



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
16 December 2011

Original: English

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## Human Rights Council

Nineteenth session

Agenda item 6

Universal Periodic Review

## Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review\*

### Iceland

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\* The annex to the present report is circulated as received.

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## Introduction

1. The Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), established in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 of 18 June 2007, held its twelfth session from 3 to 14 October 2011. The review of Iceland was held at the 11th meeting on 10 October 2011. The delegation of Iceland was headed by Ogmundur Jonasson, Minister of the Interior. At its 15th meeting, held on 12 October 2011, the Working Group adopted the report on Iceland.
2. On 20 June 2011, the Human Rights Council selected the following group of rapporteurs (troika) to facilitate the review of Iceland: Angola, Austria and Jordan.
3. In accordance with paragraph 15 of the annex to resolution 5/1, the following documents were issued for the review of Iceland:
  - (a) A national report submitted/written presentation made in accordance with paragraph 15 (a) (A/HRC/WG.6/12/ISL/1);
  - (b) A compilation prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in accordance with paragraph 15 (b) (A/HRC/WG.6/12/ISL/2);
  - (c) A summary prepared by OHCHR in accordance with paragraph 15 (c) (A/HRC/WG.6/12/ISL/3).
4. A list of questions prepared in advance by the Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland was transmitted to Iceland through the troika. These questions are available on the extranet of the UPR.

## I. Summary of the proceedings of the review process

### A. Presentation by the State under review

5. The delegation stated that it was an honour to attend the universal periodic review on behalf of the Government of Iceland and indicated that it was grateful for the opportunity to provide information on the human rights situation in Iceland. The review would make, and had already made, a positive impact on the dialogue on human rights in Iceland.
6. As laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, human rights are and should be universal and inalienable. The Member States of the United Nations have a duty to support each other in this regard, to have the courage to speak out when breaches of human rights occur and, of no less importance, to commend States that have taken steps to improve the lives of their citizens.
7. In general, it was safe to say that the human rights situation in Iceland was reasonably good. However, there was room for improvement and Iceland would not shy away from any constructive criticism. Indeed, it looked forward to the interactive dialogue and to receiving advice and recommendations.
8. Iceland placed great emphasis on human rights and the Government was currently working on a new and extensive human rights policy that will be in compliance with fundamental international human rights conventions and agreements.
9. The delegation stated that the Constitution of Iceland prescribed that human rights applied to all members of society and that there was general consent regarding this in the

country. Nevertheless, Iceland was faced with various challenges, not least in connection with tremendous economic and socio-political turbulences and upheavals before and after a catastrophic financial crash in the fall of 2008.

10. The demonstrations in Iceland during 2008 and 2009 led to the fall of the Government and new elections two years earlier than scheduled. The new Government was faced with challenging tasks following a drastic fall in State and municipal revenues and subsequent budgetary restraints. In addition, the Government was not entirely sovereign in this task. The arrival of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had a direct and indirect effect on budgetary and fiscal governing in Iceland, but the intermediary of the IMF proved to be a necessary precondition for inter-State loan agreements undertaken by the Government.

11. Protecting human rights in difficult times, while challenging, is the most important task of any Government. In recent decades a notable shift of emphasis has occurred, whereby human rights are defined in the context of market interests and ownership entitlements at the cost of public interests. This should be discussed by the international community in a forum similar to the present review. The delegation indicated that when faced with a choice between property and financial rights on the one hand and the rights of disabled persons and socially vulnerable on the other, priority should be given to rights of the latter.

12. The delegation highlighted that the present Government was formed with the specific mission to safeguard and protect the welfare system in times of crisis. Budgetary cuts have impacted the provision of services and consequently peoples' lives. However, by constantly drawing attention to the effect budgetary restraint has on the welfare systems and on vulnerable groups in society, the negative impact has been reduced.

