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Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review*

Bhutan

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Introduction

1. The Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, established in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 of 18 June 2007, held its nineteenth session from 28 April to 9 May 2014. The review of Bhutan was held at the 6th meeting, on 30 April 2014. The delegation of Bhutan was headed by Lyonpo Damcho Dorji, Minister for Home and Cultural Affairs. At its 10th meeting, held on 2 May 2014, the Working Group adopted the report on Bhutan.

2. On 15 January 2014, the Human Rights Council selected the following group of rapporteurs (troika) to facilitate the review of Bhutan: Maldives, Peru and South Africa.

3. In accordance with paragraph 15 of the annex to resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to resolution 16/21, the following documents were issued for the review of Bhutan:

(a) A national report submitted/written presentation made in accordance with paragraph 15 (a) (A/HRC/WG.6/19/BTN/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.6/19/BTN/2);

(c) A summary prepared by OHCHR in accordance with paragraph 15 (c) (A/HRC/WG.6/19/BTN/3).

4. A list of questions prepared in advance by Germany, Liechtenstein, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland was transmitted to Bhutan through the troika. Those questions are available on the extranet of the universal periodic review (UPR).

I. Summary of the proceedings of the review process

A. Presentation by the State under review

5. The head of the delegation of Bhutan reiterated the State's unremitting commitment to further protecting and promoting the fundamental rights and freedoms of its people as enshrined in the Constitution. He added that many provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights had been incorporated into the Constitution and that they had immensely influenced provisions relating to human rights.

6. An example of the independence of the judiciary was the country's first constitutional case, brought by the opposition against the Government in August 2010, in which the Supreme Court had ruled that the Government had erred in revising certain tax rates without following due legislative process.

7. As had been recommended during the previous UPR of Bhutan, the State had made concerted efforts to achieve the adoption of the Domestic Violence Prevention Act, the Child Adoption Act and the Child Care and Protection Act. Those acts provided the necessary legal framework for the protection and promotion of women's and children's rights in accordance with the country's national policies as well as its commitments under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, to which Bhutan was a party. The rules and regulations for the acts in question were being finalized.

8. Bhutan's democratic process had been further consolidated under the reigning monarch with the successful holding of local government elections in 2011 and the second parliamentary elections in 2013.
9. In recognition of the importance of a strong and professional press, the Bhutan Media Foundation had been established by royal charter in 2010. The monthly "Meet the Press" events with the participation of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet ensured access to the Government at the highest level.
10. The National Commission for Women and Children, an autonomous agency, coordinated and monitored policies and activities related to the protection and promotion of the rights of women and children.
11. The Government of Bhutan continued to attach great importance to the social sectors and to its pro-poor policies. More than 20 per cent of the total budget of the eleventh Five-Year Plan was allocated to education and health.
12. The Government was also ensuring that under the Five-Year Plan more emphasis was placed on gender issues and women's empowerment in all policies and national plans. The Government had also pledged to explore the adoption of a quota system for women's participation in the electoral process.
13. Bhutan was fully committed to ensuring gender equality in all aspects of electoral and other democratic participation.
14. Bhutan had benefited from constructive dialogue with expert bodies in the past, and in that spirit the Special Rapporteur on the right to education had been invited to visit Bhutan in May 2014.
15. In order to protect and promote the inherent dignity of all, and particularly the rights of persons with disabilities, Bhutan had signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2010.
16. With regard to the recommendations received in the previous UPR of Bhutan on acceding to the core human rights instruments, Bhutan first needed to establish the necessary legal framework, social institutions and human and financial resources to assume the obligations associated with those treaties and to abide by them in letter and spirit. As its capacity became enhanced, Bhutan would consider acceding to additional international human rights instruments.
17. The head of delegation elaborated on the numerous initiatives undertaken by the Government in addition to the recommendations received during the first UPR, such as the open-air prison system and the weekly "Meet the People" programme involving the Prime Minister, the Cabinet and the public.
18. Following up on the recommendation made during the first UPR of Bhutan in 2009 that it share its concept of "gross national happiness", Bhutan had initiated General Assembly resolution 65/309 entitled "Happiness: towards a holistic approach to development", which had been adopted by consensus in 2011. Bhutan had hosted a very successful high-level meeting on well-being and happiness in New York in April 2012. A subsequent report on the subject had been submitted to the United Nations Secretary-General in December 2013 as his country's contribution to the post-2015 development agenda.
19. Bhutan faced numerous challenges, such as a high rate of youth unemployment, uneven poverty rates across districts and regions and the problem of destitute economic migrants entering Bhutan illegally through open borders. In addition, Bhutan had been subjected to terrorist acts.

20. Bhutan looked forward to an open and constructive dialogue.

B. Interactive dialogue and responses by the State under review

21. During the interactive dialogue, 88 delegations made statements. A number of delegations thanked Bhutan for its comprehensive report and commended the progress made in promoting and protecting human rights since the first UPR in 2009. The dialogue with civil society during the preparation of the national report was considered a positive step. The recommendations made during the dialogue are to be found in section II of the present report.

22. Austria welcomed the holding of the 2013 parliamentary elections, the development of democracy and the institutionalization of an independent judiciary. It welcomed initiatives to promote women's safety and develop civil society. It looked forward to the repatriation of refugees. Austria made recommendations.

23. Azerbaijan welcomed the adoption of laws for the protection of women and children and the establishment of a separate division for that purpose. It congratulated Bhutan on having strengthened its anti-corruption legislation and noted efforts to reduce poverty. Azerbaijan made recommendations.

24. Bahrain welcomed the national plans to protect human rights, dignity and justice. It noted the measures regarding women's political participation, the protection of women from violence and youth unemployment. It expressed the hope that Bhutan would continue its efforts to protect vulnerable groups. Bahrain made recommendations.

25. Bangladesh congratulated Bhutan on its elections, which had further consolidated the democratic process. It noted progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and gender equality in education. It noted that poverty remained prevalent. Bangladesh made a recommendation.

26. Belarus welcomed the invitation to the Special Rapporteur on the right to education, as well as progress in combating human trafficking and corruption and promoting women's and children's rights. It noted that further efforts were needed to combat poverty and youth unemployment. Belarus made recommendations.

