**UN Human Rights Council Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review**

**Review of Estonia**

**Final remarks by Mr Jonatan Vseviov**

**Secretary General,** **Ministry of Foreign Affairs,**

**Tallinn-Geneva, 4 May 2021**

Madame President,

Distinguished representatives of Member States,

Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the Estonian delegation, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to all 99 delegations that participated at the third Universal Periodic Review of Estonia. I would also like to thank the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for the compilation of UN information and for all national and international stakeholders who have made their valuable contribution to our UPR process.

Allow me also to convey my appreciation to our Rapporteur, the Netherlands, and other members of the Troika – Bangladesh and Senegal for their contribution in our UPR process and the Secretariat for their effective and professional conduct of this hybrid session and for their assistance to overcome all technical problems that we face during difficult time of pandemic.

Estonia is a firm believer in the advantages that a digital society and e-Government can bring, including greater protection of human rights. As Minister Liimets said in her Opening Statement: Estonia is keen to harness the potential and benefits of new technologies in all spheres of life. Therefore, we are not in favour of abandoning the whole concept of videoconferences and/or hybrid sessions in the future after having overcome the COVID-19 pandemic, we could rather learn from the current best practices.

We are glad that so many States participated in the UPR and have carefully followed our efforts in the promotion of human rights at national as well as at international level. We are grateful to all contributors for their participation in our dialogue and for your comments and remarks.

Every comment and recommendation received here today will fall under careful consideration in the near future and we will form our opinion which recommendations we will accept in accordance with the given timetable. The follow-up of accepted UPR recommendations will constitute an essential part of the work of the national institutions working with human rights, as we commence our preparation for the next mid-term report to continue our voluntary commitment to submit mid-term reports as we have done in 2014 and 2018.

Estonia maintains its strong commitment to implementation of its human rights obligations and we consider the UPR process a useful element of this work. We regard today’s discussion as a valuable contribution to our domestic debate and to our national human rights related activities, for instance when drafting and implementing new action plans and legislation.

At national level we are in the process of adoption of our third national action plan for the implementation of the UN Security Council resolution 1325 on “Women, Peace and Security” and Cohesive Estonia Development Plan for 2021–2030. Their adoption and implementation through respective monitoring is a continuing process. Implementation and putting into practice of the first Human Rights Diplomacy Action Plan for the period 2020-2025 has just began.

National legislation and practice to promote equality, in particular gender equality and reduce gender pay gap, are under constant consideration and discussion domestically involving all relevant stakeholders, where representatives of civil society actively participate. Combating trafficking in human beings and domestic violence remain high on our national as well as international agenda. Several legislative measures and practical steps have been taken to improve the protection of victims of violence.

We understand that further efforts are necessary to adopt the implementation acts for the Registered Partnership Act, which guarantee implementation of the Act to the full extent.

Estonia will continue its efforts to become party to several of the remaining human rights conventions. Concerning becoming a party to the Optional Protocol to Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women on complaint and inquiry mechanisms, we need further efforts to carry through national proceedings to that end.

Estonia will put forward our candidacy for Human Rights Council for 2026-2028. We hope that this UPR will also have a positive impact on you when you will make your decision. Estonia is determined to work hard at national as well as international level in cooperation with other States to implement our common pledge of promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

To conclude, I would once more like to remind about Estonia’s commitment to principles of rules-based international order, respect and promotion of international law, including human rights law and international humanitarian law; democracy, rule of law and fight against impunity.

We look forward to continue our UPR dialogue after reporting to you on our achievements at the next review during the fourth UPR cycle in five years from now.

Thank you very much!