13. In time of crisis, the general trend was to direct budget cuts to public services, such as the health, welfare and educational sectors, while at the same time strict demands were made on Governments to create jobs in other sectors, such as in transport and the construction industry. As a consequence, there was always a tendency to create jobs for men while women were driven away from the labour market. This tendency has been experienced in Iceland. However, the Government has taken special measures to avoid this pattern developing by, for example, initiating gender-response budgeting. Furthermore, the Welfare Watch, a government entity, was established to monitor the economic conditions of families and individuals and to propose measures to address the needs of households, and it, as well as the Debtors Ombudsman has proved to be useful in dealing with the unavoidable consequences of the financial crisis.

14. The delegation stated that comparative studies had shown that children were on average pleased and happy, notably more so than before the crisis, which might indicate that the market- and money-driven lifestyle did not necessarily serve the well-being of children. However, children who were vulnerable before the crisis were considered to be at a higher risk now, which remains an important challenge for the Government and society in general.

15. Despite difficult times, the Government has taken important steps to improve the rights of individuals and groups. For example, in 2010 Parliament unanimously adopted legislation providing for a gender-neutral definition of marriage, ensuring the same legal status for heterosexual and same-sex married couples. Important steps are also being taken to improve the legal status of transgender people. However, equal legal status does not ensure equality.

16. The delegation indicated that promoting gender equality and ensuring that women and men enjoyed equal rights and status in all respects has been a key priority of the Government. Iceland has been successful in many areas of gender equality. This was

reflected in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report, in which Iceland had been ranked first the two previous years. Although Icelandic women's participation in the formal labour market is among the highest in the world and they were well educated, the gender pay gap persisted.

17. Sexual and domestic violence against women was a global concern. The uncomfortable and ugly reality of such violence was openly discussed in Iceland, because of the work of the Icelandic women's movement which was the first step towards dealing with this problem. The Government was doing its utmost to stimulate and encourage this development.

18. The delegation pointed out that only a small number of rape victims file charges and only few of these cases lead to indictments or convictions. In this regard, a comprehensive consultation process involving the representatives of the judiciary, police, prosecutors, civil society organizations and victims associations, was initiated. Recommendations emanating from this initiative were being followed-up.

19. Further important steps in eliminating violence and discrimination against women included the establishment of a special task force by the Government to deal with human trafficking. Penalties for such crimes have been increased. Furthermore, Parliament has passed legislation criminalising prostitution and also declaring strip clubs illegal.

20. Iceland is in the process of ratifying the European Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse. Also, the Government Agency for Child Protection operated The Children's House, which has become a model internationally for a child-friendly justice environment. It has also contributed to more numerous complaints, prosecutions and convictions for acts of sexual violence against children. However, preventive measures have not been sufficiently systematic but the Minister of the Interior indicated that he has placed particular focus on ensuring improvement in that area, in cooperation with other ministries.

21. Protecting human rights was not only a domestic issue but also an important aspect of Iceland's foreign policy. The Government wanted its development policy to be rooted in the fundamental rights of all people as set out in the Charter of the United Nations and the Millennium Development Goals.

22. The delegation stated that there is an Icelandic saying "Glögg er gests augað", which when translated into English means "the guest has a sharp eye", referring to the fact that a visitor can often notice things that residents cannot. This can be applied to all spheres of society – injustice can be taking place in one's backyard without one noticing it. In this respect, international cooperation for human rights is an important factor in implementing and ensuring global and universal human rights. In this regard, many examples were cited including the guidance received from the United Nations human rights treaty bodies, which has had a positive impact on the protection of human rights in Iceland. The delegation stated that it looked forward to the important and constructive dialogue that followed.

## **B. Interactive dialogue and responses by the State under review**

23. During the interactive dialogue, 25 delegations made statements. Many delegations expressed appreciation for the national report and the comprehensive presentation made by delegation of Iceland. Recommendations made during the dialogue are to be found in section II of this report.

24. Algeria expressed appreciation for the participatory process undertaken in the preparation of the report. It noted Iceland's commitment to adapting its national legislation to international human rights standards. It also took note of rising immigration and growing

intolerance and of the effects of the global financial crisis. Additionally it noted that Iceland has always been supportive of the efforts of developing countries. Algeria made recommendations.

25. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland noted that Iceland had signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, but that it had not yet been ratified. It also noted that gender inequality still existed in the areas of pay gap and women in leadership roles. The United Kingdom found worrying the statistic that in 2009 over half the population believed racial discrimination to be common. It raised concerns about the absence of a public authority to monitor violence and sexual abuse against children and welcomed the decision to build a new prison facility. The United Kingdom made recommendations.

26. Ghana applauded the active participation and strong representation of women in important public institutions in Iceland. It also expressed appreciation for Iceland's educational output in which women constituted 66 per cent of first-degree graduates, 60 per cent of master's degree graduates and 54 per cent of doctoral graduates. Ghana noted, however, the concern by the Committee on the Rights of the Child about the high drop-out rate of immigrant children. It also noted the 16 per cent gender pay gap, as indicated in the national report. Ghana made recommendations.

27. The United States of America commended Iceland for launching its first anti-trafficking action plan in 2009. It highlighted legislation passed in 2011 which increased the penalty for human trafficking, and constructive changes made to the country's asylum laws. The United States remained concerned by gender pay gap and gender-based violence. It noted the efforts made by Iceland to guarantee the rights of people of foreign origin. The United States made recommendations.

28. Australia commended Iceland for passing amendments to the Act on Foreigners in 2008 and the establishment of the Multicultural and Information Centre (MCI). It expressed concern that there was no definition of racial discrimination in Icelandic legislation. It was also concerned about reports of incarceration of juveniles and adults and of pretrial detainees and convicted prisoners in the same cells. Finally, Australia expressed concern about lenient sentences in cases of domestic violence, which acted as a disincentive to women who reported violent crimes to the authorities. It made recommendations.

29. Canada applauded the commitment made to promote human rights in line with the major United Nations human rights instruments. It highlighted achievements in terms of gender equality in the cabinet noting the example of Ms. Sigurðardóttir, Iceland's first woman prime minister. It also noted concerns by the Committee against Torture about asylum procedures and by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) regarding the Aliens Act which, as amended, did not provide for an independent and impartial appeal process. Canada made a recommendation.

30. The Islamic Republic of Iran expressed its concern over a number of human rights issues in Iceland, including racism and xenophobia, sexual violence and abuse of children, domestic violence, ethnic-based social inequalities, and the existence of substandard jails. It inquired about the root causes of these issues and concrete measures taken by the Iceland to address them. Iran made recommendations.

31. France noted that the Iceland had signed the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance in 2008 and inquired about obstacles to its ratification. It also noted that the establishment of a national human rights institution was under review and it asked for details on the envisaged timeline regarding this. Bearing in mind the persistent gender pay gap in the country and inequality in representation of women in leadership roles, France enquired what additional measures Iceland planned to take to correct this situation. France made recommendations.

32. Finland noted that lack of adequate resources in the prison system resulted in detainees having to wait to serve their sentences. It indicated that the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) had observed that some prisons did not conform to the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners. Finland noted that Iceland was planning to build a new reception and custody prison that would improve the conditions. Finland made recommendations.

33. Norway stated that it was following with interest the reform of the Icelandic Constitution. It expressed its trust that the Icelandic democratic system of government and constitutional framework will continue to form the basis of the enjoyment of all rights. It took note of the legislation to increase female representation in management positions and expressed concern that only a small portion of rape victims file charges, and a few of them lead to indictments or convictions. It expressed interest in learning how the new action plan would examine gender-based violence and their prosecution and handling in the judicial system. Norway made recommendations.

34. Mexico noted the action taken by Iceland to promote gender equality, develop the right to a healthy environment and to prevent trafficking in persons. It also welcomed the inclusive process undertaken in the review of the country's Constitution and expressed the hope that this exercise would result in a comprehensive normative framework that incorporated international standards for the protection and promotion of human rights. Mexico made recommendations.

35. Brazil congratulated Iceland for ensuring public participation in the review process of its Constitution. It noted progress made in the area of gender equality. It also commended recent legislation removing legal impediments to same-sex marriages, and strengthening the independence of the judiciary and freedom of expression. Nonetheless, Brazil noted that the impact of the global financial crisis and increased unemployment have resulted in challenges on the welfare system. In line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, it requested Iceland to ensure that child victims of prostitution were treated as victims not offenders. Brazil made recommendations.

