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UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW

Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review

Poland

Addendum

**Views on conclusions and/or recommendations, voluntary commitments and replies presented
by the State under review**

Views on conclusions and/or recommendations, voluntary commitments and replies presented by the State under review

1. The views expressed by Poland on the recommendations formulated during the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) are contained in document A/HRC/30/Add.2.
2. Poland reiterated that the UPR constitutes one of the *raisons d'être* of the Human Rights Council. Therefore, the Council's credibility rests largely on the success of the UPR process. It believes that with the strong commitment of all the stakeholders, the UPR can and will make a difference on the ground by improving the human rights situation in the States under review.
3. In this regard, Poland highly values all comments, questions and recommendations formulated in the course of the UPR process, which will allow it to better identify key challenges it is facing in the field of the human rights. Poland commits itself to improving and further consolidating the national system of the protection and promotion of human rights on the basis of the UPR outcome. In this context, Poland also stands ready to share with other countries its best practices and experience concerning the human rights. It also shared the following commitments and pledges: (a) Poland will ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights aiming at the abolition of death penalty; (b) Measures will be introduced to streamline the implementation of the recommendations of the Human Rights Committee.
4. The mandate of the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Matters Concerning the European Court of Human Rights will be extended to integrate therewith decisions of the Human Rights Committee.
5. Poland is also committed to continuing actions to reduce poverty and social exclusion, which will remain a priority in our national social policy. Poland indicated that a new national programme on social security and social integration for 2008-2010, now under preparation, will strengthen assistance to families for the purpose of counteracting poverty and social exclusion of children. These actions are meant to equalize the opportunities of families and children, i.e. to eliminate educational deficits and improve access to services that will enable parents to reconcile their professional activities with the upbringing of children. In addition, the national programme will determine specific goals, including, in particular, lowering the poverty index and the index of poverty risk among children. To achieve that the following actions will be undertaken by Poland:
 - Improvement of family incomes;
 - Development of the child day-care service system;
 - Leveling educational opportunities of and support for school-age children from poor families;
 - Consolidating the system of assistance to families, family counseling; improvement of income support.
6. The development of cooperation with NGOs will also contribute to the effective combating of poverty and social exclusion.
7. Poland pledges to further improve the situation of disabled persons. Due to its limited effectiveness, a review of the current system of vocational and social rehabilitation and employment of disabled persons, particularly with regard to vocational activation, will be carried out.

8. Poland will strengthen measures to reduce domestic violence. It indicated that current solutions need to be adjusted in light of the insufficient social awareness of the threats domestic violence poses to individuals, families and society as a whole, as well as insufficient assistance to victims of violence. An annual evaluation of the implementation of the National Programme to Counter Domestic Violence for 2006-2016 will constitute the basis for its adjustment to actual needs. Eradication of violence from the family environment can first and foremost be achieved through the implementation of programmes promoting positive methods of childrearing and partnership in the family, some of which are carried out in collaboration with the European Union and the Council of Europe. In 2008 the law against domestic violence and the National Programme to Counter Domestic Violence will be amended, resulting in:

- A complete ban on corporal punishment, and financial support for the implementation of projects against domestic violence at municipal level within the framework of the National Programme to Counter Domestic Violence;
- The introduction of a warrant obliging the perpetrator to leave the house immediately after an incident of violence is reported by the victim;
- The introduction of cost-free forensic medical examinations.

9. Poland will reinforce actions to implement equal treatment of women and men. A national programme for gender equality for the years 2009-2013 will be prepared, and the draft, on which consultations will be held with social partners and NGO representatives, covers the following areas of action:

- Equal economic independence of women and men, including equality in the labour market;
- Reconciliation of family life and career;
- Participation in political life and decision-making;
- Equality in the area of health care;
- Eradication of all forms of gender-driven violence;
- Eradication of gender stereotypes, including in schoolbooks and school curricula;
- Promotion of gender equality in external relations and development policy.

