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1 min 45 seconds

 **NORTH MACEDONIA**

Thank you, Mr. President.

Canada welcomes the positive steps taken by North Macedonia in areas such as combating discrimination, promoting gender equality, and protecting LGBTI rights.

Canada recommends North Macedonia to:

1. Take steps to increase the independence and effectiveness of the judiciary, with particular attention to increasing the transparency and accountability of the Judicial Council and the Council of Public Prosecutors;
2. Take further steps to protect marginalized groups such as LGBTI persons and Roma and to address the hate speech directed against them;
3. Take further steps to prevent and combat sexual and gender-based violence, including domestic violence, for example by increasing the accessibility and timeliness of related judicial proceedings; and,
4. Address the low representation of women, in particular women from ethnic minority groups, in the parliament, municipal councils, central and local government and the armed forces, especially in decision-making positions.

**Observations**

Canada continues to be concerned about the weak anti-corruption framework and selective implementation of anti-corruption laws in practice.