



O PROVEDOR DE JUSTIÇA

13TH SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL (Geneva, 1-26 March 2010)
Agenda item 6: consideration of the UPR report on Portugal

Oral statement – Portuguese Ombudsman

Mr. President,

I speak on behalf of the Portuguese Ombudsman, Portugal's National Human Rights Institution with A-status accreditation since 1999, in full compliance with the Paris Principles.

The UPR process allows for important discussion on the main achievements and challenges of each State in the area of Human Rights. The Ombudsman is appreciative of the inclusive approach taken in relation to NHRIs and civil society actors.

He is also pleased to take note of the achievements already realized by Portugal towards the effective implementation of Human Rights, but underlines the importance of furthering the work in some fields.

Therefore, he commends the Portuguese Government for accepting a significant number of the recommendations formulated in the working group.

In relation to these recommendations, the Ombudsman would highlight three points:

Firstly, the situation in prisons. This has been a subject of particular importance to the work of the Ombudsman throughout the years. Several inspection visits were carried out and a number of recommendations were addressed to the relevant public authorities. While acknowledging the improvements achieved, the Ombudsman encourages the Government to take further steps, in particular by pursuing ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and establishing the national preventive mechanism accordingly.

Secondly, the Ombudsman encourages the continuation of efforts to strengthen the protection of vulnerable groups, including children and women who are victims of violence, who live in poverty or who are otherwise at risk of social exclusion.

Lastly, the Ombudsman will continue to take note of further efforts to provide assistance to and ensure full integration of immigrants in Portugal.

In relation to the prospects for creating a government body responsible for coordinating the interministerial work in the field of Human Rights, the Ombudsman will follow new developments with interest.

On a final note, the Portuguese Ombudsman is committed to following closely the implementation stage of the UPR, and to providing such contributions as may be relevant within his own scope of activity.

Thank you, Mr. President.