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

**28th Session, November 10, 2017**

Thank you Mr. Vice President.

The United States warmly welcomes the delegation of Benin.

We recognize Benin’s efforts to protect children from human trafficking. We remain concerned that not enough is being done to investigate and prosecute cases, that not all forms of trafficking are criminalized and that the penalties for trafficking crimes are weak. With regard to sex trafficking, penalties are not commensurate with the punishments prescribed for other serious crimes, such as rape.

We applaud the launch of Benin’s National Anti-Corruption Forum and the collaboration between government and civil society actors on good governance and transparency initiatives.

Early and forced marriage continues to be a major human rights problem in Benin despite a law prohibiting it and a public awareness campaign against it.

Bearing in mind these concerns, we recommend that Benin:

1. Finalize and enact legislation to criminalize all forms of human trafficking, as defined in international law, with sufficiently stringent penalties.
2. Sustain and strengthen nascent anti-corruption and transparency initiatives, in consultation with civil society, including through follow-on discussions to the June National Anti-Corruption Forum; and
3. Strengthen information campaigns against early and forced marriage and enforcement of laws already in place.

Thank you Mr. Vice President.