

**Universal Periodical Review of the Republic of Palau**  
**21 January 2016**  
**Intervention by the delegation of Estonia**

Estonia warmly welcomes the delegation of the Republic of Palau to its second UPR. We thank Palau for their work in preparing the report and also for the information provided in the opening statement.

Estonia notes with appreciation the positive steps that Palau has taken to implement the previous recommendations, including the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), adding to the previously ratified Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Estonia encourages Palau to incorporate the provisions of both treaties into the domestic legislation.

Estonia further commends the Government of Palau for taking steps to accede to the rest of the core human rights treaties by signing them at the margins of the 66th UN General Assembly in 2011. While fully acknowledging the challenges of the Government in moving the human rights agenda forward, we strongly encourage Palau to now pursue the ratification of the signed treaties, and to strengthen the realisation of human rights throughout the country.

The adaption of two new laws, the Family Protection Act (2012) to address domestic violence and child abuse in the country, and the Penal Code that includes child exploitation crimes and offenses, are steps in the right direction.

We also commend Palau for the commencement of development of a national gender policy. At the same time, we are concerned about the fact that the definition of rape was limited to sexual intercourse, and spousal rape was still exempt from prosecution. In addition, the common-law rule requiring proof of physical resistance in order to prove the absence of sexual consent was still applied, as was the defense of reasonable belief that a victim was of lawful age of consent.

Estonia would like to note, that although protection measures were outlined in the Family Protection Act, there were no protection measures in place, specifically in the form of shelters and other services to support victims, especially women and children. We further encourage Palau to establish protection services for survivors of domestic violence and child abuse.

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

- to accede to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (**ICC**) and fully align its national legislation with the Statute, and to accede to the Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Court (**APIC**)
- to prohibit all **corporal punishment** in all settings, including in the home;
- to introduce a **law on freedom of information** in compliance with international standards.

Estonia would like to wish the delegation of Palau a successful review meeting.

Thank you!