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**UPR44 – UZBEKISTAN**

**Statement by Slovakia**

8 November 2023

Mr. President,

Slovakia takes good note of an overall progress of the Government of Uzbekistan to improve human rights situation in the country in line with the "New Uzbekistan" programme.

Significant steps were taken to consolidate the rights of persons with disabilities, to strengthen women’s rights, and in particular to eradicate child labour.

Still, we would like to encourage the Government of Uzbekistan to strengthen guarantees for protection of journalists and media workers. It is important to adopt measures aimed at ensuring fair trial standards when journalists are involved.

Slovakia offers the following recommendations to Uzbekistan for further consideration:

1/ Take further steps with a view to ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture,

2/ Take further measures to strengthen the protection of journalists and media freedom by law and in practice.

I thank you, President.