27. The Plurinational State of Bolivia commended efforts to strengthen child protection, which would improve the Government's capacity to respond to violence, abuse and exploitation affecting children. It made recommendations.

28. Botswana noted initiatives regarding social protection for vulnerable groups. It welcomed the Domestic Violence Prevention Act. It expressed concern regarding reports of child labour and abuse of children and urged Bhutan to implement child protection legislation. Botswana made recommendations.

29. Brazil acknowledged the consolidation of the democratic process. It noted the challenge of providing education for all. It expressed concern at violent and exploitative practices against women and children. Brazil made a recommendation.

30. Brunei Darussalam commended Bhutan on the adoption of an inclusive process for the preparation of the report. It commended efforts to promote children's rights, particularly through the provision of education. It welcomed youth unemployment programmes. It made recommendations.

31. Cambodia commended efforts to uphold the rule of law and strengthen democracy in Bhutan. It noted legislative progress, including the adoption of child protection laws. It commended Bhutan for organizing events to raise awareness of human rights. Cambodia made recommendations.

32. Canada requested information on the dialogue with Nepal concerning Bhutanese refugees, future initiatives and cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. It applauded the peaceful transition of Bhutan to democracy and noted its achievement of certain Millennium Development Goals. Canada made recommendations.
33. Chad noted the considerable progress in implementing recommendations and improving the human rights situation. It welcomed the inclusive report preparation process, which had involved consultation with many stakeholders. Chad made recommendations.
34. China welcomed investment in education and health and efforts to promote gender equality and protect vulnerable groups. It acknowledged the challenges that Bhutan faced and called on the international community to provide support. China made recommendations.
35. Costa Rica noted measures to strengthen the judiciary and to promote a culture of human rights through awareness-raising events. It invited Bhutan to continue its work on human rights education. It made recommendations.
36. Cuba commended Bhutan for its investment in free education and health care and for the attention given to the needs of children with disabilities. It noted social protection initiatives to enhance the population's quality of life. Cuba made a recommendation.
37. The Czech Republic commended Bhutan for the steps taken, including the adoption of legislation to combat corruption and domestic violence. It encouraged Bhutan to make progress in various areas. It made recommendations.
38. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea expressed appreciation for the commitment, efforts and achievements of Bhutan in the field of human rights, including the implementation of previously accepted recommendations. It made recommendations.
39. Denmark commended Bhutan for its constructive engagement and the progress made. It noted that Bhutan had not taken steps towards ratifying the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and drew attention to the initiative aimed at achieving universal ratification of that convention through the provision of assistance. Denmark made a recommendation.
40. Egypt noted the gradual consolidation of democracy, accompanied by progress in areas such as education and poverty reduction. It acknowledged the challenges concerning youth employment and food security and encouraged Bhutan to maintain its commitment to those areas. Egypt made recommendations.
41. Eritrea noted efforts towards inclusive education for children with disabilities, and progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. It noted the decline in poverty but recognized that the latter still posed a major challenge. Eritrea made recommendations.
42. Ethiopia commended efforts to enhance the legislative framework in various areas. It welcomed the development and poverty reduction goals set by Bhutan and encouraged it to further strengthen efforts to tackle poverty. Ethiopia made recommendations.
43. France commended Bhutan for its efforts to consolidate the democratic process and improve the human rights situation, and encouraged it to continue those efforts. France made recommendations.
44. Gabon commended Bhutan for its commitment to human rights. It welcomed the improvement of the legislative framework, including the adoption of legislation to prevent violence and corruption. It noted that many challenges still needed to be addressed. Gabon made recommendations.

45. Germany acknowledged the positive developments that had led to the peaceful and democratic change of government. It commended steps to implement previous UPR recommendations, notably the enactment of the Domestic Violence Prevention Act. Germany made recommendations.
46. Ghana applauded steps to implement previous UPR recommendations. It requested clarification of the work and functions of the Gross National Happiness Commission, which had taken part in the preparation of the report. Ghana made a recommendation.
47. India commended the commitment of Bhutan to democracy and a free press, its achievements in poverty reduction, its efforts to consolidate the democratic process, and its holding of elections in 2013. It acknowledged the challenges facing Bhutan. India made recommendations.
48. Indonesia noted efforts to ensure women's political participation, and the consideration of a quota system. It welcomed plans to reduce poverty and to assist vulnerable groups through targeted intervention. Indonesia made recommendations.
49. Iraq commended Bhutan for its achievements in improving the human rights situation since the first UPR cycle, its initiatives to protect women and children from violence, and its strengthening of human rights legislation. It welcomed efforts to promote political, economic and social rights and to combat poverty.
50. Ireland encouraged Bhutan to adhere to international instruments. It drew attention to the pending visit request by the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief. It expressed concern at the prevalence of malnutrition, which increased child mortality and the likelihood of the non-fulfilment of Millennium Development Goal 4. Ireland made recommendations.
51. The Islamic Republic of Iran commended the constructive engagement of Bhutan in the UPR process. It noted the drafting of rules and regulations under the Child Care and Protection Act. It expressed appreciation for poverty reduction efforts and programmes. It made recommendations.
52. Italy commended Bhutan for its poverty alleviation efforts, for having taken steps towards ratifying international instruments and for having ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the optional protocols thereto on the involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. It expressed concern regarding child marriage and child labour. Italy made recommendations.
53. Jordan welcomed the enactment of the Domestic Violence Prevention Act, the Child Care and Protection Act and the Anti-Corruption Act, as well as the establishment of the National Commission for Women and Children. Jordan made recommendations.
54. Kazakhstan noted the signing of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the adoption of related domestic legislation, improved education and health care provision, and efforts to combat domestic violence and human trafficking. It welcomed the establishment of the National Commission for Women and Children and improved awareness of human rights. Kazakhstan made recommendations.
55. Kuwait commended progress in poverty alleviation through programmes such as the Rural Economy Advancement Programme and the National Rehabilitation Programme for the most vulnerable groups. Kuwait made a recommendation.
56. Kyrgyzstan noted the recent reduction in poverty and the provision of free education and health care. It expressed support for anti-corruption measures, which had improved the situation. Kyrgyzstan made recommendations.

