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

**Review of Bhutan**

8 May 2019

**Statement by Austria**

Austria warmly welcomes the delegation of Bhutan to the UPR and thanks them for their report.

We commend Bhutan for the successful 2016 amendment of the “Jabmi (=Bar Council) of Bhutan Act 2003”, which will encourage further improvement towards equal access to the legal aid system [including various pro bono schemes] – in particular for poor and marginalized groups. We welcome Bhutan’s efforts to raise awareness about child marriage and to combat human trafficking. [We hope for further continuation, especially among vulnerable populations and in remote and poor communities].

We offer the following recommendations:

* Take steps towards ratifying the remaining core international human rights treaties, in particular the ICCPR, ICESCR and the CRPD;
* Identify and correct practices that discriminate against children based on their ethnic origin, in particular in their access to education and health services;
* Enact legislation to explicitly prohibit corporal punishment of children in all settings;
* Enhance the combat against gender-based violence, taking into account the results of the Violence against Women and Girls Study Report by UNDP;
* Further promote genuine participation of civil society organizations, including in the area of awareness raising, advocacy and monitoring in the field of human rights.

I thank you.