**15 May 2019**

**33rd Session of the Universal Periodic Review**

**Review of Nicaragua**

**Statement by AUSTRIA**

Damos la bienvenida a la Delegación de Nicaragua y le agradecemos la presentación de su informe.

Austria is deeply concerned about reports of serious human rights violations and abuses since April 2018, among them threats and violence against human rights defenders and journalists. We call on Nicaragua to ensure the freedom of the media and the protection of journalists, and fully guarantee and protect the right to peaceful assembly. Finally, Austria remains profoundly worried about the high levels of sexual violence against women, particularly girls, who reportedly make up for 80% of cases.

Austria would therefore like to offer the following recommendations:

* Address, and ensure thorough and impartial investigations of human rights violations, incl. excessive use of force, torture, arbitrary detention and killings committed by state officials and paramilitary groups and guarantee the independence and impartiality of the judiciary;
* Take urgent measures to combat all forms of violence against women and children, particularly sexual violence against girls through strengthening of the legal framework, development of competent authorities and adequate support to victims;
* Fully cooperate with the OHCHR and regional human rights bodies and mechanisms with a view to ensure the full compliance with human rights obligations;
* Accede to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.