

**Statement by Latvia on Swaziland  
25<sup>th</sup> Session of the UPR Working Group  
May 2015**

Mr. President,

Latvia warmly welcomes the distinguished delegation of Swaziland to this UPR and thanks it for the presentation of the national report. We appreciate the various programmes Swaziland put in place to ensure free primary education, improve prevention of HIV, AIDS and malaria and to promote gender equality and empowerment of women. We nonetheless share many of the concerns raised by the CEDAW and deplore that to date no systematic national legislative or policy review has been undertaken to align all laws and policies with the principle of equality and non-discrimination. We are also concerned that sexual violence and domestic abuse remain unaddressed due to delays in adopting the required legislation to curb these practices. **We recommend** that Swaziland take immediate action to ensure alignment of its domestic law as well as all pending legislation with CEDAW, adopt without further delay the Bill on Sexual Offences and Domestic violence and, take all necessary measures to ensure abolition of harmful traditional practices, affecting women and girls.

Mr. President, Latvia strongly believes that an independent media, free political activity and a vibrant civil society are crucial in ensuring the proper functioning of a democracy. We note with regret that Swaziland, despite its commitments during the first cycle, has fallen short in warranting that journalists, human rights defenders and civil society organisations are not hindered in their work. **We recommend** that Swaziland remove all restrictions, in law and practice, which prevent the full enjoyment of the right to freedom of expression, association and assembly and create an enabling environment for civil society.

More generally, Latvia is of the opinion that Swaziland would benefit from the valuable expertise of Special Procedures while addressing its human rights challenges and **we recommend** that Swaziland extend a standing invitation to all Special Procedure mandate holders.

Finally, Latvia is concerned that notwithstanding Swaziland's commitment during the first UPR cycle to ratify the Rome Statute of the ICC, such ratification has not taken place yet. **We therefore recommend** that Swaziland takes all necessary steps to speed up the ratification process of the Rome Statute.

Thank you.