10. The action plan for gender equality will reinforce the achievements of the Beijing Platform for Action and relevant international conventions such as CEDAW.

11. In 2008-2013, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy will carry out two projects involving research, training and promotion. The first one will be devoted to the reconciliation of career and family roles of women and men, and the second –will be on the socio-economic activation of women at local and regional levels.

12. In accordance with the draft law on equal treatment, the minister responsible for family matters and equal treatment, using data and analyses from independent research and in conjunction with other relevant bodies, will prepare a national programme against discrimination. The programme will determine adequate measures to:

- Raise social awareness of the root causes and effects of discrimination;
- Counteract violations of the principle of equal treatment;
- Establish cooperation with relevant social partners involved in implementing equal treatment.

13. Poland will continue to combat and counteract racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and hate crimes. Although these phenomena are not common in Poland, the Government is nevertheless determined to implement a wide catalogue of preventive measures of an institutional, legal and educational nature. Poland will continue implementing and evaluating its Programme for the Roma community, the National Programme against Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance 2004-2009, and the law enforcement officer programme for combating hate crimes. Moreover, the existing network of Human Rights Advisers attached to the Police Commander in Chief and Voivodship Police Commanders in Chief will conduct ongoing monitoring of incidents, trends and crimes related to discrimination and misconduct of law enforcement authorities. They will also make analyses and elaborate proposals on the improvement of the quality and methods of the work of the law enforcement. It is also planned to create the institution of Human Rights Advisers attached to the Border Guard.

14. Poland will continue to participate in the World Programme for Human Rights Education, within the first stage of which education on human rights has been introduced into the core curricula of general education at primary and middle schools. Moreover, the Ministry of National Education has launched a number of other measures to promote education on human rights and the rights of child. Training to prepare activities for the advancement of human rights and combating discrimination in local communities has been carried out under numerous projects.

15. Additional measures to level educational opportunities will be introduced. Poland will spare no effort to enable pre-school age children to enjoy their rights, among others through the creation of amenable conditions for developing various forms of pre-school education, particularly in rural areas. The planned strategy for the development of education in rural areas for 2007-2013 will be attuned to the Government Programme for the development of education in rural areas in the years 2008-2013. The strategic aim of the programme is to upgrade the quality and level of education in rural areas. Implementation of the measures facilitating access children from rural areas and small towns to quality education will continue until 2013.

16. In conclusion, the delegation of Poland reiterated that Poland is fully committed to make the UPR process a success and to ensure that it will improve the situation of human rights at the national level. It stated that no country has a perfect human rights record and Poland is not being an exception. Poland is aware of its shortcomings in this field and it has been very clear about this in the national report and during the UPR process. What we need is to be constantly ready to respond to the new challenges in the promotion and protection of human rights. In this context Poland is convinced that the value of the UPR exercise lies not only in the presentation of human rights achievements but in particular in the identification of the key challenges that are still to be tackled. Poland perceives the recommendations made in the course of the UPR process as an immense added value for further improvement of the human rights situations on the ground. Many of them reflect the challenges that Poland has already identified and is in the process of addressing.

17. The delegation of Poland thanked the representatives of the civil society for their comments concerning the examination of the situation of human rights in the country. It stressed that the principles of openness and inclusion are of utmost importance in the process of UPR, it refers in particular to the involvement of the civil society. In this context, the delegation does hope that the lessons that were drawn from this experience will allow Poland to improve communication and cooperation with non-governmental organizations in the future. It noted that issues raised during the debate by the NGO's, e.g. the problem of overcrowding in prisons, access to abortion, equal treatment, cases of discrimination based on sexual orientation, the question of secret flights and secret detention centres, pre-trial detention and domestic violence, have already been discussed during the interactive dialogue that took place on the 14th of April. Some of them are also covered

by recommendations formulated by the UPR Working Group - comments to them are to be found in the written responses of the Government to these recommendations as contained in document A/HRC/8/30/Add.2.
