

Amnesty International

*Oral statement on the outcome on Ghana under the UPR*

*11 June 2008*

*Check against delivery*

Mr. President,

Amnesty International welcomes recommendations made by several states regarding the use of the death penalty in Ghana, including to establish a moratorium on executions and to remove the death penalty from domestic law. However, despite a de facto moratorium on executions being in place in the country, Ghana was not able to support these recommendations in the Working Group. We welcome that no executions have been carried out for the past 15 years, but are concerned that death sentences continue to be handed down, including as recently as earlier this week, and that over 100 prisoners remain on death row. Amnesty International hopes that the government will take the opportunity of the Council's adoption of the UPR outcome to declare its respect for the right to life, including by committing to act on these recommendations as soon as possible.

During the review, Ghana was encouraged to complete the reform of the judicial system and Amnesty International would like to build on this recommendation by highlighting the need to urgently address the issue of prison conditions, including the

problem of acute overcrowding. In doing so, Amnesty International calls on the government to establish an effective system of records of all inmates, and to ensure that national and international organizations are granted access to prisons upon their request.

Further on the need for judicial reform, Amnesty International is concerned at reports suggesting that the police fail to bring suspects before a judge within 48 hours of arrest, as guaranteed in Ghana's Constitution. In implementing reform of the judicial system, Amnesty International encourages the government to ensure that anyone held is charged with a recognizable criminal offence or released; and that the cases of those awaiting trial are regularly reviewed to ensure that their right to a fair trial within a reasonable time is respected.

Thank you, Mr President