**U.S. Statement at the UPR of Malawi, 22nd Session, May 5, 2015**

The United States warmly welcomes the Malawi delegation to the UPR Working Group.

We commend Malawi on the enactment of the Gender Equality Act in 2013 and on the passage of the Trafficking in Persons Bill in February 2015. We also commend Malawi’s commitment to reducing the incidence of child marriage as evidenced by the passage of the Marriage, Divorce, and Family Relations Act.

However, we note with concern that gender-based violence and discrimination against women and girls remains pervasive and women continue to have lower literacy and education levels and less access to employment than men. In addition, children in Malawi continue to be subjected to violence and the worst forms of child labor, including forced labor.

Finally, we are also concerned by the continued existence of laws that criminalize consensual same-sex activity between adults. We urge Malawi to ensure that its legislation respects the rights of all citizens, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Bearing in mind these concerns, we recommend that Malawi:

1. Take steps necessary to advance equal education and employment opportunities for women and girls and eliminate the worst forms of child labor;
2. Vigorously investigate and prosecute trafficking offenders, under the recently passed Trafficking in Persons Act; and
3. Modify the criminal code to decriminalize same-sex sexual activity between consenting adults; and to criminalize all forms of sexual abuse of children regardless of the sex of the child.