**Universal Periodical Review of the Republic of Rwanda**

**4 November 2015**

**Intervention by the delegation of Estonia**

Estonia welcomes the delegation of the Republic of Rwanda to its second UPR. We thank Rwanda for the preparation of the report and for the additional information provided today.

Estonia notes with appreciation that there has been considerable progress in reconciling and uniting the society 20 years after the tragic events of the 1994 genocide. We also commend the work of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, as the tribunal approaches the end of its mandate.

Estonia encourages Rwanda to continue its efforts to become party to all the main international human rights instruments and cooperate with the special procedures of the UN Human Rights Council, as well as with treaty bodies. We welcome the fact that Rwanda has issued a standing invitation to the UN human rights special procedures.

While acknowledging Rwanda’s positive activities relating to women’s rights, including the One Stop Centers for Gender Based Violence, we encourage Rwanda to continue to pursue effective implementation of gender equality legislation.

Estonia further notes the progress made in the field of freedom of expression, assembly and association, including the adoption of the Access to Information Law. At the same time, further positive steps by Rwanda remain necessary to promote and protect a vibrant civil society.

Estonia would like to make the following **recommendations** to the Government of the Republic of Rwanda:

* to respect and protect the freedom of expression online/offline and the freedom of assembly and association, including by lifting obstacles regarding the registration and work of NGOs, and by acceding to the first optional protocol to the ICCPR;
* to fully align its national legislation with the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), to accede to the Rome Statute and the Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Court (APIC);
* to explicitly prohibit all forms of corporal punishment, including in the home, and to repeal the “right of correction” in the Civil Code.

We would like to wish the delegation of Rwanda a successful review meeting.

Thank you.