36. Germany noted concerns relating to prison conditions and regarding the lack of separation between juvenile and adult prisoners, men and women prisoners and pretrial and convicted prisoners. It requested information regarding measures taken to abolish these precarious conditions. Noting reports of lack of room to house prisoners, Germany also asked what steps had been taken to overcome the scarcity of prison capacity. Finally, Germany noted concerns regarding the lack of procedures and gaps in legislation concerning stateless persons and asked if any steps had been taken to ratify the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

37. Slovakia thanked the delegation for its report and stressed the commitment of Iceland to the major international human rights instruments. Slovakia noted the work and functioning of the Multicultural and Information Centre, the Intercultural Centre and the Immigrant Council, the establishment of the Ombudsman for Children and the introduction of the human rights education in the national school curriculum. Slovakia made recommendations.

38. Slovenia asked how Iceland intended to improve its data collection on the use and effectiveness of restraining orders, particularly with regard to domestic and sexual violence and how it planned to raise awareness of the judiciary and police regarding this issue. It also asked how the Government planned to strengthen the provision of human rights education in schools, including through the school curricula and by ensuring the training of teachers. Additionally, Slovenia inquired how the Government intended to diminish the high drop-out rate of immigrant children, particularly in secondary education. Slovenia made recommendations.

39. The delegation stated that it was illegal to pay migrant workers less and to grant them fewer rights than those negotiated by the labour unions for other similar workers. As regards the Children's House, it was stated that following its establishment in 1998, there had been a dramatic increase in the level of social awareness of the sexual abuse of children. The child-friendly and professional environment at the Children's House had facilitated a positive attitude toward reporting cases to the local Children's Protection Services, which in turn referred individual cases to the Children's House for investigation. The Government Agency for Child Protection had also introduced additional measures in relation to violence against children and a pilot project aimed at supporting children in situations of domestic violence and ensuring their voices were heard.

40. Iceland recently adopted the so-called "Austrian model" which permitted the police to remove a violent person from the home in order to protect other members of the household. This was a fundamental change from the previous approach, which had been to remove the women and children and place them in women's shelters.

41. There were challenges in relation to custody and visitation in the area of domestic violence. A bill on a new children's act, which will be before Parliament later in 2011, will address this matter. Judges and District Commissioners will be conferred the responsibility to assess whether the child will be at the risk of violence. The bill will also incorporate the general principles from the Convention on the Rights of the Child into Iceland's law.

42. The delegation stated that prostitution was a crime, but it was the purchase, advertising and facilitation of the act that was illegal in that the prostitute, child or grown-up was always treated as a victim and not as an offender. On the issue of gender equality, the delegation stated that there was advancement towards gender equality. However, gender inequality persisted. Women were greatly underrepresented in management positions in private companies. Also, there was a gender pay gap despite legislation on equal pay for equal work. The Government has taken various measures to address this challenge. Gender-budgeting would be a key concern in budget preparation and economic policy.

43. On the issue of prison conditions, it was reiterated that a new prison would be built and completed in the next few years. Once completed, the small and inadequate prisons could be closed. The new prison will have separate facilities for women, and prisoners could be separated in groups based on their different needs. A very small number of persons under the age of 18 could serve an unconditional sentence. Also, changes in the Execution of Sentences Act would result in prisoners completing their sentences by doing community service or they could be monitored electronically.

44. In answer to questions on the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities it was stated that ratification was being prepared and was scheduled to take place in 2012.

45. In response to questions on discrimination on the base of race or ethnicity it was stated that various projects to fight discrimination had been launched in recent years and more comprehensive legislation was being prepared.

46. Regarding the challenge of preservation of the welfare system during the financial crisis, the important role of the Welfare Watch in monitoring the welfare service and making recommendations to the government was underlined.

47. The delegation discussed efforts in the school system and a new school legislation and curriculum as well as efforts to minimize the high drop-out rate of immigrant from the upper secondary-schools.

