**Statement by Bulgaria**

United Nations Human Rights Council

43rd session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review

***Review of Israel***

9 May 2023

Mr. President,

Bulgaria is pleased to welcome the high level delegation of Israel and thanks for the presentation of the national report.

Bulgaria notes that Israel remains committed to engaging with international human rights mechanisms as part of its support for the promotion and protection of human rights, both domestically and globally.

We commend that on 1 September 2021, the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings entered into force for Israel – making Israel the first country outside of Europe, who is not a member of the Council of Europe, to become a State-Party to the Convention.

Bulgaria highlights that in addition to its comprehensive legislation and policies on children's rights, in 2021 Israel improved the institutional framework for their protection by establishing the Committee of Directors-General of State Ministries charged with coordinating child and youth policies, and by appointing a new Government Coordinator for the rights of children and youth at the Ministry of Justice.

Bulgaria would like to offer the following recommendations:

1. Take appropriate and decisive measures to ensure implementation of the recommendations of the human rights treaty bodies on equality and non-discrimination;
2. Continue efforts to investigate all allegations of violence against women, and provide effective remedies to victims, including by strengthening training of relevant public officials;
3. Consider taking further concrete steps to reduce the pay gap between women and men by applying the principle of equal pay for work of equal value and increasing the use of wage surveys;
4. Continue efforts to expand inclusive education opportunities for students with disabilities to attend mainstream schools.

We wish the delegation of Israel a successful outcome of the review!

Thank you, Mr. President!