

**STATEMENT BY BOTSWANA DURING THE REVIEW OF BELGIUM  
AT THE 24<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW**

*(20 January 2016, Geneva)*

1. **Mr. President,** Botswana welcomes the delegation of Belgium to their second UPR. We thank them for the presentation of their comprehensive national report.

2. We note with appreciation a number of measures, particularly the legislative reforms, Notable are the 2012 strengthening of the law on domestic violence; and the measures to reduce prison overcrowding.

3. We also welcome the adoption of 53 measures aimed at combating racism and discrimination by the Government of the French Community in Belgium. We encourage Belgium to use these measures as a step towards adopting a national action plan against racism.

4. Even though Belgium has also made progress in addressing violence against women, some challenges still remain. Reports indicate that issues of sexual violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriages are still persistent in Belgium.

5. We also note reports of a rise in economic exploitation mostly in the form of long working hours with insufficient pay,

unsafe working conditions, intimidation, violence and unpaid social security contributions.

6. Botswana makes the following two recommendations to Belgium:

- a) ensure laws safeguarding women's rights are effectively enforced, including the law banning female genital mutilation;
- b) adopt a national action plan against racism; ban all organisations that promote and incite racial discrimination; and adopt clear measures to effectively combat racially motivated violence by the law enforcement officers.

7. We wish Belgium a successful review outcome.

I thank you, Mr. President!