48. Further, the delegation mentioned efforts to strengthen the independence of the judiciary.



49. Spain noted steps taken by Iceland to recognize same-sex marriage and to grant the judiciary greater independence. It noted that article 62 of the Constitution determined that the Government should support and protect the Lutheran Evangelical Church while article 65 established the equal treatment of all persons regardless of their religion. Spain asked if the current wording of the Constitution could be seen as implying discrimination against other religions and whether it wouldn't be desirable to adopt a neutral formulation that avoided Government action in that area. Spain made recommendations.

50. Argentina commended Iceland for the application of positive measures in the areas of the fight against discrimination and smuggling of persons as well as the adoption of programmes for the resettlement of refugees. Argentina made recommendations.

51. Chile noted that Iceland had a comprehensive legal human rights protection framework. It also noted the participation of women in the institutional and political life of the country and the high level of their participation in the work force. Chile additionally took note that Iceland was one of the first countries to be affected by the world financial crisis, and that this hampered aspects of its welfare society. It asked for more information on the steering Committee, known as Welfare Watch, appointed by the Government to monitor welfare issues following the crisis. Chile made recommendations.

52. Sweden welcomed the efforts made by Iceland to promote human rights. With regards to the inadequate capacity in the prison system, Sweden welcomed the plans to expand capacity by constructing a new prison. It noted concerns that State church priests were introducing Christian beliefs to children, often without parental consent. Sweden made recommendations.

53. Hungary noted, with satisfaction, the attention given by Iceland to the promotion of gender equality. However, recent surveys indicated that a significant gender-based salary gap continued to exist. It asked what concrete action was being considered to reduce this gap and to address stereotypes and attitudes on the traditional roles and responsibilities of men and women. Hungary also took positive note of action on the rights of persons with disabilities and in particular the fact that Icelandic Sign Language had been recognized as the first language of deaf people. Hungary made recommendations.

54. Thailand acknowledged the commitment of Iceland in ratifying the core international human rights instruments and the monitoring roles played by the ombudsman and other institutions. It applauded legislation promoting gender equality. Thailand appreciated the efforts made to combat violence against women, especially domestic violence and sex trafficking and to improve prison facilities. In this regard, it called on Iceland to consider the recommendations made by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to strengthen efforts to assist victims and the recommendations of the Committee against Torture regarding the improvement of prison facilities. Thailand made a recommendation.

55. Uruguay welcomed the Iceland's decision to give priority to combating violence against women and the action plan to combat sexual and domestic violence against women and children. It noted, however, that domestic violence continued to be a problem. Uruguay highlighted the work of the State and of the Ombudsman for Children. Uruguay expressed its concern at the high number of cases of violence and sexual abuse of children. It noted the high number of international human rights instruments ratified. Uruguay made recommendations.

56. Afghanistan noted that Iceland's system of law incorporated its international legal obligations into national legislation, ensuring implementation of human rights. Furthermore, Afghanistan acknowledged Iceland's legislation on gender equality and its efforts to combat discrimination and racism against minority groups, persons with disabilities and immigrants. Afghanistan made recommendations.

57. The Republic of Moldova commended Iceland for developing mechanisms for the protection of human rights, including its consideration of the possibility of establishing a national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles. It acknowledged efforts to promote gender equality and to fight domestic sexual violence, including through the National Action Plan against Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence and the work of the Emergency Reception Centre for Rape Victims. It made recommendations.

58. Israel noted efforts made by Iceland regarding education, health care, child care, gender equality, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) rights, and the rights of persons with disabilities. Noting information given in the national report regarding challenges faced by Iceland due to the financial crisis, Israel raised concerns about the rights of vulnerable groups. It made recommendations.

59. The delegation emphasized that Iceland considered the dialogue and the reporting process to be an important contribution to its further enhancement of human rights protection. This process would serve as an important foundation for further work in the field of human rights. The delegation expressed its gratitude to those civil society organizations that sent submissions on the human rights situation in Iceland. Iceland placed great emphasis on an active dialogue with civil society organizations and highly valued the input received in preparation for the review. The delegation thanked member and observer States for the comments and recommendations received.

