

**Statement by Latvia on Lesotho
21st Session of the UPR Working Group
21 January 2015**

Mr. President,

Latvia warmly welcomes the distinguished delegation of Lesotho to this UPR and thanks it for the presentation of the national report.

My country congratulates Lesotho for the various laws, action plans and awareness campaigns to protect and enhance women's rights, in particular with regard to human trafficking, gender based violence, women's access to and control of land, political participation and reproductive health. We share the CEDAW's concerns, however, about the absence of a specific prohibition to discriminate against women and about existing exceptions to the principle of non-discrimination in several areas of domestic law. Latvia therefore **recommends** that Lesotho incorporate the principle of equality between men and women into all areas of Lesotho law by repealing or amending all existing discriminatory legislation, to achieve full de iure equality for women in Lesotho, in compliance with the state's international treaty obligations. Also, could the delegation comment on the status of the domestic violence bill that was under discussion in the Lesotho Parliament in 2011 and provide more information as to its specific content?

Latvia welcomes the adoption of the 2011 Children's Protection and Welfare Act aimed at ensuring social and economic well being of children, as well as the National Strategic Plan on Vulnerable children. We recognize the considerable efforts undertaken by the government of Lesotho to achieve the MDG target of universal primary education through the development of child-friendly school policies. My government is concerned however, that a lack of registration of births results in the effective denial of access to essential services, including education. **We recommend** that Lesotho take the necessary steps to ensure that birth registration is effectively implemented and enforced by allocating sufficient human and financial resources to the National Identity and Civil Registry Department to promote the effectiveness of birth registration systems and processes. **We also recommend** that Lesotho put in place awareness campaigns to sensitize local communities on the importance of education for both boys and girls alike.

Finally, my government believes that Lesotho will benefit from active engagement with the special procedures, which can assist the country in identifying areas of concern and developing strategies for improving human rights on the ground. **We therefore recommend** that Lesotho extend a standing invitation to all mandate holders.

Mr. President, let me conclude by wishing Lesotho all the best for a successful UPR review.