*G. Samouel*

**Intervention by Cyprus**

**26 January 2023, 09:00-12:30**

**Universal Periodic Review**

**42nd Session**

**Benin**

Mr. President,

Cyprus welcomes the participation of the delegation from Benin at today’s UPR, as well as the presentation of its Report.

Cyprus commends Benin’s efforts to bring its laws in line with international human rights law and welcomes the establishment of special measures to combat gender-based violence. This includes the significant steps forward, such as Benin’s ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the establishment of the Benin Human Rights Commission.

Cyprus recommends:

1. Ratify the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
2. Review relevant provisions in the Criminal Code in order to enable human rights defenders to work freely and without fear;
3. Organize campaigns and educational programmes, to raise awareness of the importance of cultural heritage in all its diversity;
4. Continue in its effort to mainstream gender in national policies.

Thank you.