**UPR – Kingdom of Bahrain – 1 May 2017**

**STATEMENT by BULGARIA**

Thank you, Mr. Chair,

*Bulgaria welcomes the distinguished delegation of the Kingdom of Bahrain.*

My delegation notes that substantial efforts have been made by Government of Bahrain in the area of human rights since the country’s last UPR in 2012, especially on promoting gender equality and ensuring women’s political, social and economic place in society, as well as the launch of the National Plan for the Advancement of Bahraini Women 2013-2022.

Bulgaria however wishes to note that that executions carried out in Bahrain earlier this year represent a drawback after six years of de facto moratorium on death penalty in the country. While condemning the use of violence as a political tool and fully recognising the right and the responsibility of the Government of Bahrain to undertake all necessary steps to protect the security and stability of its country, we reiterate our strong opposition to the use of capital punishment in all circumstances.

Bulgaria views the amendment of the Code of Criminal Procedure which is aimed to stop the application of the death penalty to pregnant women as a move in the right direction Important step is the establishment of the Prisoners’ and Detainees’ Rights Commission in 2013, as an independent human rights body to ensure that they are not subjected to violations.

At the same time, we are concerned by different manifestations of violence of women’s social, economic, cultural and political rights.

Bulgaria shares the concerns of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women CEDAW that abortion had been criminalized even when the pregnant woman was the victim of rape or incest and that under existing laws women continued to be denied equal rights with men with regard to family relations, in particular marriage, the legal age of marriage, divorce, child custody, guardianship and inheritance. In addition, women still did not enjoy equal rights to nationality.

Bulgaria encourages Bahrain to strengthen the effectiveness of its efforts to continue the process of developing a legal framework for the promotion and protection of human rights, according to the international standards in this area.

*Bulgaria recommends Bahrain:*

1. *to impose an official moratorium on the death penalty and to replace the death penalty with a sentence that is fair, proportionate, and respects international human rights standards*

2. *to issue a standing invitations to special procedure mandate holders*

Thank you!