**United Nations Human Rights Council**

**Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review**

**29th Session – Review of the United Arab Emirates**

**Geneva, 22 January 2018**

**Statement by AUSTRIA**

Mr. President,

Austria welcomes the delegation of the UAE to the UPR and thanks them for the presentation of their national report.

We note the efforts made by the UAE to follow up on the results of the last UPR, such as a new labor law legislation, an increased representation of women in decision-making positions including the Government and concrete measures to combat human trafficking.

While Austria appreciates the UAE’s acceptance of our previous recommendation regarding the protection of human rights defenders and journalists, we continue to be concerned about the limitations of freedom of expression and the persecution and arbitrary detention of those who express peaceful dissent verbally, in writing or via the electronic media. We note that Special Procedure Mandate Holders have raised concerns regarding the detention of human rights defender Ahmed Mansoor, who has also cooperated with the UN, as an act of reprisal and have asked for his immediate release.

Austria encourages the UAE to pursue its reform efforts concerning the protection of migrant workers, including domestic workers; particularly female domestic workers remain highly vulnerable and require further positive steps by the government.

We therefore recommend that the UAE:

1. Ratify the ICCPR, ICESCR and OP-CAT and enhance cooperation with UN human rights mechanisms
2. Align its legislation with international human rights obligations on freedom of expression, and take concrete measures to protect human rights defenders including from reprisals for cooperating with the UN;
3. Strengthen the protection of migrant workers and in particular female domestic workers, including by implementing existing legislation, reinforcing inspections and enhancing workers’ access to remedies;
4. Abolish the death penalty for all crimes and commute all existing death sentences.

I thank you.