

ADVANCE QUESTIONS TO TONGA

LATVIA

- According to the information of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights 59 countries from different regions of the world have issued standing invitations to all special procedures of the Human Rights Council. While Tonga does not have history of cooperation with the special procedures of the Human Rights Council – would your country consider extending a standing invitation to all special procedures in the future?

NETHERLANDS

- Equal rights between women and men are observed with regard to education and health care and, through to a lesser extent, with regard to employment. The growing number of women in leading positions is to be welcomed. Forms of discrimination against women however still exist in areas such as land ownership rights, child support rights and inheritance laws. Information would be welcomed on the time-table regarding the amendment of the land laws which the Tongan Government proposes in order to allow women to inherit land where there is no male heir.
- In relation to the treatment of detainees and prisoners by security forces it is recommended that in addition to the recommendations contained in the report of the Community Para-legal Taskforce on Human Rights further progress should be made to facilitate extended access to prisoners for NGO's. Could you comment on this?
- What steps is the Tongan Government taking to avoid delays in submitting its periodic human rights reports and the ratification of international treaties?
- Does Tonga consider to adhere to a strict time-table with regard to the process of constitutional and political reform?

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

- We would be grateful if Tonga could elaborate further on the role that civil society played in the preparation of Tonga's national report.
- Grateful for further information on the existence (and independence) of a national human rights institution, in accordance with the Paris principles in Tonga.
- What plans does Tonga have to accede to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)?

- Could you please tell us why Tonga's reporting on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its reporting on Commission on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) appear to be delayed?
- Could you let us know what plans does Tonga have to respond to the Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders in respect of events around the November 2006 riots?
- Could you please tell us what measures are currently being taken by Tonga to protect the freedom of the media?