**Universal Periodic Review of the Republic of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela**

**1 November 2016**

**Intervention by the delegation of Estonia**

Estonia welcomes the delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuelato its second UPR and thanks for the detailed national report presented today.

While recognizing Venezuela for approving the National Human Rights Plan 2016-2019 in March this year despite the rejection of this recommendation in the previous review, we encourage the Government to attach more importance to financing and implementation of the plan, i.e. to the promotion and protection of the human rights on the ground, to respond timely to specific request by treaty bodies as well as conduct regular consultations with civil society.

Estonia is further concerned about gender-based violence against women and girls and difficulties the victims experience in accessing justice and protection. We encourage the Government of Venezuela to improve people’s access to contraceptives and to decriminalize abortion.

Estonia recommends to the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to:

* ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;
* effectively implement the Organic Law on the Right of Women to a Life Free of Violence;
* protect and promote freedom of expression, ensure the safety of journalists, and promptly respond to alleged violations in this regard.

Thank you!