57. The Lao People's Democratic Republic noted the adoption of human rights legislation and progress in alleviating poverty and promoting gender equality, youth employment and access to free education and health care. It made a recommendation.

58. Latvia applauded the ratification of the optional protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. It highlighted the important role of the human rights special procedures. Latvia made recommendations.

59. Madagascar recognized the strengthened normative and institutional framework and encouraged Bhutan to continue the democratic process. It noted progress in promoting the right to education, children's rights and the right to health. Madagascar made recommendations.

60. Malaysia expressed appreciation for the strengthening of national institutions, as it had previously recommended. It noted the strengthened rule of law and democracy, consolidated by successful elections in 2011 and 2013. Malaysia made a recommendation.

61. Maldives noted progress towards universal education, including for children with disabilities, which required support from the international community. It noted the improved legislative framework. The Gross National Happiness Index had improved development indices. Maldives made recommendations.

62. Regarding women's participation in politics, the delegation stated that, in line with the current Government's pledge to establish legal quotas for women's participation in politics, the National Commission for Women and Children had taken many steps, including the establishment of the Bhutan Network for Empowering Women.

63. To improve access to justice for female victims of violence, the delegation explained, the Domestic Violence Prevention Act of 2013 allowed domestic violence cases to be filed not only by the police but also by a victim, a complainant, a protection officer or a service provider. The involvement of the judiciary in issuing protection orders to victims also improved access to justice for victims.

64. In response to comments on youth unemployment, the delegation stated that the Government was drafting a national employment policy and improving coordination between the private sector and government agencies to better align skills with available jobs. Steps were being taken to establish a business opportunity and information centre to provide credit particularly to small and medium-sized enterprises, and to explore overseas employment opportunities for young people.

65. Mauritius welcomed the parliamentary elections of 2013. It noted that an improved institutional framework was supported by resources and legislation, that primary education was free and compulsory, and that happiness was recognized as a development paradigm. Mauritius made a recommendation.

66. Mexico welcomed the participation of civil society in the preparation of the national report. It expressed concern regarding the lack of ratification of international instruments, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention against Torture and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Mexico made recommendations.

67. Mongolia highlighted the strengthening of democracy and the rule of law as well as new legislation promoting judicial independence and legal reform. It welcomed the signature of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and urged Bhutan to become a party to other instruments. Mongolia made a recommendation.

68. Montenegro noted efforts to improve the institutional and legislative framework. It asked about plans to improve cooperation with international human rights mechanisms and

prevent domestic violence and harmful traditional practices. Montenegro made recommendations.

69. Morocco commended Bhutan for its promotion of the “national happiness” concept. It asked how Bhutan would combat youth unemployment, and for details of planned sustainable solutions to challenges related to education, health care, infrastructure and the economy. Morocco made a recommendation.

70. Myanmar welcomed efforts towards poverty eradication and government programmes to provide free education through grade 10. It noted new human rights legislation. Myanmar made recommendations.

71. Nepal applauded efforts to strengthen democracy, combat gender-based violence and enhance female representation in decision-making. Repatriation of refugees was the only solution to the refugee crisis, and it urged Bhutan to cooperate. Nepal made recommendations.

72. The Netherlands commended Bhutan on its transition to a democratic constitutional monarchy and its efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. It was concerned that refugees wishing to return to Bhutan could not do so. It made recommendations.

73. Nicaragua recognized progress towards improving human rights and commended the provision of support by the international community. It noted the Domestic Violence Prevention Act and the Child Care and Protection Act. Nicaragua made recommendations.

74. Oman noted the enactment of national legislation and efforts towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, and that improving economic conditions, tackling unemployment, alleviating poverty and providing health care and education were national priorities. Oman made a recommendation.

75. Pakistan commended Bhutan for its enactment of several new laws to advance human rights. It welcomed measures towards environmental conservation, which promoted development and economic rights. Pakistan made recommendations.

76. Paraguay noted the reduction in poverty and welcomed legislation on domestic violence, the creation of institutions to protect women and children, and programmes to protect vulnerable groups and empower local governments. Paraguay made recommendations.

77. Peru commended Bhutan for its efforts to consolidate democracy and the rule of law. It welcomed measures to promote civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. It encouraged international cooperation to tackle remaining challenges. Peru made recommendations.

78. The Philippines acknowledged the commitment of Bhutan to strengthening the rule of law, combating domestic violence, reducing the gender gap in tertiary education and increasing women’s participation in politics. It noted the enactment of legislation on human trafficking. It urged Bhutan to cooperate with climate change initiatives. It made recommendations.

79. Portugal welcomed the extending of an invitation to the Special Rapporteur on the right to education, as well as the adoption of the Domestic Violence Prevention Act and the Child Care and Protection Act. It expressed concern regarding gender-based violence. Portugal made recommendations.

80. Saudi Arabia noted progress in protecting children’s rights, providing access to high-quality gender-equal education, and combating domestic violence and human trafficking. It noted the creation of the National Commission for Women and Children. It made recommendations.

81. Serbia welcomed the laws to protect children's rights and prevent domestic violence and encouraged Bhutan to implement them. The National Commission for Women and Children should be enabled to fulfil its mandate. Serbia made a recommendation.

82. Sierra Leone applauded the commitment of Bhutan to strengthening democracy and reducing poverty. Access to health care and good governance had improved. Bhutan should combat gender-based violence, increase women's access to justice and reduce youth unemployment. Sierra Leone made recommendations.

83. Singapore noted efforts to further the rule of law, strengthen judicial capacity and develop human resources. It acknowledged improvements to the education system and efforts to improve equal access to education. Singapore made recommendations.

84. Slovenia welcomed the signing of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It noted that the high incidence of child marriage was a major factor contributing to the significant number of low-birth-weight babies. Slovenia made recommendations.

85. Solomon Islands commended efforts to mainstream gender into development plans and policies and the commitment to collaborating with and supporting civil society organizations, given their critical role in advancing human rights. It made recommendations.

86. South Africa commended the priority given to environmental conservation, socioeconomic development, good governance and the preservation of culture. It encouraged Bhutan to make further efforts to tackle non-communicable diseases and to promote, protect and ensure the fulfilment of human rights. It made recommendations.

