreciate the emphasis given to women empowerment and the measures taken to address gender-based violence including the passage of Domestic Violence Act and Sexual Offences Acts of 2013 and the formulation of a National Plan of Action to eliminate the harmful practice of Female Genital Mutilation. We **recommend** that The Gambia considers enacting a comprehensive law prohibiting the practice of FGM.

7. We wish The Gambia all success in its future endeavors.

I thank you.
