

**Remarks for Ambassador Keith Harper
U.S. UPR Adoption
September 24th, Geneva, Switzerland**

Thank you, Mr. President.

I'm very proud to be before you today for the adoption of the report of the second UPR of the United States.

I'd like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the Secretariat , to our troika, to the many states who made constructive and useful recommendations to us, and to our partners in this process from civil society, some of whom came from the United States to be here today.

I'd also like to reiterate how important the UPR mechanism is for the United States.

Its universality encourages openness, honesty, and accountability. We are proud to stand before you today to showcase our best practices, while honestly acknowledging those areas where more needs to be done.

Our UPR has been a process of self-reflection and improvement, which will continue after today's adoption.

I would like to underscore the importance in this regard of two things -- our vibrant civil society, and our federal structure.

We are humbled by the work of our civil society. We appreciate their efforts to hold us accountable. We value their input, and we salute their contribution to the human rights dialogue in the United States.

We don't always agree, but we respect their voices and we ensure they can be heard.

In July we held a consultation with civil society about the UPR recommendations. We expect to continue the dialogue as we work to implement the recommendations we've supported.

A robust and open civil society space is one of the key ingredients for a successful democracy. That space allows civil society to voice opinions and operate freely.

Our federal system of government also enhances protections for human rights in the United States.

Different levels of government provide an additional barrier to protect individual liberties and to prevent misconduct.

State, local, and tribal officials are normally the closest authorities to the people they serve. They are often in the best position to solve problems, and they are directly accountable to a local population.

Moreover, different levels of government in our federal system have been described as laboratories of democracy, because they may develop and test different and creative solutions. Where their solutions work well, these best practices may be shared and emulated elsewhere. The different levels of government in our federal system, including State, local, and tribal governments, can thus improve human rights protection.

For example, several district attorneys, or public prosecutors, around the country have begun establishing conviction review units. In Brooklyn, the district attorney revamped their Conviction Review Unit and tasked it to review wrongful conviction claims and questionable convictions. He has said that the unit's highest priority is to give freedom to people who were convicted during the 1990s but who don't belong in prison.

Another example of how our federal structure improves promotion of human rights is the Race to the Top Fund. This federal program asks

state, local, and tribal school districts to submit their best and most innovative education reform ideas for federal funding.

Many of these ideas aimed to better support disadvantaged students and those who have been traditionally underserved, such as low-income and minority students, students with disabilities, and English learners.

Race to the Top grantees now serve 22 million students and 1.5 million teachers in more than 40,000 schools.

As we work over the coming years to implement the recommendations that we supported today, we believe that our federal system and our strong and active civil society will only strengthen our efforts to promote, protect, and respect human rights.

With that, I'd like to turn the floor over to Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Scott Busby. He will speak in detail about the recommendations we support or support in part, and some of the work that's already ongoing.