87. South Sudan noted the commitment to strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights through the adoption of relevant legislation. It applauded initiatives to enhance democracy, notably through public awareness-raising programmes. It made a recommendation.

88. Spain welcomed measures to promote inclusive education, especially for persons with disabilities, and efforts to combat gender-based violence. It expressed concern about discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation. It made recommendations.

89. Sri Lanka was encouraged by progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, although challenges remained, including insufficient food and nutrition security and chronic malnutrition among a third of children. It noted the commitment to environmental conservation. It made recommendations.

90. The State of Palestine welcomed efforts to ensure that democracy took firm root, but noted that challenges remained. The youth unemployment rate, which was higher than the national average, also remained a concern. The State of Palestine made recommendations.

91. The Sudan highlighted the alternative development model of Bhutan, which was based on the concept of "gross national happiness" and emphasized a more holistic approach to development, with people at its centre. The Sudan made a recommendation.

92. Switzerland welcomed the progress made in strengthening the democratic process. It expressed concern about the situation of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal and the fact that certain ethnic groups continued to suffer discrimination in Bhutan. Switzerland made recommendations.

93. The United Republic of Tanzania commended Bhutan for holding successful elections and establishing development plans, and for its achievements in the areas of economic development, education, health care, food and nutrition security, and youth employment. The United Republic of Tanzania made a recommendation.

94. Thailand welcomed the significant role played by the National Commission for Women and Children and the signing of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2010. It cited remaining challenges, including illegal immigration and macroeconomic management. Thailand made recommendations.

95. Timor-Leste welcomed budgetary allocations to education and health and the priority given to guaranteeing free health services and primary education for all. It lauded progress towards gender equality in education. It made recommendations.

96. Tunisia encouraged Bhutan to continue the Prime Minister's weekly meetings with the people, and to ensure that human rights defenders, journalists and other actors were able to carry out their activities. Tunisia made a recommendation.

97. Turkey welcomed the adoption of legislation and progress towards strengthening the judiciary and combating corruption, achieving gender equality in education, meeting the needs of vulnerable children, reducing poverty and achieving food security. Turkey made recommendations.

98. Turkmenistan welcomed the strengthening of legislative, institutional and policy mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights, including the adoption of relevant legislation, and improvements in prison conditions. Turkmenistan made recommendations.

99. Uganda highlighted achievements, including the provision of free health care and primary education for all, a social safety net for vulnerable groups and progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. Uganda made recommendations.

100. The United Arab Emirates welcomed progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and efforts to ensure social equality and guarantee the rights of all citizens, including social and economic rights. It made a recommendation.

101. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland welcomed the adoption of relevant legislation and calls by the National Commission for Women and Children to support women by empowering them economically. It expressed concern about early marriage and violence against women. It echoed calls for Bhutan to develop self-regulatory mechanisms for the media and adopt freedom of information legislation. It made recommendations.

102. The United States of America commended Bhutan for progress on its democratization agenda. It expressed disappointment at the failure to allow the return of ethnic Bhutanese refugees from camps in Nepal. It voiced concern regarding the fact that laws and practices restricted religious freedom and that consensual sexual acts between adults of the same sex were criminalized. The United States made recommendations.

103. Uruguay commended institutional and legislative changes and efforts to strengthen the judiciary and democracy. It encouraged Bhutan to invite special procedures mandate holders to visit the country. Uruguay made recommendations.

104. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela welcomed institutional and legislative measures to improve the management of public services, with the involvement of all stakeholders, and initiatives to reduce poverty and provide free health-care services. It made recommendations.

105. Viet Nam congratulated Bhutan on its efforts to uphold the rule of law, strengthen democracy and ensure the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by its people. It made recommendations.

106. Yemen took note of the fact that, despite numerous challenges, Bhutan had enacted legislation to promote and protect human rights and strengthen the judiciary, and that it had

built capacity and raised awareness, including by providing legal training on human rights. Yemen made a recommendation.

107. Zambia commended Bhutan for enacting key human rights legislation and for its efforts to provide free health care and education and protect marginalized people. It encouraged Bhutan to continue its efforts to promote and protect human rights. Zambia made recommendations.

108. Afghanistan welcomed the steps taken by Bhutan to promote economic and social rights. It recognized the important role of the National Commission for Women and Children in promoting and protecting the rights of women, children and the disadvantaged and the increasing number of civil society organizations and their growing role. Afghanistan made recommendations.

109. Algeria welcomed the adoption of domestic violence, child protection and anti-corruption legislation and the creation of commissions to oversee efforts in the areas of human rights, women's issues, children's issues and gender equality. Algeria made recommendations.

110. Argentina encouraged Bhutan to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and to accede to the other international human rights instruments to which it was not a party. Argentina recognized the State's concern for and commitment to women's rights. Argentina made recommendations.

111. Armenia encouraged Bhutan to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other international human rights conventions, particularly the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Armenia expressed concern regarding the number of young people who had never attended school. Armenia made recommendations.

112. Australia commended Bhutan for having held successful elections in 2013, for its progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, for its commitment to improving living standards and for its legal reforms to address human rights issues. It expressed concern about the situation of Bhutanese refugees living in Nepal. Australia made recommendations.

113. In response to the questions raised regarding freedom of religion, the delegation explained that the Bhutanese people had the freedom to embrace and practise any religion of their choosing. The delegation referred to article 7, paragraph 4 of the Constitution, which guaranteed the right to practise any religion provided a person was not compelled to belong to a faith by means of coercion or inducement.

114. Regarding questions relating to electoral issues, the delegation explained that Bhutanese citizens who were at least 18 years old were entitled to vote. However, according to the Constitution and the Election Act of 2008, members of the royal family, religious figures and members of religious institutions could neither participate in the electoral process nor join political parties, as they were meant to remain above politics, without promoting any party or candidate in an election. The Election Commission was an independent entity, as stipulated in the Constitution and the Election Act.

