

Mr. President,

It is a great honour for me to address this meeting devoted to the adoption of the outcome of Denmark's first Universal Periodic Review (UPR). It has been a privilege to be given this opportunity to engage in an open and constructive dialogue with members of the Human Rights Council and observer states on the human rights situation in Denmark.

Denmark is a strong supporter of the UPR mechanism and having taken part in the process ourselves we now have an even better understanding of the important role the UPR plays in promoting human rights domestically and internationally.

The UPR is a mechanism with a true potential to improve human rights on the ground for the benefit of all individuals around the world. It provides each involved state with a clear target and a tool box for the development of the domestic human rights agenda, and it represents a unique opportunity to states to undertake an open and candid debate on human rights among peer states and with civil society. For particularly those reasons, Denmark strongly supports the UPR mechanism.

The UPR process has received considerable attention and without doubt raised the general awareness of human rights in Denmark. The attention is important and constitutes a key element in the continuous improvement of the human rights situation in Denmark as well as in other states.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members and observers of the Human Rights Council for their active contribution to a meaningful and credible dialogue on the Danish domestic human rights situation and our efforts to meet our international obligations in this respect. The recommendations and constructive input received from other peer states and civil society organisations are the result of hard work and knowledge. In this regard, I would

like to highlight the particular role of civil society. From the outset of the process, and in line with the guidelines of the Human Rights Council, it has been our ambition to present a national report that was reflective of society as a whole and not merely a product of various government offices. Looking back at the entire process, the inclusion of civil society has proven to be one of its strongest features and has added significant value to the Danish process.

Mr. President,

Denmark received 133 recommendations of which 81 have been agreed to while 52 have not been accepted. In many cases, the reason for not agreeing to a recommendation does not pertain to substance. The recommendations focus on 9 over-all thematic issues: International obligations, the rights to equality and non-discrimination, human rights of migrants, legal rights and detention, freedom of expression, women's rights, children's rights, development policy, and Greenland and the Faroe Islands.

All recommendations have been subject to careful scrutiny and all relevant authorities have been involved.

However, I would like to draw the attention of the Human Rights Council to the fact that last week general elections were held in Denmark and that new government has not yet taken office.

Mr. President,

We acknowledge that human rights challenges exist in Denmark – as they do elsewhere – and the UPR process continues to be an important factor in addressing those challenges.

Involvement of civil society, including public hearings in the largest cities in Denmark and in Greenland and the Faroe Islands, has been a vital part of the Danish Government's initial scrutiny of the recommendations received.

In continuation of my opening remarks, I would like to once again express my gratitude to all parties involved for their invaluable support during the UPR process and to you, Mr. President, for your able leadership. We would also like to thank the Troika for the constructive and effective cooperation with our delegation.

Thank you for your attention.