

11 June 2009

Human Rights Council
Eleventh Session

Item 6
“Consideration of UPR reports”

Oral Intervention by Amnesty International on Nigeria

Mr. President,

Amnesty International welcomes Nigeria’s engagement with the UPR and its stated commitment to cooperate in every aspect of the mandate of the Human Rights Council.

The organisation also welcomes the announcement, in the Working Group, that Nigeria has ratified the Optional Protocol to the Disabilities Convention, and signed the International Convention on Migrant Workers; the International Convention on Enforced Disappearance; the Genocide Convention; the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture. We urge their speedy ratification and implementation.

Amnesty International welcomed the statement in the Working Group by the Minister of Foreign Affairs that Nigeria “continues to exercise a self-imposed moratorium [on the death penalty].” However, we are concerned by recent legislative amendments in several States in Nigeria to extend the scope of the death penalty to include crimes related to kidnapping.

Mr President,

Amnesty International calls on the government to accept and implement as many of the UPR recommendations as possible and as a matter of urgency, in particular:

- To repeal all laws that discriminate against women, to prohibit all forms of violence against women and to fully implement the provisions of CEDAW in both federal and state legislation,¹
- To improve access to justice for all Nigerians, including improved access to legal aid,²
- To prevent and prosecute acts of extrajudicial executions, torture and other ill treatment by the security forces,³

¹ Recommendations 16 (Norway; Mexico; Ireland); 18 (Italy; Austria; Ukraine; Qatar) Norway; Ireland) and 19 the Netherlands, Bahrain, France, Belarus, Malaysia, Viet Nam, Angola)

² Recommendations 21 (Belgium; Mexico; Slovakia) and 25 (United Kingdom, Portugal, France, Germany, Austria)

³ Recommendations 14 (Benin, Germany), 15 (Ukraine, The Netherlands, Ireland) and 22 (Slovakia, Denmark, Portugal)

- To abolish legislation that discriminates on the basis of gender or sexual orientation and reject the 'same gender marriage (prohibition) bill';⁴
- To take all necessary measures, including through legislation, to ensure full independence in the National Human Rights Commission's work to protect and promote human rights,⁵ and
- To adopt a formal moratorium on executions.⁶

By declaring a formal moratorium on executions, the Nigeria would show important leadership on the issue of the death penalty in line with the global trend towards abolition.

Thank you, Mr President

⁴ Recommendation 12 (Canada and Finland)

⁵ Recommendation 4 (New Zealand and Portugal)

⁶ Recommendation 13 (The Netherlands, Brazil, Mexico, Slovakia, Italy, Turkey, Sweden, United Kingdom, New Zealand, Azerbaijan)