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**38th Session of the Universal Periodic Review**

**Review of NAMIBIA**

3 May 2021

**Statement by Austria**

Austria is fully aware that Namibia is heavily affected by the COVID-19 crisis. Still, human rights cannot be neglected during the pandemic and they must be at the heart of sustainable recovery efforts.

We welcome the adoption of the Prioritised National Plan of Action on Gender Based Violence, as well as the Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security and the preparation of a white paper on indigenous people.

We nonetheless remain concerned about the absence of effective policies for the protection of ethnic minorities, with discrimination in the labor market persisting and a higher school drop-out rate of children belonging to ethnic minorities. We are monitoring the situation of LGBTI people in Namibia and encourage the government to combat all forms of discrimination or violence against people based on their sexual orientation or gender identity.

We therefore offer the following recommendations:

1. Ensure that the legally guaranteed rights of ethnic minorities are also de facto safeguarded, especially by undertaking all efforts to reduce the drop-out rate of schoolchildren belonging to ethnic minorities and to stop discrimination of ethnic minorities in the labor market.
2. Repeal laws that criminalize and discriminate based on sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, especially Sodomy under Schedule 1 offences in the Criminal Procedures Act 51 of 1977, the Labour Act 11 of 2007, and the Combating of Immoral Practices Act 21 of 1980.
3. Revise outdated laws on abortion and develop national service protocols and provide training guidelines in accordance with the Maputo Protocol and WHO best practices.
4. Allocate significant budget and human resources to implement the *Prioritised National Plan of Action on Gender-Based Violence*.

I thank you.