

## Human Rights Council adopts outcomes of Universal Periodic Review of Italy and El Salvador

Human Rights Council  
MIDDAY

18 March 2015

The Human Rights Council this afternoon adopted the outcomes of the Universal Periodic Review of Italy and El Salvador.

Maurizio Enrico Serra, Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations Office at Geneva, said Italy had accepted 176 of the 186 recommendations made to it. A further 10 recommendations were noted. Italy's legislation protected the rights of all migrants, and Italy was committed to combatting human trafficking, upholding the rights of asylum seekers and strengthening international cooperation to prevent deaths at sea. It had taken measures to reduce prison overcrowding, prohibit discrimination on any grounds, and combat violence against women.

In the discussion, delegations welcomed Italy's acceptance of most of the recommendations, and commended its efforts to prevent deaths at sea through *Operation Mare Nostrum* in the Mediterranean. Italy was encouraged to make further efforts to protect the rights of migrants and combat gender discrimination and violence. Speakers also called for stronger measures to prevent hate speech, racial violence and discrimination, and xenophobia.

Speaking in the discussion were Togo, Venezuela, Burkina Faso, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Council of Europe, Cuba, Egypt, Ethiopia, Greece, Iran, Kuwait, Libya, Philippines, Sierra Leone and Sudan.

The following non-governmental organizations also spoke: International Volunteerism Organization for Women, Education and Development, COC Nederland, Save the Children, Franciscans International, Amnesty International, Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII, Rencontre Africaine pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme and World Evangelical Alliance.

The Council then adopted the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of Italy.

Joaquin Maza Martelli, Permanent Representative of El Salvador to the United Nations Office at Geneva said that of a total of 159 recommendations received it accepted 117 recommendations and taken note of 42. El Salvador had made progress on building a safe and educated country with a high standard of living, promoting a social agenda and addressing the situation of vulnerable groups, including migrants. El Salvador was making decisive steps toward the implementation of the recommendations and the achievement of its lofty goals.

In the discussion, delegations welcomed El Salvador's efforts in the fields of social inclusion and access to healthcare, and for the protection of the rights of the child, women, the elderly and indigenous peoples. Speakers welcomed El Salvador's acceptance of recommendations regarding access to sexual and reproductive health services but expressed serious concern about its draconian abortion laws, which criminalized abortion on all grounds including danger to a woman or girls life or in cases of rape or incest. They also spoke about efforts to protect the rights of migrant workers.

Speaking in the discussion were Cuba, Ecuador, Kuwait, Nicaragua, Philippines, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Venezuela, Bolivia, China and Côte d'Ivoire. A representative of the Office of the Ombudsman of El Salvador spoke in a video message.

The following non-governmental organizations also spoke: International Institute Maria Ausiliatrice, Centre for Reproductive Rights, International Education Development, Amnesty International, Action Canada for Population and Development, Europe-Third World Centre and International Lesbian and Gay Association.

The Council then adopted the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of El Salvador.

The Human Rights Council will continue its full day of meetings at 3 p.m. when it will consider the Universal Periodic Review outcome reports of Bolivia, Fiji and San Marino. The adoption of the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of Gambia which was scheduled

reports of beating, rape and sexual abuse. The adoption of the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of Somalia, which was scheduled for today, has been postponed to next week.

### **Consideration of Outcome of Universal Periodic Review of Italy**

MAURIZIO ENRICO SERRA, Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations Office at Geneva, said the Universal Periodic Review had contributed to the implementation and protection of human rights on the ground in Italy. Italy welcomed all contributions and observations made during the dialogue, and accepted 176 of the 186 recommendations made at its second Universal Periodic Review. Italy noted the remaining 10 recommendations because it did not agree with their substance. For example, regarding the recommendation to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers and their Families, Italy said its legislation already protected the rights of migrants and it was committed to combat trafficking in persons, including at the European level.

Italy was committed to ensure the rights of asylum seekers and all migrants and called for renewed commitments and greater cooperation to address the problem of deaths at sea, noting that the *Operation Mare Nostrum* in the Mediterranean was the widest humanitarian initiative ever conducted by Italy. The prohibition of all forms of corporal punishment had already been implemented, with reference made in the constitution and the Criminal Code. Measures had also been taken to reduce overcrowding in prisons following a decision by the European Court of Human Rights. Italy was committed to combat discrimination on any grounds and violence against women, and during its presidency of the European Union had created several initiatives to promote gender equality. The Foreign Ministry in 2014 held a conference on the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons in the international framework, it noted.

Togo noted with satisfaction that most recommendations had been undertaken by Italy and recommended the adoption of the report. Venezuela commended Italy's law that decriminalized irregular migration and its Constitutional Court ruling that removed the condition of migration as an aggravating offence. Venezuela recommended the adoption of its report. Burkina Faso commended the developments undertaken by Italy and recommended the adoption of the report. China commended Italy for its constructive participation in the second cycle of the Universal Periodic Review and the acceptance of many recommendations, including those made by China concerning an increase in development assistance. China hoped that Italy would further strengthen its maritime operations to save lives, and take measures to address the situation of illegal migrants.

