

ADVANCE QUESTIONS TO LIBERIA

DENMARK

- The high number of rape cases in Liberia is of critical concern. Which concrete steps is the Government of Liberia taking to eliminate gender and sexually based violence in the country - in addition to the establishment of the Criminal Court - both with regard to the prevention of these human rights violations as well as with regard to the promotion of redress of victims, as women and children are currently subjected to societal stigmatization (for instance as rape victims) and hence are unlikely to address the Court?
- Which concrete steps is the Government of Liberia taking to ensure the speedy and effective establishment and work of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights, including a speedy appointment of Commissioners as well as sufficient allocation of funds for the Commission to implement its mandate, which is instrumental for the protection of human rights in Liberia?
- Which specific initiatives will the Government of Liberia be taking to promote the rule of law in Liberia, especially with regard to eliminating impunity and bringing to justice anyone suspected of having committed extrajudicial executions, torture, ill-treatment, rape or other grave human rights violations?

SWEDEN

- In its resolution 62/149 of 18 December 2007 and 63/168 of 18 December 2008, the UN General Assembly called on States to establish a moratorium on executions with a view to abolishing the death penalty. Sweden regrets the recent reintroduction of the death penalty in 2008, with the passing of a bill making armed robbery, terrorism and hijacking capital offenses where they result in death. This was made in contravention of Liberia's obligation under the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Liberia acceded in 2005.

Could the Government of Liberia elaborate on the status of the death penalty in relation to the resolutions of the General Assembly (A/RES/62/149 and A/RES/63/168) and the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights?

Sweden recommends the Government of Liberia to repeal the aforementioned law and bring its legislation in line with its international obligations. Sweden also recommends the Government of Liberia to introduce a permanent de facto and de jure moratorium on death penalties with a view to adopt a law abolishing the death penalty, and to commute without delay all death sentences to terms of imprisonment.

- Sweden welcomes the efforts made by the Government of Liberia in addressing rape and other forms of sexual violence. We note, however, that high incidence of gender-based and sexual violence against women and girls continue to be a serious threat to the enjoyment of human rights in Liberia. Some contributing factors to this are deficiencies in the justice system and discrimination against women, particularly in relation to lack of information on women's rights.

Sweden would like to ask the Government of Liberia to elaborate on what measures that are taken to promptly address inequalities between men and women, in particular discriminatory traditional and cultural practices such as early marriages and female genital mutilation? What is the status of the special court that has been established to hear gender-based and sexual violence cases?

Sweden recommends the relevant authorities in Liberia to take all necessary measures to ensure the full enjoyment of human rights by women and girls, including by way of properly and promptly investigating and prosecuting cases of gender-based and sexual violence. We also recommend Liberia to specifically prohibit the practice of female genital mutilation as a matter of urgency.

UNITED KINGDOM

- We should be grateful to know how Liberia will address the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission?
- Please could you tell us when can the international community expect to see the Independent National Commission for Human Rights made operational?
- We welcome the recent efforts to revise discriminatory legislation and enact new laws protecting women from rape and gender-based violence. We should be grateful to know what progress has been made on implementing policy to protect women? Does the Government plan to reintroduce legislation banning Female Genital Mutilation?
- We are concerned by reports that senior officials have allegedly engaged in or ordered beatings or other actions incompatible with Liberia's international human rights obligations – what plans does Liberia have to ensure that rule of law is applied uniformly and without deference to status or position?
- Please could you tell us what is Liberia doing to ensure that all those held in detention are being held in conditions which meet international standards?
- Could you please tell us how does Liberia intend to improve the social and economic rights of its people, address the growing divide between the Americo-Liberians and the indigenous population and tackle the complex issue of ethnic

based discrimination within Liberian society?

- Please could you tell us what plans Liberia has to enact a moratorium on the death penalty?
- We would be grateful if you could provide information on the extent to which civil society was consulted in the preparation of your national report and will be consulted in the follow up.
