

ADVANCE QUESTIONS TO VANUATU

CZECH REPUBLIC

- Does the Government of Vanuatu intend to accede to the remaining core human rights instruments, such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT) and the Optional Protocol thereto (OP CAT)?
- Has the Government of Vanuatu considered ratifying the Conventions and protocols relating to the status of refugees and stateless persons?

GERMANY

- Pursuant to reports of the UN and NGO Stakeholders there is no gender equality in Vanuatu due to social and cultural norms and practices as well as patriarchal attitudes and deep rooted-stereotypes. Discrimination against women exists, inter alia, in customary and domestic law and with regard to access to education and employment. Germany would like to know which measures the Government envisages to improve the situation of women in Vanuatu.

THE NETHERLANDS

- The Netherlands congratulates Vanuatu for signing the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICPPR) in 2007. Does the Government have the intention to also accede to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and ratify the UN Convention Against Corruption?
- The Netherlands congratulates the Vanuatu Parliament for passing the Family Protection Act after 11 years of national debate. This is a positive step to combat domestic violence. What steps is the Government taking and what resources are being allocated to ensure the Act's effective implementation?
- Although the equal status between men and women is guaranteed in the Constitution of Vanuatu, the Netherlands shares NGO concerns that enforcement of these constitutional provisions is lacking in certain areas. For instance, although the Government's national report emphasises that many women own leaseholds, customary rules in the context of land ownership are often used to deny women or their direct descendants the sharing of land resources equally with those who are descendants of the male lineage. NGOs have noted that customary law can also be used to deny women equality in other areas, despite Constitutional guarantees. The Netherlands acknowledges that the Government is aware of these conflicts between human rights and customs and traditions and also between human rights and Christian values. Nonetheless, how does the Government plan to address these difficult issues to ensure facto equality?
- The Constitution of Vanuatu provides for the protection against discrimination on a range of grounds. These, however, do not include disadvantages such as disability, economic

status, sexual orientation or living with HIV/AIDS. Does the Government plan to amend the Constitution to include such disadvantages as prohibited grounds for discrimination?

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

- Could you please elaborate further on the role civil society in Vanuatu played in the preparation of your national report for this process?
- Could you please elaborate on the steps that the Government of Vanuatu is taking to develop a national human rights institution in Vanuatu in full compliance with the Paris Principles?
- Could you please tell us what the Government of Vanuatu is doing to ensure incorporation of obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).
- What measures are being taken to put into practice 'The Family Protection Act' - and in so doing protect vulnerable women from domestic violence?
- We would be interested to hear more about Vanuatu's development of a policy to provide free education. What other measures which are being developed to ensure that access to education is improved for those students who face financial and logistical constraints in attending school.