115. Regarding the issue of people in refugee camps in eastern Nepal, the delegation explained that the problem was not a straightforward refugee situation but rather arose from illegal economic immigration. The root cause was the massive movement of people in the region who suffered from extreme poverty, environmental degradation and political instability. There were more than 130,000 non-Bhutanese workers in Bhutan – more than in the 1990s. Some married local people in order to be able to stay in Bhutan, and some even requested citizenship. The Governments of Bhutan and Nepal had agreed that there were a variety of people in the camps, including non-Bhutanese people. The delegation expressed

appreciation for the resettlement of refugees to third countries by the core group of countries.

116. Responding to the questions regarding children's rights, the delegation explained that Bhutan was a member of the South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children and was working to address child protection issues, such as child marriage, corporal punishment and harmful traditional practices.

117. In conclusion, the delegation thanked all participating member States for their participation. Bhutan valued the recommendations received and would seriously consider them.

II. Conclusions and/or recommendations**

118. **The following recommendations formulated during the interactive dialogue enjoy the support of Bhutan:**

118.1 **Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (Chad);**

118.2 **Continue to review national legislation in order to ensure that it is in line with the State's international human rights obligations (Turkmenistan);**

118.3 **Establish a national child welfare committee, as provided for by the Child Care and Protection Act (South Africa);**

118.4 **Establish an effective organization within the Government for implementing the child protection programme as an initial step (Turkey);**

118.5 **Continue providing assistance to the National Commission for Women and Children through capacity-building and providing additional human resources and technical expertise (Afghanistan);**

118.6 **Further its endeavours with regard to the smooth and productive activity of the Women and Child Protection Division within the country (Azerbaijan);**

118.7 **Step up efforts on monitoring and evaluation of the activities related to women's empowerment and child protection through development of an appropriate monitoring system (Belarus);**

118.8 **Strengthen the monitoring and evaluation efforts of women's empowerment and child protection through development of appropriate monitoring mechanisms (Ethiopia);**

118.9 **Continue developing the institutional framework with respect to the promotion and protection of human rights (Jordan);**

118.10 **Pursue its commitment to developing human resources and to strengthening national social and political institutions in order to enhance its capacity to fulfil its international human rights obligations (Timor-Leste);**

118.11 **Strengthen its national efforts in promoting human rights education and training (Egypt);**

** The conclusions and recommendations have not been edited.

- 118.12 Continue to seek assistance from the United Nations system and the international community in order to promote human rights awareness throughout the country (Timor-Leste);
- 118.13 Continue its cooperation with the United Nations and other international organizations to overcome the remaining constraints and challenges (Lao People's Democratic Republic);
- 118.14 Request from the international community the necessary help and technical assistance to meet its obligations under international conventions and treaties (Morocco);
- 118.15 Continue its efforts to implement its international human rights obligations (Pakistan);
- 118.16 Call for technical assistance for capacity-building to fulfil international treaty reporting obligations (Uganda);
- 118.17 Continue its policies in improving women's rights (Jordan);
- 118.18 Ensure the protection and advancement of women's rights, especially in rural areas, and, in particular, promoting wider participation of women in politics and decision-making on national and local levels and strengthening combating violence against women and children (Czech Republic);
- 118.19 Pay further attention to the issue of domestic violence, the gender gap in tertiary education and women's participation in politics (Kyrgyzstan);
- 118.20. Formulate awareness-raising activities as part of efforts to prevent the practice of child marriage, and consider improving the availability of antenatal and postnatal services to women (Slovenia);
- 118.21 Continue taking the necessary measures to promote the rights of children and women (Nicaragua);
- 118.22 Take further measures to address violence against women and shortcomings concerning the enjoyment of rights by women and girls (Portugal);
- 118.23 Continue its efforts to raise awareness in rural communities about marriage laws and the dangers of child, early and forced marriage (Canada);
- 118.24 Continue to provide for all needs of vulnerable children, and especially children from poor socioeconomic backgrounds (Islamic Republic of Iran);
- 118.25 Continue efforts to provide social care for children at risk, especially those from socioeconomically poor backgrounds (Yemen);
- 118.26 Continue efforts to promote children's rights and the right to education (Saudi Arabia);
- 118.27 Apply the law of 2011 in relation to the protection of children (Madagascar);
- 118.28 Take measures to effectively implement the Plan of Action for Child Protection (Plurinational State of Bolivia);
- 118.29 Expedite the preparation and adoption of norms and regulations to implement the provisions of the Child Adoption Act and the 2011 Child Care and Protection Act (Plurinational State of Bolivia);

- 118.30 Continue with measures to improve the conditions of access to education and to health services for all, without discrimination (Algeria);
- 118.31 Continue to give priority attention to the protection of women and children from domestic violence, including by implementing and closely monitoring the impact of the Domestic Violence Prevention Act (Germany);
- 118.32 Adopt measures to combat violence against women, including domestic violence (France);
- 118.33 Strengthen measures to combat gender-based violence, particularly by emphasizing awareness-raising in education and supporting programmes for the economic empowerment of women, especially in rural areas (Spain);
- 118.34 Continue to enhance its engagement with its regional and international partners to facilitate building of capacities in countering domestic and gender-based violence and human trafficking, especially of women and children (Philippines);
- 118.35 Continue efforts to prevent and combat trafficking in human beings, including in the framework of training professionals and increasing the level of awareness (Belarus);
- 118.36 Increase its efforts to prevent unacceptable forms of child labour (Italy);
- 118.37 Carry on with measures to ensure the effective and impartial enforcement of the laws and to end impunity in cases of domestic violence (Argentina);
- 118.38 Continue to improve the rule of law and undertake further measures to enhance the capacity of its law enforcement agencies (Singapore);
- 118.39 Strengthen the rule of law and good governance, including capacity-building for the law enforcement system and national institutions on human rights (Viet Nam);
- 118.40 Take steps to expedite public access to information through the right to information bill (India);
- 118.41 Facilitate the growth and development of civil society organizations in the country (Afghanistan);
- 118.42 Pursue efforts towards a solid democratic culture, particularly the participation of women in political life and in senior civil service posts (Switzerland);
- 118.43 Continue developing a long-standing democratic culture, including by increasing the participation of women in decision-making and intensifying efforts to strengthen accountability (State of Palestine);
- 118.44 Take further steps in promoting political participation of women (Kazakhstan);
- 118.45 Continue its advocacy campaign to encourage greater participation by women in the political process at the national and local levels (Indonesia);
- 118.46 Take measures to increase the political participation of women (India);
- 118.47 Encourage greater participation of women in the political process (Malaysia);

