

UPR Pre-session on Iceland, 7. December 2021

**Statement delivered by H.E. Harald Aspelund, Permanent Representative
on behalf of the Government of Iceland**

I am pleased to see this many participants taking interest in the situation of human rights in Iceland as well as our upcoming review under the UPR mechanism in January.

Today is about listening to the views of civil society organizations in Iceland and we are fortunate to have a number of representatives online who stand ready to take your questions.

Iceland is firmly committed to the advancement of human rights, both at home and abroad. We see the UPR as a critical tool in the quest for the promotion and protection of universal human rights.

As a sign of our commitment and the importance we attach to the UPR process, we strive to participate in the review of all countries through focused and constructive recommendations.

We also remain committed to using the Human Rights Council as a platform for the promotion of human rights and have therefore announced our candidacy for a seat on the Council for the period 2025 to 27.

Since our last review, real efforts have been made to both strengthen and improve our national process with emphasis on follow-up and implementation of recommendations received in the second cycle. Relatedly, a Steering Committee on Human Rights was established in 2017, creating an important platform for formal human rights consultations and follow-up across all Ministries.

Since its establishment, the Committee has organized regular consultations with civil society organizations and other stakeholders with the view of having a dialogue on process and furthering human rights in Iceland. More specifically,

great emphasis was placed on civil society consultations throughout the drafting of the UPR report for the third cycle.

Our upcoming review will focus on recommendations adopted after our last UPR. During that period, genuine progress was made towards increasing the protection of human rights in Iceland. However, we are aware that there is always room for improvement with new challenges continuously emerging that require thoughtful solutions and that need to be addressed over time.

In closing, I want to thank you all for your attention and hope you will find the session both informative and useful.