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Mr President,

New Zealand welcomes this opportunity for dialogue with Fiji on its human rights situation.

New Zealand **commends** the progress made in its 2018 election towards mainstreaming female political representation and participation in government.

New Zealand **recommends** that Fiji prioritise comprehensive strengthening of its approach to combatting violence against women and other vulnerable groups, including through legislative, institutional and community-based mechanisms.

As a core part of combatting gender-based violence, New Zealand **recommends** that Fiji take steps to improve the quality of and ensure broad access to comprehensive sexuality education.

New Zealand welcomes Fiji’s election to the Human Rights Council and **commends** its recent accession to key human rights instruments: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

New Zealand further welcomes Fiji’s ratification of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, but **recommends** that Fiji withdraw its reservation to the Convention.

Finally, New Zealand **recommends** that Fiji take steps to ensure that the rights to freedom of expression and association in Fiji, including those of workers and employers, can be exercised without fear of undue interference by authorities, including by progressing legislative reform.

Thank you Mr President.