## **II. Conclusions and/or recommendations\*\***

60. **The recommendations formulated during the interactive dialogue have been examined by Iceland and are listed below.**

61. **The following recommendations enjoy the support of Iceland:**

- 61.1. **Commit to the ratification of the CRPD promptly (United Kingdom);**
- 61.2. **Adhere to the principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and consider favourably its ratification in the shortest time possible, in line with the Government's commitment to the rights of persons with disabilities (Mexico);**
- 61.3. **Ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as well as its optional protocol (Brazil);**
- 61.4. **Suggest the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol (Chile);**
- 61.5. **Continue the progress made on the rights of persons with disabilities through the adoption of various legislative measures by ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) as well as its Optional Protocol (Hungary);**
- 61.6. **Include in Icelandic legislation a definition of racial discrimination (Australia);**
- 61.7. **Incorporate all of the substantive provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination into domestic law, with a view to ensuring comprehensive protection against racial discrimination (Canada);**

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\*\* Conclusions and recommendations have not been edited.

- 61.8. Continue to safeguard all human rights provisions in its new Constitution (Norway);
- 61.9. Study the possibility of becoming party to the following international instruments: the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Argentina);
- 61.10. Take measures aimed at establishing a national human rights institution with a broad mandate that promotes and protects human rights in accordance with the Paris Principles (Argentina);
- 61.11. Encouraged the establishment of a National Human Rights Institution based on Paris Principles (Afghanistan);
- 61.12. Ensure adequate human rights education and training for all professionals working with children (Slovenia);
- 61.13. Coordinate preventive measures for the elimination of this trend (of cases of violence and sexual abuse of children) and develop preventative training programs, in particular for teachers and other professionals working with children (Uruguay);
- 61.14. Formally incorporate education about child sexual abuse and its prevention into the training of teachers and other professionals working with children, health professionals, lawyers and police officers (Slovenia);
- 61.15. Pursue vigorously preventive and awareness-raising policies in combating discrimination based on race or ethnicity, in addition to the measures already taken (Algeria);
- 61.16. Continue vigorously to address issues around gender inequality and racial/ethnic discrimination (United Kingdom);
- 61.17. Embark on public sensitization programmes and adopt anti-discrimination legislation to address all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (Ghana);
- 61.18. Undertake measures to tackle all manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (Iran);
- 61.19. Reinforce efforts in combating all manifestations of racism, xenophobia and other related intolerance (Slovakia);
- 61.20. Consider adopting comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation, addressing all manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in all spheres of life (Israel);
- 61.21. Take measures to reduce the gender pay gap and eliminate gender-based violence (United States of America);
- 61.22. Increase the research, collection and analysis of data on the prevalence, causes and consequences of violence against women, including information on the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim in cases of violence as well as the possible causes for the reluctance of victims to lodge complaints (Uruguay);
- 61.23. Modernise the prison system in order to ensure adequate resources and capacity and that the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners are fulfilled (Finland);

- 61.24. Increase efforts to effectively prevent trafficking in human beings for sexual exploitation and forced labour, including child prostitution, and take measures to ensure assistance to possible victims of human trafficking (Republic of Moldova);
- 61.25. Should overlook its legislation on custody and take actions to ensure that the welfare and protection of the children are prioritized in custody cases (Sweden);
- 61.26. Strengthen the participation of women in political and private decision-making centres, in particular in the diplomatic and judicial fields (Spain);
- 61.27. Continue efforts in ensuring access to the rights of older persons in the context of an adequate standard of living and healthcare (Israel);
- 61.28. Put in place measures aimed at integrating minorities, reducing their vulnerability to exploitation and discrimination and guaranteeing their access to work in accordance with their educational qualifications and professional experience (Spain);
- 61.29. Ensure that immigrants gain access to professions reflecting their educational level and professional experience (Iran);
- 61.30. Take due measures to tackle the rising unemployment rates among immigrant caused as a result of financial crisis, given the concerns contained in the National Report, (Afghanistan);
- 61.31. Intensify efforts to improve the situation of students with an immigrant background in order to increase enrolment and to avoid drop-outs (Ghana);
- 61.32. Continue developing policies to guarantee and affirm the rights of migrant women (Argentina);
- 61.33. Continue to make efforts to guarantee the rights and participation of foreigners, in accordance with the commitment made in paragraph 124 of the National Report (Chile);
- 61.34. Assess possible action to overcome the issue referred to in paragraph 52 of the National Report regarding the worrisome dropout rate for pupils of immigrant background, which may be partly due to lack of skills in the Icelandic language (Chile).
62. The following recommendations enjoy the support of Iceland which it considers to be already implemented or in the process of implementation:
- 62.1. Enact legal and societal reforms in order to ensure that non-native citizens and legal residents are able to fully enjoy their constitutionally and internationally protected human rights (United States of America);
- 62.2. Make every effort to preserve the various components of the existing social protection programs and ensure the rights of vulnerable groups (Algeria);
- 62.3. Take proactive and sustained measures to eliminate stereotypical attitudes about the roles and responsibilities of women and men, including through awareness-raising and educational campaigns directed at both women and men and the media (Republic of Moldova);
- 62.4. Endeavour to implement the recommendations by CEDAW to eliminate all forms of stereotypical attitudes against Women (Ghana);

