**Universal Periodic Review, 29th session**

**Human Rights Council**

**UPR of Tonga, 15th January 2018**

**Intervention by Denmark**

*[Check against delivery]*

Mr. President,

Denmark welcomes the delegation from Tonga and thanks it for its presentation today.

Ensuring full and effective gender equality and the protection of women and girls against all forms of discrimination is crucial when seeking to advance respect and protection of human rights and must be a key objective also in relation to ensuring social and economic sustainable societies.

*Denmark recommends the Government to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).*

During its last UPR, Denmark positively noted that Tonga accepted recommendations to ratify the UN Convention against Torture. However, Tonga has yet to ratify the convention.

The UN Convention against Torture commits and guides States towards effective prohibition, punishment and prevention of torture and redress for victims. By ratifying, Tonga joins more than 160 States Parties in the unequivocal message: Torture can never be tolerated.

*Denmark recommends the Government to ratify the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment (CAT) without further delay*

Allow me in this context to highlight that the Convention against Torture Initiative, which works through government-to-government exchange and cooperation, stands ready to explore avenues to assist the Government in advancing on this issue if deemed helpful.

I thank you.