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**PERMANENET MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

**GENEVA**

*Check against delivery*

**United Nations Human Rights Council**

**34th Session of the UPR Working Group**

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**Statement by the Republic of Croatia**

**Review of Gambia**

**Geneva, November 5, 2019**

Mr. President,

Croatia welcomes the delegation of Gambia and thanks His Excellency Hon. Aboubacarr Tambadou for the presentation of the national report.

Croatia welcomes the improvement of the overall conditions for the enjoyment of the right to freedom of opinion and expression in the country. It is essential for any democratic society that citizens and media professionals can express themselves freely and without fear.

The establishment of the National Media Law Review Committee, set up to review existing media related legislation in order to remove barriers to the full enjoyment of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, is another positive step taken by Gambia.

Mr. President,

Croatia recommends to Gambia:

* to strengthen transparency and accountability in public affairs, including in a response to the attacks on journalists;
* to review national laws, including the personal law and the Women’s Act, with a view to removing all provisions discriminatory towards women;
* to continue and further strengthen capacity building and training of the police officers, prosecutors and other law enforcement agents on the application of relevant legislation in order to address the underreporting of sexual violence and the lack of accountability.
* To decriminalize same-sex relationships between consenting adults and take measures to protect LGBTI persons from arbitrary arrests and violence.

Croatia hopes that these recommendations will be taken into consideration and wishes the respective delegation of Gambia a successful UPR review.

Thank you, Mr. President.