- 62.5. Share its experiences with other countries with regard to its system in helping especially sexually abused or exploited children and adolescents, the so-called Barnahus (Finland);
- 62.6. Continue efforts to combat all forms of violence against women with a particular emphasis on the most vulnerable groups of society (Israel);
- 62.7. Establish a community education program to raise awareness of domestic violence against women and options open to them to bring an end to this crime (Australia);
- 62.8. Reflect the findings of the new action plan to examine gender-based acts of violence and their prosecution and handling in the judicial system in the next national UPR report (Norway);
- 62.9. Fight against domestic violence through more effective measures against perpetrators, and especially by protecting and avoiding the deportation of migrant women victims of gender violence (Spain);
- 62.10. Adopt comprehensive legal and other measures to combat all forms of violence against women and particularly violence in the home and sexual violence (Uruguay);
- 62.11. Take effective measures to tackle trafficking in human beings, domestic violence and sexual offences (Iran);
- 62.12. Prosecute perpetrators of human trafficking (United States of America);
- 62.13. In view of the trajectory in recent years of increased instances of human trafficking to and via Iceland, the government may need to pay continued attention to help victims of trafficking; (Afghanistan);
- 62.14. Take necessary measures to ensure that no child is subject to religious practice that confines their religious freedom or the liberty of parents to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions (Sweden);
- 62.15. Pass legislation to increase female representation in management positions, and implement it as soon as possible, and continue efforts to achieve equal pay for men and women (Norway);
- 62.16. Strengthen its efforts to increase the number of women in high-ranking posts, particularly in academia (Republic of Moldova);
- 62.17. Combat poverty and social exclusion, particularly of the disadvantaged and marginalized groups, with the adoption of clear indicators to assess progress achieved (Iran);
- 62.18. Ensure that the procedure to request and recognize refugee status be in compliance with the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol (Uruguay).
63. The following recommendations will be examined by Iceland and its responses will be provided in due time, but no later than the nineteenth session of the Human Rights Council in March 2012:
- 63.1. Ratify the ICRMW and the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education and also to withdraw its reservations to several provisions of ICCPR (Iran);

- 63.2. Ratify, as soon as possible, the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (France);
- 63.3. Ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the optional protocol to the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the Optional Protocol to the Covenant on, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Brazil);
- 63.4. Ratify the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons as well as the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness (Slovakia);
- 63.5. Sign and ratify the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Spain);
- 63.6. Ratify or accede to, as appropriate, to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (Uruguay);
- 63.7. Ratify or accede to the; the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Uruguay);
- 63.8. Define torture according to article 1 of the CAT (Brazil);
- 63.9. Continue with the complete incorporation into domestic law of the rights enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Spain);
- 63.10. Study the possibility of becoming party to the following international instruments: Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Argentina);
- 63.11. Establish a National Human Rights Institution in keeping with the Paris Principles (France);
- 63.12. Establish a National Human Rights Institute accredited by the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (ICC) and take the necessary measures to warrant its independence by granting it the required statutory powers and budgetary resources (Hungary);
- 63.13. Establish a national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles (Republic of Moldova);
- 63.14. Maintain and enhance its development assistance programs designated to the developing countries (Algeria);