Côte d'Ivoire welcomed all reforms undertaken by Italy to make its national legislation consistent with international standards and encouraged it to take further measures to address the situation of illegal migrants and trafficking in persons. Council of Europe complimented Italy for its second Universal Periodic Review but reiterated concern about insufficient protection for migrants and refugees, xenophobic attitudes in society particularly towards Roma and Sinti communities, overcrowding in prisons and the excessive length of judicial procedures. Cuba underlined the importance of combatting discrimination and encouraged Italy to continue efforts in that regard.

Egypt welcomed Italy's efforts to protect migrants at sea and combat trafficking in persons. It encouraged further efforts to combat racism and xenophobia. Ethiopia commended Italy for accepting a significant number of recommendations, including on the rights of persons with disabilities, and recommended the adoption of the report. Greece welcomed Italy's acceptance of the vast majority of recommendations, and said it fully understood the challenges faced by Italy as a first-entry country for migrants. Greece supported Italy's efforts to combat trafficking.

Iran welcomed Italy's acceptance of a number of recommendations including those made by Iran and looked forward to hearing about their implementation. Italy should boost efforts to address racial discrimination against minorities, especially Muslims, the treatment of illegal immigrants and support for victims of trafficking and domestic violence. Kuwait encouraged Italy to implement the recommendations it had accepted. It welcomed the legislative role of the Italian Parliament, particularly the deliberations concerning the establishment of the national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles. Libya highly commended Italy's participation in the second cycle of the Universal Periodic Review and expressed appreciation for the effort to promote and protect human rights in all perspectives. Libya commended Italy's acceptance of 176 recommendations, which was evidence of its commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights.

Philippines noted Italy's commitment towards the realization of the human rights of people in its territory and efforts to address the rights of migrants and victims of trafficking. Italy should ensure that its national legislation was compatible with the international standards. Sierra Leone welcomed Italy's constructive engagement with the Universal Periodic Review and encouraged Italy to consider accepting all recommendations and implement in particular those pertaining to combatting racism. Sudan appreciated the steps taken by Italy to promote and protect human rights and commended it for accepting most of the recommendations made, including the two presented by Sudan.

International Volunteerism Organization for Women, Education and Development commended Italy's efforts to support inclusive education and urged Italy to further protect the rights of migrant children and children with disabilities. It expressed concern about discrimination faced by women, including in the work place. COC Nederland said it opposed Italy's view that the recommendations on the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons were already being implemented, as it believed much remained to be done in that area. In particular Italy should ensure marriage equality and provide more resources to combat discrimination. Save the Children urged Italy to approve the law authorizing the ratification of the third Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and to

approve the draft bill to create a national system for the reception and protection of unaccompanied foreign minors. Italy should explicitly ban all forms of corporal punishment of children.

Amnesty International called on Italy to implement the recommendations on refugees and migrants, including on protection, reception conditions and unaccompanied minors. In 2014, Italy rescued some 170,000 individuals through *Operation Mare Nostrum* which was discontinued in October 2014. Italy and the European Union should ensure that a search-and-rescue operation of comparable scale and mandate was urgently established in the central Mediterranean. Franciscans International said it was encouraged by Italy's commitment to fight discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and to include sexual orientation as grounds for protection against hate speech. It regretted that no recommendations had been made on environmental and human rights abuses caused by business activities in Italy.

Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII encouraged Italy to protect the rights of child from conception, and recommended the elaboration of an action plan to promote and protect the life of a soon-to-be-born child, promote anonymous childbirth as an extreme alternative to abortion, and to implement the child's right to family, including by fully applying national standards for foster care. Rencontre Africaine pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme welcomed Italy's efforts and initiatives to combat torture and racial discrimination and to protect the rights of migrants. It welcomed Italy's *Operation Mare Nostrum* which had prevented a humanitarian catastrophe in the Mediterranean. It remained concerned about discrimination and marginalization of migrants and the Roma community. World Evangelical Alliance regretted that some religious minorities faced discrimination in Italy, in particular with regard to the construction of places of worship. It called on Italy to adopt adequate measures to remedy the situation as soon as possible.

MAURIZIO ENRICO SERRA, Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations Office at Geneva, welcomed the comments made and said Italy would give them due consideration. Italy had accepted to undergo a mid-term review of the implementation of recommendations made to it, he noted. Italy would continue cooperating with all stakeholders on all matters to meet the recommendations that been accepted.

Of the 193 recommendations received, Italy accepted 176 recommendations and took note of 10.

The Council then adopted the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of Italy.

### **Consideration of Outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of El Salvador**

JOAQUIN MAZA MARTELLI, Permanent Representative of El Salvador to the United Nations Office at Geneva, said he was grateful for the recognition of the progress El Salvador had made in promoting and protecting human rights by many States. He said a total of 159 recommendations had been received, many referred to the protection of vulnerable groups and the social agenda promoted by the Government. El Salvador had immediately accepted 97 recommendations, and had submitted 62 to an internal consultation process. A strategy to reduce social inequalities was established and a law had been adopted to establish a social protection system. The Universal Periodic Review must be seen as a mechanism which truly encouraged States to make progress in the sphere of human rights, said El Salvador, recognizing the importance of civil society and the Office of the Ombudsman in that regard.

