**43rd Session of the Universal Periodic Review**

**Mali – 2 May 2023**

Statement by H.E. Christopher Grima, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Malta to the UN in Geneva

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Mr. President,

Malta welcomes the delegation of Mali to this session of the Universal Periodic Review.

Since its last UPR review, Mali has taken steps intended to enhance its implementation of international human rights standards, including the 2018 Law on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, and strengthening its National Human Rights Commission enabling it to be accredited with an “A” status in accordance with the Paris Principles in March 2022.

We also note that despite these positive developments, Mali continues to face significant challenges in areas such as the implementation of effective governance and the ability of national institutions to provide services to citizens. We remain concerned about the continued suspension of the peace agreement and urge all parties to re-engage in the national process. Malta deplores the Malian Transitional Government’s decision in February 2023 to declare the Director of the Human Rights Division of MINUSMA persona non grata and ordering his expulsion. Conflict-related sexual violence remains a significant concern.

Malta would like to make the following recommendations:

1. Ensure accountability and redress by investigating and prosecuting those responsible for grave violations against children and ensure that all victims have access to justice and are provided with comprehensive, age-appropriate and gender-sensitive protection services.
2. Ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR, aiming at the full and permanent abolition of the death penalty, and to commute all effective death sentences.
3. Consider enacting legislation that specifically lists discrimination based on actual or perceived sexual orientation and/or gender identity as a punishable offence.

We wish Mali a successful UPR session.