- 63.15. Give further consideration to the incorporation of the definition of discrimination against women contained in article 1 of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women in its national legislation (Brazil);<sup>1</sup>
- 63.16. Consider the creation of a public body tasked with monitoring and creation of preventative measures to counter violence and sexual abuse against children (United Kingdom);
- 63.17. Take legislative measures to ensure that all children are effectively protected from sexual exploitation (Iran);
- 63.18. Take legislative measures to ensure that children older than 14 years of age are effectively protected from sexual exploitation (Brazil);
- 63.19. Take legislative measures to ensure that children older than 14 years of age are effectively protected from sexual exploitation; and adopt the amendment bill to the General Penal Code, which would extend the statute of limitations in respect of sexual abuse cases against children (Israel);
- 63.20. Approach, at all instances, child victims of sexual exploitation as victims and not offenders, providing for appropriate victims' reintegration (Slovakia);
- 63.21. Strengthen the protection framework for the rights of the child, particularly through measures to prevent child abuse, exploitation and violence against children, as well as facilitating access to justice and legal aid, and medical and psychological support to victims (Mexico);
- 63.22. Take measures to eliminate the obstacles for women victims of domestic and sexual violence faced when bringing complaints and seeking protection (Republic of Moldova);
- 63.23. Authorities ensure separate incarceration of juveniles and adults and of pre-trial detainees and convicted prisoners (Australia);
- 63.24. Establish a norm leading to the separation of women and men in penitentiary centres and between adults and minors; and set up measures to ensure compliance with this norm, having heard information on the measures that will be adopted in penitentiary centres (Spain);
- 63.25. Implement the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-Custodial Measures for Women Offenders, otherwise known as the "Bangkok Rules" (Thailand);
- 63.26. Should take action to protect the principle of legal security by expanding the capacity in the prison system so that all inmates are guaranteed a treatment in accordance with the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Sweden);
- 63.27. Support Muslims by enabling them to freely practice their religion (Iran);

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<sup>1</sup> The recommendation made during the interactive dialogue was stated as follows: "Give further consideration to the incorporation of the definition of discrimination against women contained in article 1 of the Convention in its national legislation." (Brazil).

- 63.28. Put in place temporary special measures to encourage acceleration of the achievement of substantive equality between women and men, particularly within the private employment sector (Republic of Moldova);
- 63.29. In the framework of the review of asylum and immigration law, and in accordance with the recommendation made by Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), grant foreign workers a no less favourable treatment than that which is granted to nationals in respect to restrictions, requirements and working conditions (Mexico);
- 63.30. Consider joining the convention on the rights of migrant workers in line with recommendation 1737 of 17 March 2006 of the Parliamentary Assembly of Council of Europe (Algeria);
- 63.31. Conduct appropriate public awareness campaigns with a view to eliminating prejudices and to promote understanding and tolerance towards immigrants (Slovakia);
- 63.32. Reduce the vulnerability of migrants to exploitation and discrimination through, among other measures, the review of the system to grant work permits and raising awareness of employers (Uruguay).
64. All conclusions and/or recommendations contained in the present report reflect the position of the submitting State(s) and/or the State under review. They should not be construed as endorsed by the Working Group as a whole.



## Annex

### Composition of the delegation

The delegation of Iceland was headed by H.E. Mr. Ogmundur JONASSON, Minister of the Interior and composed of the following members:

- H.E. Mr. Kristinn F. ARNASON, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Iceland to the International Organizations in Geneva;
  - Ms. Halla GUNNARSDOTTIR, Political Adviser to the Minister of the Interior;
  - Ms. Maria Run BJARNADOTTIR, Legal Adviser, Ministry of the Interior;
  - Ms. Gudridur Thorsteinsdottir, Director, Ministry of Welfare;
  - Ms. Elin Rosa SIGURDARDDOTTIR, Adviser, Ministry for Foreign Affairs;
  - Mr. Veturlidi Thor STEFANSSON, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Iceland in Geneva;
  - Ms. Ingunn HILMARSDOTTIR, Temporary Officer, Permanent Mission of Iceland in Geneva.
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