- 118.48 **Develop gender policies that allow a wider participation of women in politics (Paraguay);**
- 118.49 **Undertake campaigns to encourage greater women's participation in politics (Cambodia);**
- 118.50 **Review and address gaps in education and training policies and outline strategies to ensure employment growth, improve working conditions and provide equal opportunities (State of Palestine);**
- 118.51 **Develop a comprehensive national policy and strategic plans to create jobs and provide equal opportunities (Bahrain);**
- 118.52 **Continue efforts to foster economic growth and to enhance employment opportunities (Oman);**
- 118.53 **Intensify efforts to implement the National Employment Policy in creating more employment opportunities for the youth population (Islamic Republic of Iran);**
- 118.54 **Continue to take effective measures in favour of youth employment (China);**
- 118.55 **Continue to implement youth unemployment programmes in order to produce a skilled workforce to meet the requirements of the labour market and promote youth entrepreneurship (Brunei Darussalam);**
- 118.56 **Attach more attention to job creation, especially addressing youth unemployment (Turkey);**
- 118.57 **Remunerate participation in internship programmes and accompany them with technical education training through shared programmes with the country's economic and industrial sector (Mexico);**
- 118.58 **Continue the implementation of a more concrete system of social protection through the initiatives listed in the national report, and call on the international community to support those national efforts (Cuba);**
- 118.59 **Continue the programmes related to poverty reduction and continue the efforts to create a stronger system of social protection (Kuwait);**
- 118.60 **Further develop its sound social policies in order to increase the quality of life of its people, particularly in the neediest areas (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela);**
- 118.61 **Continue to develop its human resources for further harmonizing and mainstreaming international obligations into domestic legislation and practices, with more focus on employment, education, health care, food security and social welfare, especially in rural and remote areas (Viet Nam);**
- 118.62 **Continue intensifying its efforts in poverty eradication and economic development with a view to graduating from the least developed country category by 2020 (United Republic of Tanzania);**
- 118.63 **Continue its efforts to further reduce poverty, particularly in rural areas (Cambodia);**
- 118.64 **Make more efforts to reduce poverty, leading to balanced and inclusive growth (China);**
- 118.65 **Continue to implement public policies to combat poverty (Paraguay);**

- 118.66 Intensify the progress made to eliminate poverty by identifying the critical bottlenecks in society (Eritrea);
- 118.67 Continue its measures for poverty reduction, including reduction of multi-dimensional poverty (Azerbaijan);
- 118.68 Take concrete measures to reduce multi-dimensional poverty (Islamic Republic of Iran);
- 118.69 Continue addressing the challenges in reducing multi-dimensional poverty (Myanmar);
- 118.70 Continue to mobilize internal resources and capacity while strengthening cooperation with partners and United Nations agencies to address poverty challenges (Eritrea);
- 118.71 Promote and protect the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas (Plurinational State of Bolivia);
- 118.72 Step up its efforts to further reduce poverty, particularly in rural areas (Indonesia);
- 118.73 Allocate sufficient resources for potable water projects, especially in rural and marginalized areas (Mexico);
- 118.74 Continue the process of strengthening free health care and free education in remote areas as well as strengthening the *kidu* welfare system for the benefit of vulnerable populations (United Arab Emirates);
- 118.75 Continue to provide free health services, fully implementing the consolidated National Health Policy, which was launched in July 2011 (Democratic People's Republic of Korea);
- 118.76 Further consolidate its successful health programmes that provide medical care that is universal, free and of quality for all Bhutanese (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela);
- 118.77 Continue its efforts to improve the quality of health services for mothers and children, including the education of pregnant women and mothers with a view to decreasing maternal and neonatal mortality rates, and to seek the assistance of the international community with a view to providing better health services to the people (Mauritius);
- 118.78 Adopt a comprehensive approach that includes providing a healthy environment, safe water and sanitation and proper childcare, encouraging exclusive breastfeeding and improving the education and the health of mothers, in order to reduce the mortality rate of children under 5 (Ireland);
- 118.79 Share its experiences in provision of free education to all children (Democratic People's Republic of Korea);
- 118.80 Continue the ongoing efforts to promote inclusive education (Eritrea);
- 118.81 Further develop the quality education policies in the country, paying special attention to providing school services to children in remote and difficult locations (Kazakhstan);
- 118.82 Strengthen the Government's efforts to eliminate illiteracy, particularly in remote and difficult locations (Kyrgyzstan);

- 118.83 Continue to improve its education system and ensure equitable access to quality education for its people (Singapore);
- 118.84 Continue taking measures to further promote and guarantee the right to education in the country, and particularly to increase school attendance among young people (Armenia);
- 118.85 Take further measures to address the decline of female enrolment in schools, in order to ensure that young women complete their secondary education (Portugal);
- 118.86 Continue programmes aimed at improving the level of education through financial support, especially for girls belonging to poor families (Bahrain);
- 118.87 Further address the gender disparity in school enrolment rates at the tertiary level (Myanmar);
- 118.88 Make use of the educational process to share the culture of human rights and raise awareness of those rights (Saudi Arabia);
- 118.89 Continue its efforts to enhance access to quality education for all its young citizens, especially those with special needs (Brunei Darussalam);
- 118.90 Work closely with the international community towards the priority goal of education for all, especially children with disabilities (Maldives);
- 118.91 Continue implementing the Non-Formal Education programme for adults, including persons with disabilities (South Sudan);
- 118.92 Further develop measures permitting the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in economic, political, social and cultural life, using a human-rights-based approach (Spain);
- 118.93 Intensify efforts to operationalize the concept of gross national happiness and the tools used to monitor its implementation in the development process (Sudan);
- 118.94 Continue to strengthen measures to achieve progress in the areas identified in the national development plan, through appropriate means (Sri Lanka);
- 118.95 Request development assistance to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (Ethiopia);
- 118.96 Continue its fight against poverty and the negative impacts of climate change with support from the international community (Bangladesh);
- 118.97 Continue to avail itself of technical assistance and international cooperation in its efforts relating to disaster management and preparedness as well as climate change mitigation (Maldives);
- 118.98 Develop and submit proposals for capacity development assistance in disaster management; proposals might include, for example, strengthening the knowledge of relevant national stakeholders of the impact of climate change and of sound disaster management from a human rights perspective (Solomon Islands);
- 118.99 Continue to strengthen its environmental conservation efforts, which contribute to the global efforts to safeguard the common heritage of humankind (Sri Lanka);

