

**Statement delivered by Sumbue ANTAS,**

**Ambassador/ Permanent Representative of the Republic of Vanuatu to the United Nations and other International Organisations in Geneva**

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**Review of Tonga**

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Mr. President,

Vanuatu warmly welcomes the distinguished delegation of Tonga and thanks them for their informative presentation on the human rights situation in their country.

We commend the Government of Tonga for its efforts in promoting and protecting human rights, despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters. We recognize the progress that has been made so far and would like to make the following recommendations to further improve the human rights situation in Tonga:

1. Adopt policies that protect the human rights of marginalized groups in the face of climate change;
2. Strengthen collaboration with UN and development partners to promote rural development, support agriculture, and mitigate the impacts of climate change;
3. Strengthen the legal and policy framework to eliminate discrimination against persons with disabilities and remove barriers to their participation;

We wish the delegation of Tonga a successful review and look forward to the progress that will be made in promoting and protecting human rights in the country.

Thank you.