**U.S. Statement at the Universal Periodic Review of Congo**

**45th Session of the UPR Working Group**
**January 30, 2024**

**As delivered by Sylvia Updegraff**

Thank you, Mr./Madam [Vice] President.

The United States welcomes the delegation from the Republic of Congo.

The United States congratulates the Republic of Congo for its efforts to advance women’s rights and combat gender-based violence by passing the 2022 Mouébara law, however we are concerned that discrimination against women remains widespread. We also remain concerned by Congo’s limited efforts to combat human trafficking, excessive use of pretrial detention, and reports of death in detention.

In the spirit of constructive engagement, we recommend that Congo:

1. Increase efforts to combat trafficking in persons by investigating and prosecuting cases of human trafficking, identifying trafficking victims and referring them to care, and establishing an inter-ministerial anti-trafficking task force.
2. Address the occurrence of deaths in detention by investigating allegations of abuse and torture of detainees by security forces and improving detention conditions.
3. Enforce and implement measures and legislation to promote and protect women's rights and to combat impunity for gender-based violence.

I thank you.