**Statement by Bulgaria**

United Nations Human Rights Council

40th session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review

***Review of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela***

25 January 2022

Mr. President,

Bulgaria welcomes the delegation of the Bolivarian Republic Venezuela and thanks for the presentation of the national report.

We acknowledge that since the second UPR the country has received two visits from Special Procedures mandate holders as well as a visit by the High Commissioner for Human Rights in 2019.

However, we recognise that there remain significant challenges and restrictions on the civic and democratic space. Numerous reports indicate a serious deterioration of the human rights situation in Venezuela, while the country is facing a severe humanitarian emergency.

Bulgaria would like to make the following recommendations to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela:

1. Protect and promote freedom of expression, ensure the safety of journalists, and respond to alleged violations;
2. Strengthen institutions and mechanisms for the protection of unaccompanied minors and combat all forms of violence, exploitation and abuse against them.

We wish the Delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela a successful review!

Thank you.