**42nd session of the Universal Periodic Review**

**Review of Ghana**

24 January 2023

**Statement by Austria**

Austria welcomes the delegation of Ghana thanks them for their presentation.

We commend the Government of Ghana for the efforts it has made to implement the recommendations since the last review. We are especially pleased to note the political will to abolish the mandatory death penalty and the steps taken to prevent domestic violence and support victims of gender-based violence, such as the adoption of the strategic plan for the period 2021–2025 of the Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit of the Ghana Police Service and the establishment of the Orange Support Center.

At the same time, we notice recurring reports of alleged misconduct by law enforcement and security personnel, as well as a lack of transparency in investigations of this alleged misconduct. Austria also regrets to see the continued imposition of mandatory death sentences. Moreover, reports of infringements of press freedom and the safety of journalists and media workers as well as the infrigements on fundemental freedoms proposed in the Promotion of Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanian Family Values Bill are of grave concern for Austria.

Austria would like to offer the following recommendations:

* Fully implement the Domestic Violence Act and ensure its practical application by providing sufficient funding.
* Establish an independent mechanism to investigate alleged misconduct by police officers and ensure that mechanisms are in place within the police to conduct investigations in a transparent and unbiased manner.
* Revise the criminal code to abolish the mandatory death penalty.
* Promote the fundamental principles of equality and non-discrimination as set out in the Constitution of Ghana by developing specific legislation to protect against all forms of violence and discrimination against persons based on their actual or perceived gender identity and sexual orientation.
* Take steps to ensure adequate protection of media freedom and safety of journalists and media workers from all forms of violence, harassment and intimidation.