

Mr. President

Distinguished Representatives of Member States

Representatives of International Organizations

Representatives of non-governmental organizations

Staff of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the government and people of Saint Lucia I have the honor and privilege of presenting Saint Lucia's response to the recommendations put forward by member states at our country review of November 2015. In that review it was asserted by our head of delegation Ambassador Menissa Rambally that all 121 recommendations would be considered by the relevant stakeholders, with the aim of accepting those that seemed readily attainable by our state.

Of the 121 recommendations put forward Saint Lucia has accepted 91, partially accepted 1 and noted 29. The 91 accepted recommendations represent what our Government believes it can achieve within the 4-year period prior to our next review with the rationale behind this trend of thought being twofold. Firstly, it is our state's firm belief that we have a head start in certain areas where tremendous progress has already been made, secondly some of the recommendations fall firmly in line with the vision which our government has for the country and therefore the policies necessary for their implementation won't be far removed from the state's established mandate.

As pertains the recommendations which were noted, it was believed that Saint Lucia would find it difficult to take action to implement those in question within the same 4 year period for varying reasons. However, the Government of Saint Lucia has not relegated the noted recommendations to being unachievable, in fact some may well be acted upon

inside the aforementioned timeline, however a definitive stance cannot be taken on them at the moment.

As mentioned earlier the Government of Saint Lucia believes that we are already well on our way to meeting our obligations in several areas covered in the recommendations. An example of this can be seen with regards to the issue of Gender Equality where I would like to reiterate what was stated in our oral submissions, that according to a report released by the ILO in 2015, 52.3% of managerial positions in Saint Lucia were held by women, such an achievement does not occur by accident, but rather by the introduction of progressive policies and initiatives which support the growth of our women.

Yet the government realizes that this is no reason to rest on its laurels as women are still faced with issues which hinder their general wellbeing. One such issue being that of Domestic Violence which the state is tackling head on with the current revamp of our Domestic Violence Legislation. The net result of such a revamp is likely to be harsher penalties for perpetrators of such crimes and the ability for the state to prosecute such incidences without the aid of a victim complaint.

Member states would be pleased to know that there are further changes to our state's legislation afoot. Family law legislation is currently being examined with amendments likely addressing some of the recommendations put forward such as removing the legal distinction between children born within and outside of marriage.

Saint Lucia has already set the wheels in motion in meeting its international obligations, as instruments of ratification have been drafted and should be deposited shortly for the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Further in an effort to bolster our capacity to not only ratify human rights instruments but also to integrate them into domestic legislation, the Government has gone about doubling the number of legislative drafters within the drafting unit.

At this point Mr. President, I would like to allow member states and civil society to make their contributions before making my closing remarks.

Thank you

Saint Lucia will undertake to meet its obligations with fervor as we understand that achieving the said recommendations would not only please the working group but also be of great importance to our people.

In meeting our obligations, it is understood that a formal structure is needed in monitoring our human rights objectives. Although we are unable to commit to a National Human Rights Institution due to financial constraints, Saint Lucia is more than willing to accept assistance from the International Community to aid with the creation of an efficient human rights management system. That being said UNDP has agreed to hold a workshop on island, meeting with the relevant stakeholders with the hope of introducing a formal structure.

Finally, Saint Lucia will like to thank all who contributed in making its participation possible, and would like to assure the working group that its trust in our island nation meeting its obligations has not been misplaced.

I Thank You