**Universal Periodic Review of the Kyrgyz Republic**

**20 January 2020**

**Intervention by the delegation of Estonia**

Estonia welcomes the high-level delegation of the Kyrgyz Republic.

We commend Kyrgyzstan for the ratification of the CRPD in March 2019, the need for which Estonia called for in the UPR’s 21st session, in January 2015.

We congratulate Kyrgyzstan for its improved position in the 2019 World Press Freedom Index and encourage continuing its efforts in safeguarding the freedom of expression, including by protecting freedom of the press and by instituting a cap on moral damages in all civil defamation cases. Estonia reiterates that freedom of the media, including in the internet, is an important pillar of democracy.

Whilst we recognize the positive steps taken by the Kyrgyz government in promoting gender equality, *inter alia*, through the adoption of the National Gender Plan for 2018-2020, we note with concern the high prevalence of violence against women, bride-kidnappings, forced marriage and sexual violence. We urge Kyrgyzstan to do more in upholding women’s rights to freely choose a spouse and better enforce existing laws that criminalize bride kidnappings and child marriage.

Considering this, Estonia recommends the Kyrgyz Republic to:

* Ratify and fully align its national legislation with the Rome Statute of the ICC.
* Ensure freedom of expression online and offline, including by instituting a cap on moral damages in all civil defamation cases.
* Amend Article 313 of the Criminal Code to bring it into compliance with Articles 19(3) and 20(2) of the ICCPR.
* Create mandatory training programmes for judges, prosecutors and law enforcement officials on the application of criminal law dealing with violence against women.
* Encourage women to report cases of violence, sexual violence and forced marriage to law enforcement bodies and not elders’ courts.

We wish the delegation of Kyrgyzstan a successful review meeting.

Thank you!