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Madam President

New Zealand welcomes the participation of Latvia today in the Universal Periodic Review process.

New Zealand **recommends** Latvia continue its efforts to achieve gender equality by adopting legislation implementing gender equality laws to combat stereotypes and multiple forms of discrimination and by strengthening efforts to reduce the high rates of violence against women.

New Zealand **recommends** that Latvia ensure that both sexual orientation and gender identity are listed as prohibited grounds of discrimination in various legislation, including in criminal law. New Zealand also **recommends** that the government ensure that members of the LGBTQIA community are free to report homophobic and transphobic concerns without fear of reprisals, threats, attacks, or harassment. We **recommend** that Latvia provide legal recognition to same-sex unions.

Finally, New Zealand **recommends** that Latvia increase its efforts to counteract xenophobia, and combat stereotypes and prejudices in political discourse, including for Roma who continue to face barriers to education, employment and access to services.

Thank you.