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Read by Marcellene Hearn

**United Nations Human Rights Council
22nd Session (25 February to 22 March 2013)**

Item 6: Consideration of UPR Reports, GHANA

Oral Statement, Association for the Prevention of Torture

^{Vice}
Mr. President,

The Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT) welcomed Ghana's commitment to ratify the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Torture [and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment] (OPCAT) during the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) last October.¹

Yet, we recall that Ghana made the same commitment four years ago during its first UPR review when it accepted three recommendations to ratify the OPCAT.²

In 2009, the government took initial steps towards ratification by submitting a bill on ratification to the parliament, but since then all forward momentum has stopped.

In 2011, the UN Committee Against Torture recommended that Ghana "accelerate the ratification process, as well as the designation of a national preventive mechanism."³

Now, in the second UPR review, seven States have recommended OPCAT ratification and/or the establishment of a national preventive mechanism, as envisioned in the treaty. For its part, Ghana has either accepted those recommendations or indicated that they are in the process of implementation.⁴

APT is interested to learn what measures have been taken to implement these recommendations to date.

We further encourage Ghana to: (1) ratify the OPCAT by the end of the year; and (2) take prompt measures to designate a national preventive mechanism through an open, transparent, and inclusive process.

¹ Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Ghana, ¶ 80, UN Doc. A/HRC/22/6, 13 Dec. 2012.

² Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Ghana, ¶ 68(13), UN Doc. A/HRC/8/36, 28 May 2008 (see recommendations of Mexico, United Kingdom and Netherlands).

³ Committee Against Torture (CAT), Concluding Observations: Ghana, ¶ 27, UN Doc. CAT/C/GHA/CO/1, 15 June 2011.

⁴ UN Doc. A/HRC/22/6, at ¶ 123.11 (Tunisia), ¶ 125.1 (Spain), ¶ 125.3 (Estonia), ¶ 125.4 (Czech Republic), ¶ 125.5 (Australia), ¶ 125.15 (Poland), ¶ 125.16 (Luxembourg).

If Ghana establishes an independent, effective and well-resourced NPM, we believe it has the potential to become a leader in torture prevention. Therefore, ratification and implementation of the OPCAT ought to be a matter of prime national importance. We hope that the parliamentary and executive authorities will now act upon national and international calls to move ahead with torture prevention in Ghana.

Thank you, Mr. President.

We welcome Ghana's statement today that a visit of the Special Rapporteur on Torture is under consideration and encourage Ghana to take full advantage of this opportunity to move forward on torture prevention.