**Statement by Bulgaria**

United Nations Human Rights Council

31st session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review

***Review of the Republic of the Congo***

14 November 2018

Thank you, Mr. President!

Bulgaria welcomes the high level Delegation of the Republic of the Congo and thanks for the presentation of the national report.

We commend the continuation of the reform of the national system for promoting and protecting human rights in the Congo after the second UPR cycle. Bulgaria would like to highlight the adoption by referendum of the new Constitution of the Congo on 25 October 2015 which laid particular emphasis on the citizen’s rights and freedoms and abolished death penalty. We praise the adoption of Act 30-2018 of 7 August 2018, which strengthened the mandate, structure and functioning of the National Human Rights Commission.

Bulgaria recognizes the ratification by the Congo of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto on 14 February 2014.

We would like to encourage the Congo to undertake further measures aimed at implementation of the current legislation and public policies, as well to raise the effectiveness of the National Human Rights Commission.

Bulgaria would like to make the following recommendations to the Congo:

1. To continue implementation of policies to encourage the sustainable economic empowerment of women, in particular in rural areas;
2. To develop a comprehensive national strategy to prevent and address all forms of violence against children;
3. To conduct public awareness campaigns and to take further steps to implement the National Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities.

We wish the Delegation of the Congo a successful review!

Thank you, Mr. President!