**Universal Periodic Review of the Republic of Panama**

**3 November 2020**

**Intervention by the Delegation of Estonia**

Estonia welcomes the delegation of the Republic of Panama to the UPR’s 36th session.

We commend Panama for the positive steps in strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights, such as i.a. creating the National Council of Gender Parity, elaborating action plans to implement the Sustainable Development Goals and adopting a Multidimensional Poverty Index.

Estonia notes with appreciation that among the first in the region Panama has signed a National Plan for public-private social responsibility and human rights (2020-2030). We also note positively the ratification of the Escazu Agreement on access to information and justice on environmental issues.

Estonia encourages Panama to move forward and implement a number of national plans including on human trafficking and on the access to water.

Estonia makes the following recommendations to the Government of Panama:

* Strengthen the institutional human rights framework, including by ensuring the independence of the judiciary.
* Enhance the participation of indigenous peoples in matters concerning them including through prior consultations.
* Fully decriminalize defamation and place it within a civil code in accordance with international standards
* Provide an enabling and safe environment for free and pluralistic media and full access to information.

We wish the delegation of Panama a successful review meeting.

Thank You!