

Universal Periodical Review of the Marshall Islands
11 May 2015
Intervention by the delegation of Estonia

Estonia very warmly welcomes the delegation of the Republic of the Marshall Islands to the UPR's 22nd session. We thank the Marshall Islands for their work in preparing the report and also for the additional information provided in the opening speech.

Estonia acknowledges the significant challenges the Marshall Islands are facing in addressing human rights issues, including a lack of capacity and inadequate resources in a time of serious financial constraints, and therefor commends the Government's continuous efforts and good will to tackle those concerns. We also appreciate the country's collaborative spirit.

Since the last UPR session, the Marshall Islands have taken several steps to implement the previous recommendations. Even though due to the previously mentioned reasons, the Marshall Islands have not reached ratification of the remaining core Human Rights treaties, a significant step was taken in the field of the rights of the disabled – after the approval of the National Policy on Disability Inclusive Development in September 2014, a legislative compliance review of the Convention of the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD) was conducted, and the *Nitijela* approved the Government's accession to the CRPD in January of 2015. We encourage the Government to take the next step – to sign and ratify the convention.

We would also like to commend the Marshall Islands for progress made in meeting its obligations through the incorporation of human rights principles into national legislation. The most significant of which are the enactment of a new Criminal Code more closely in line with international human rights standards, and of the *Domestic Violence Prevention and Protection Act 2011* (DVPPA) to criminalize domestic violence, which is an important step in strengthening the legislative framework for the protection of women and children.

In the field of gender equality and women's health, other steps are also encouraging, such as developing the National Gender Policy, which we recommend to be finalized, endorsed and implemented at the earliest possible time, as well as strategies for the Reproductive Health Policy and the Prevention of Adolescent Pregnancy.

Estonia encourages the Marshall Islands to continue with the incorporation of human rights principles into national legislation, as well as with efforts to become part of all the main international human rights instruments and to fully cooperate with the special procedures of the UN Human Rights Council, including by issuing the standing invitation.

Estonia would like to make the following recommendations to the Government of the Marshall Islands:

- to take steps to ratify the **Kampala amendments** to the Rome Statute of the ICC
- to ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (**ICCPR**) and the two optional protocols (**ICCPR-OP1/OP2**);
- to endorse and begin implementing the **National Gender Policy**;
- to ratify the **Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)** and the optional protocol (**OP-CAT**)

Thank you!