

**UN Human Rights Council
Outcome of UPR of Sweden 2015
26 June 2015**

Opening statement by Sweden

Mr President,

Today this Council will consider the draft report of the Universal Periodic Review of Sweden conducted in January.

This is an event of great significance to my government's human rights work. It brings to a conclusion a long period of hard work and active engagement with a process which has proved highly valuable in our own work, and which has provided an encouraging example of what this Council can do to increase the respect for human rights across the world.

Promoting and respecting universal human rights is a core value and a central priority for my Government. It is also a cornerstone of our foreign policy. We have therefore greatly welcomed the opportunity of this UPR to engage in our human rights work with interested parties. Ensuring respect for our international human rights obligations is a continuous process. Dialogue, as well as regular and constructive scrutiny, contributes to furthering the values which our society is based on.

Mr President,

In preparing for the review, my government consulted civil society organisations, including organisations representing indigenous peoples and national minorities, already at an early stage. Consultation meetings were held with stakeholders, both in Sweden and in Geneva. Our draft national report was posted on the Government's human rights website, to allow the broadest possible transparency. Since the review in January, we have held a follow-up meeting with civil society. This dialogue with stakeholders will continue in the follow-up to the review.

Throughout the process, a wide range of issues have been brought to our attention, increasing our own understanding of the human rights situation in

Sweden and of our human rights work at large. In total, we received 208 recommendations and we now have accepted 154 of these.

Some of the issues raised in the review in January were such that we wanted further time to allow more careful consideration after the review. We have addressed these issues in our addendum. Please allow me to mention some of them.

Mr President,

Several states recommended us to establish a national human rights institution.

The government has already announced in its budget bill for 2015 that it will deliver to the parliament a strategy for the systematic work for human rights in Sweden. One important aspect of this coming strategy is to set out how an independent monitoring of the implementation of human rights in Sweden could be organised. The strategy will therefore include vesting a national institution with the competence to promote and protect human rights in accordance with the Paris Principles.

Several states made recommendation relating to racism, intolerance and discrimination.

Let me underline that my government wants Sweden to be an open and inclusive society, a country where people with roots in various parts of the world and of different religions can live side by side. We seek to combat all forms of discrimination. Crimes of a racist, xenophobic or homophobic nature run contrary to our fundamental values. Sweden has taken a number of steps, and will continue to counter, such hate crimes.

I would also like to stress that Sweden has comprehensive legislation in place that prevent religious and racial profiling. Sweden also has laws and regulations governing the use of personal data that applies in both the public and the private sector. The Police is not allowed to register data solely on grounds that concerns for example race, ethnic origin, political view or religion.

Let me also recall that Sweden accepts the recommendation to adopt a national plan on combating crimes of hatred, racism, and xenophobia, while

underlining that the Government is already paying continuous attention to these issues.

Some recommendations concerned the rights of the child. Concerning the ratification of the Third Optional Protocol to the Convention of the rights of the child, the issue raises several questions which need to be further analysed before it is possible for the government to take a final position. Concerning the recommendations on children in detention, my Government is currently considering appointing an Inquiry to examine some aspects of the legal framework on pre-trial detention, such as alternative measures to pre-trial detention, measures to counteract the isolation of detainees. Special attention should be given to the treatment of minors in pre-trial detention.

Mr President,

Some states recommended Sweden to incorporate the crime of torture as a specific criminal offense. In June 2014, the Government commissioned an independent inquiry to consider whether a specific provision on torture should be introduced in Swedish penal law. The report is due on 1 September 2015 and the Government does not want to anticipate the outcome of the inquiry. We have therefore chosen not to accept the recommendations at this point.

More explanations to all the 44 recommendations that were postponed in January, are provided in the addendum.

Mr President,

Before we embark on the Council's consideration today of the draft report of the Universal Periodic Review of Sweden, let me assure you that my government very much sees the UPR as part of our national endeavours to ensure systematic human rights work. The recommendations we have received will be an important reference point in our continued work.

I now look forward to the Council's consideration.

Thank you, Mr President.