118.100 Continue to strengthen its environmental conservation efforts, which contribute significantly to global efforts to safeguard the common heritage of mankind (Pakistan);

118.101 Request technical assistance and cooperation, as deemed appropriate, from the international community, including relevant United Nations and other specialized agencies, with a view to ensuring the promotion and protection of the full spectrum of human rights of its people (Mongolia);

118.102 Call for technical assistance for gender development, women's empowerment, child protection, prevention of trafficking in persons and disaster management (Uganda);

118.103 Continue its efforts to strengthen its anti-corruption legislation and institutional framework (Azerbaijan).

119. Bhutan considers that recommendation 118.1 above has already been implemented.

120. Bhutan will examine the following recommendations and provide responses concerning them in due time, but no later than the twenty-seventh session of the Human Rights Council, to be held in September 2014:

120.1 Continue extending its international commitments and consider ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Latvia); continue its efforts to establish a legal framework to protect human rights by ratifying core instruments, especially the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (France); take steps to ratify the core human rights conventions, in particular the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Sierra Leone); ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Austria); accede to the international human rights instruments, in particular the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Peru); ratify all core international human rights treaties, most notably the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Germany); ratify or accede to the main instruments on human rights, in particular the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Madagascar); ratify the international human rights instruments, particularly the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Algeria); ratify the other core human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, without delay (Ghana); ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Tunisia); ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Botswana); ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Gabon); accede to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its protocols (Uruguay);

120.2 Consider the possibility of acceding to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Egypt); consider ratifying and implementing international human rights treaties such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Zambia); continue its efforts to establish a legal framework to protect human rights by ratifying core instruments, especially the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (France); take steps to ratify the core human rights conventions, in particular the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Sierra Leone); ratify the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Austria); accede to the international human rights instruments, in particular the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Peru); ratify all core international human rights treaties, most

notably the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Germany); ratify or accede to the main instruments on human rights, in particular the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Madagascar); ratify the international human rights instruments, particularly the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Algeria); ratify the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Tunisia); ratify the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and its Optional Protocol (Portugal); accede to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Uruguay); sign and ratify the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and its Optional Protocol (Spain);

120.3 Continue its efforts to establish a legal framework to protect human rights by ratifying core instruments, especially the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (France); ratify the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, signed in 1973 (Peru); ratify or accede to the main instruments on human rights, in particular the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Madagascar); ratify the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Tunisia); accede to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Gabon); ratify the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Chad);

120.4 Continue extending its international commitments and consider ratification of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Latvia); take steps to ratify the core human rights conventions, in particular the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Sierra Leone); ratify all core international human rights treaties, most notably the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Germany); ratify or accede to the main instruments on human rights, in particular the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Madagascar); ratify the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Tunisia); ratify the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, as previously recommended (Denmark); accede to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Uruguay);

120.5 Ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Switzerland); ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);

120.6 Consider the possibility of acceding to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (Egypt); consider acceding to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (Philippines); ratify the international human rights instruments, particularly the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All

Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (Algeria); ratify the other core human rights treaties, including the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, without delay (Ghana);

120.7 **Consider ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at the earliest opportunity (Thailand); continue its efforts to establish a legal framework to protect human rights by ratifying core instruments, especially the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, signed by Bhutan in 2010 (France); ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Austria); ratify the international human rights instruments, particularly the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Algeria); ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol (Spain);**

120.8 **Consider acceding to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (Zambia); continue its efforts to establish a legal framework to protect human rights by ratifying core instruments, especially the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (France); accede to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (Uruguay);**

120.9 **Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Brazil);**

120.10 **Consider ratifying the main international human rights instruments not ratified, including the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (Paraguay); continue extending its international commitments and consider ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (Latvia); consider the possibility of acceding to the major international human rights treaties, including the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (Italy); ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (Austria); ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (Tunisia); accede to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (Botswana); accede to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (Australia); accede to and fully align its national legislation with the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, including by incorporating provisions to cooperate promptly and fully with the Court and investigate and prosecute genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes effectively before its national courts, and accede to the Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Court (Netherlands);**

120.11 **Consider becoming a member of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and ratifying the core ILO conventions (Austria); consider acceding to ILO Convention No. 189 (2011) concerning decent work for domestic workers (Philippines); ratify ILO Convention No. 182 (1999), concerning the prohibition and immediate action for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, and No. 138 (173) on the minimum age for admission to employment (Mexico);**

120.12 **Step up efforts to accede to the Trafficking in Persons Protocol (Philippines);**

120.13 **Accede to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Armenia);**

- 120.14 **Accede to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness (Canada);**
- 120.15 **Ratify the third Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Portugal);**
- 120.16 **Continue efforts to accede to the international human rights treaties (Kazakhstan);**
- 120.17 **Establish a relationship of constant cooperation with the United Nations human rights mechanisms (Paraguay);**
- 120.18 **Improve cooperation with the United Nations treaty bodies, including by incorporating and implementing international human rights law standards (Montenegro);**
- 120.19 **Step up cooperation with human rights bodies and consider extending a standing invitation to special procedures mandate holders, so as to enhance technical assistance and contribute to the overall improvement of standard setting in the country (Serbia);**
- 120.20 **Consider further cooperation with the international human rights monitoring mechanisms, including treaty bodies and special procedures of the Human Rights Council (Turkmenistan);**
- 120.21 **Collaborate with treaty bodies and special procedures mandate holders (Chad);**
- 120.22 **Continue to establish cooperation with international human rights mechanisms and consider extending a standing invitation to all special procedures mandate holders of the Human Rights Council (Solomon Islands);**
- 120.23 **Consider issuing a standing invitation to the special procedures mandate holders (Slovenia);**
- 120.24 **Extend an open and standing invitation to the special procedure mandate holders to visit Bhutan (Peru); extend a standing invitation to all United Nations Human Rights Council special procedures mandate holders (Montenegro);**
- 120.25 **Strengthen its cooperation with the special procedures of the Human Rights Council by extending a standing invitation to all special procedures mandate holders (Latvia);**
- 120.26 **Accept requests for visits by United Nations special procedures mandate holders, including the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief (France);**
- 120.27 **Invite without delay the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief to visit the country, and issue a standing invitation to all special procedures mandate holders (Czech Republic);**
- 120.28 **Accept the request made by the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief to visit Bhutan (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);**
- 120.29 **Accept the visit request of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, and consider extending a standing invitation to all special procedures mandate holders of the Human Rights Council (Ireland);**

