

**STATEMENT BY BOTSWANA DURING THE REVIEW OF THE NIGER
AT THE 24TH SESSION OF THE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW**

(18 January 2016, Geneva)

Mr. President,

1. Botswana welcomes the Delegation of the Niger to their second UPR and thanks them for their comprehensive national report.

2. Since its last UPR, Niger has made significant strides, particularly in legislative reforms in the area of human rights. These include the Adoption of the 2014-2019 Action Plan of the National Commission to Coordinate the Fight against Trafficking in Persons, the 2011 Act establishing the Ombudsman, and the 2011 Act establishing regulations of the High Court of Justice.

3. We also note with appreciation the signing of the Declaration of Table Mountain, which abolished the imprisonment of journalists for performing their professional duties. We encourage Niger to fully implement this Declaration to ensure the enjoyment of the rights to freedom of opinion and expression by everyone.

4. There are however, a number of areas that are still lagging behind. These include violence against women and girls; as well as early and forced marriages, which according to reports are among the highest in the world.

5. Botswana therefore wishes to make the following two recommendations for the Niger:

- (a) strengthen the laws on the protection of the rights of women with a view to effectively address violence against women, including sexual violence and female genital mutilation;
- (b) ensure full abolition of all forms of early and forced marriages.

6. We wish the Niger a successful review and adoption of their UPR report.

I thank you, Mr. President!