Despite the national challenges it faced, El Salvador had made progress over the past five years, including through the implementation of the National Development Plan which would guide the progress and contribute to building a safe and educated country where people enjoyed high standards of living. Progress had been made in addressing the situation of vulnerable groups, including migrants, and El Salvador stressed the need for continued dialogue on that issue in the Human Rights Council. El Salvador was on the right path and was making decisive steps which would lead the country toward the implementation of recommendations and achievement of its lofty goals.

Cuba commended El Salvador's progress in the field of healthcare services and in general its commitment to the Universal Periodic Review mechanism. Ecuador welcomed efforts made by El Salvador to share good practices in promoting social inclusion and protecting vulnerable groups. Kuwait commended the achievements made by El Salvador since its last review. In particular it welcomed El Salvador's efforts to develop and improve living standards and its adoption of programmes to improve access to healthcare. Nicaragua commended El Salvador on accepting most of the recommendations. It underscored El Salvador's achievements on the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities, women and indigenous people.

Philippines welcomed the delegation of El Salvador and said it supported its efforts to harmonize domestic laws with international human rights standards, in particular in improving public awareness on the dangers of cross border migration of unaccompanied minors. It recommended the adoption of the report. Sierra Leone commended El Salvador for its commitment to promoting human rights as well as its cooperation and efforts to implement policies which would promote the rights of children. It noted that several of its recommendations enjoyed the support of El Salvador. Sri Lanka appreciated ongoing efforts to strengthen institutional and legislative measures and commended the importance the Government placed on protecting rights of migrant workers. It recommended the adoption of the report of El Salvador.

Venezuela acknowledged the importance that El Salvador attached to the Universal Periodic Review recommendations and the

comprehensive care given to vulnerable families. The Government's participation in the process was positive and evidence of its commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights. [Bolivia](#) commended El Salvador on its noteworthy achievements in the field of human rights, particularly in the protection of the rights of the child, women, the elderly and indigenous peoples. Bolivia wished it success in the process of strengthening its institutions.

[China](#) appreciated El Salvador's constructive approach to the Universal Periodic Review and its firm pledge to implement policies to protect and promote women, eliminate violence against women and children, and ensure that all children enjoyed equal access to education. [Côte d'Ivoire](#) welcomed El Salvador's cooperation with the Universal Periodic Review, and encouraged El Salvador to guarantee the rule of law and the enjoyment of civil and political rights for all its citizens. El Salvador was also encouraged to continued efforts on social development and the rights of persons with disabilities.

DAVID MORALES, [Head of the Office of the Ombudsman of El Salvador](#), speaking in a video statement, welcomed El Salvador's cooperation with the Universal Periodic Review and said that the Office of the Ombudsman had largely participated in the process. He reaffirmed his position that El Salvador should accept all recommendations made to it.

[Centre for Reproductive Rights](#) regretted that El Salvador had rejected the recommendations on reproductive healthcare and rights. It recommended El Salvador took steps to guarantee full and effective recognition of sexual and reproductive rights, and to amend its laws criminalizing abortion without exception. [Amnesty International](#) said El Salvador had one of the most draconian abortion laws in the world: abortion was criminalized on all grounds, even if a woman or girls' life was endangered by the pregnancy, or in cases of rape and incest. It welcomed El Salvador's acceptance of the recommendations to provide access to sexual and reproductive health services but stressed its disappointment that the Government had merely noted the 10 recommendations to decriminalise abortion.

[Action Canada for Population and Development](#) urged the Government to adopt the Gender Identity Law which would allow transgender persons to change their identity documents in accordance with their gender identity, and to accept and implement the recommendations pertaining to abortion law reform. [Europe-Third World Centre](#) encouraged El Salvador to implement the right to water in its constitution and encouraged the Government to stand firm in opposing mining projects by transnational corporations. It should guarantee security of human rights defenders and duly investigate all crimes committed against them. [International Institute Maria Ausiliatrice](#) voiced concerns for the situation of children living in the street and the lack of support they received both as street children and upon reaching adulthood. A comprehensive study on the causes of the phenomenon was needed.

[International Lesbian and Gay Association](#) noted the declaration of good intent by the Government to eradicate discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons was on the rise, and investigation and prosecution of acts of violence must be ensured. [International Education Development](#) said it had visited El Salvador nearly 20 times during the course of the armed conflict. It noted the new status of El Salvador's indigenous peoples and was pleased with the voting process. In spite of great progress made in the ratification and implementation of many human rights instruments, significant problems remained.

JOAQUIN MAZA MARTELLI, [Permanent Representative of El Salvador to the United Nations Office at Geneva](#), welcomed the support voiced by States, and expressed El Salvador's commitment to make all efforts to attain full compliance with human rights standards. The Government had a receptive attitude to all the recommendations, and would continue to inform the Council on progress made.

Of the 159 recommendations received, El Salvador accepted 117 recommendations and took note of 42.

The Council then adopted the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of El Salvador.

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