- 120.30 Undertake further actions in order to prevent child marriages (Italy);
- 120.31 Amend relevant legislation in order to ensure civil registration for all children, including fatherless children (Austria);
- 120.32 Guarantee the fundamental rights of all the country's inhabitants without discrimination and reform the Citizenship Act accordingly (Switzerland);
- 120.33 Harmonize the procedure for transmitting Bhutanese nationality in order to allow women to transmit Bhutanese nationality to their children on the same terms as men (France);
- 120.34 Continue taking measures for the protection of the rights of senior citizens, children, persons with disabilities and minorities while giving utmost priority to the provision of social security in all regions of the country (Nepal);
- 120.35 Continue working to promote the rights of persons with disabilities and mainstreaming the rights of minorities and vulnerable groups in the social programmes and projects of the Government (Nicaragua);
- 120.36 Consider prohibition of the use of corporal punishment of children in all settings (Zambia);
- 120.37 Strengthen gender awareness through the incorporation of content with a human rights approach into formal and informal education in order to eradicate violence against women (Costa Rica);
- 120.38 Take measures, in law and in practice, to end all forms of child labour, in accordance with the highest international standards (Costa Rica);
- 120.39 Improve equal access to the legal aid system, in particular for poor and marginalized groups (Austria);
- 120.40 Decriminalize sexual acts between consenting adults of the same sex (United States of America, France);
- 120.41 Proceed to the abolition of existing legislation criminalizing relations between persons of the same sex (Spain);
- 120.42 Consider amending legislation criminalizing relations between persons of the same sex (Argentina);
- 120.43 Continue to provide, in accordance with its obligations under international human rights law, the widest possible protection and support for the family as the natural and fundamental unit of society (Egypt);
- 120.44 Review its laws and practices relating to religious groups to ensure that all persons, religious denominations and institutions feel free to associate and practice their religious beliefs (Sierra Leone);
- 120.45 Protect religious freedom by allowing individuals to practise their religion freely, and provide religious organizations equal opportunities to obtain legal status (United States of America);
- 120.46 Further enhance the environment for the development of civil society organizations, including in the areas of legal awareness-raising, advocacy and human rights monitoring (Austria);
- 120.47 Continue efforts to make its democratization process more inclusive and development-oriented (Nepal);

120.48 Enact amendments to the Electoral Code and ensure broader participation of all citizens in the electoral process and equal enjoyment of the right to vote and to stand for election (Czech Republic);

120.49 Establish a comprehensive and institutionalized national social security policy (South Africa);

120.50 Intensify efforts to make primary education compulsory, free of all costs and accessible to all children, with the implementation of additional measures to ensure the right to education for children from ethnic minorities (Brazil);

120.51 Strengthen measures to ensure inclusion of and respect for the rights of all ethnic and religious communities (Canada);

120.52 Give favourable consideration to the return from Nepal of those refugees with compelling humanitarian needs (Australia);

120.53 Contribute to an acceptable solution for the people living in refugee camps and give particular attention to the elderly and to those who have been separated from their families (Germany);

120.54 Reinvigorate the dialogue with neighbouring countries in order to allow for the return of Bhutanese refugees still living in camps across the border (Austria); intensify its efforts to resolve, through bilateral discussions, the issues relating to displaced persons formerly resident in the country and currently living in a neighbouring country (Sierra Leone); carry on a dialogue with Nepal to find acceptable solutions for the remaining Bhutanese refugees of Nepali origin in Nepalese refugee camps (Czech Republic);

120.55 Continue efforts to ensure the promotion and protection of the rights of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, especially those already in camps (Zambia);

120.56 Allow voluntary repatriation of ethnic Nepali Bhutanese refugees to Bhutan (United States of America);

120.57 Resume bilateral negotiations with Nepal and cooperate with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to facilitate the voluntary return of refugees to Bhutan and focus in particular on addressing cases involving compelling humanitarian concerns (Netherlands);

120.58 Step up efforts, together with Nepal, to find a lasting solution to the situation of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal (France);

120.59 Take the necessary measures to allow the Bhutanese refugees who wish to return to Bhutan to do so safely and in conditions that respect their rights (Switzerland);

120.60 Step up efforts to ensure that the country's immigration laws and regulations are in line with its international human rights obligations (Thailand).

121. 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

[English only]

Composition of the delegation

The delegation of Bhutan was headed by H. E. Mr. Lyonpo Damcho Dorji, Minister for Home and Cultural Affairs, and composed of the following members:

- H. E. Mr. Yeshey Dorji, Foreign Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA);
 - Ambassador Sonam T. Rabgye, Director-General, PPD, MFA;
 - Mr. Rinchen Kuentsyl, Deputy Chief, PPD, MFA;
 - Ms. Metho Dema, Assistant Desk Office, PPD, MFA;
 - Mr. Thinley Namgyel, Director, Gross National Happiness Commission;
 - Ms. Dechen Zam, Chief Planning Officer, Ministry of Education;
 - Mr. Sonam Tashi, Deputy Chief Attorney, Office of the Attorney General;
 - Ms. Phintsho Choeden, Director-General, National Commission for Women and Children;
 - Ms. Dorji Ohm, Executive-Director, Youth Development Fund;
 - H. E. Mr. Daw Penjo, Ambassador and Permanent Representative;
 - Mr. Kinley Wangchuk, Minister Counsellor;
 - Ms. Chening Peldon, Counsellor;
 - Ms. Tashi Peldon, First Secretary;
 - Ms. Pema Tshomo, Second Secretary.
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