

UPR of GAMBIA - INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE

Feb 10, 2010; 0900-1200 hrs

INTERVENTION BY INDIA

Mr. President, Attorney-General & Minister of Justice,

India welcomes the delegation of Gambia led by H.E. Mrs. Marie Saine-Fridavs, and thanks them for their comprehensive National Report and informative presentation.

02. India appreciates the progress made in the situation of human rights in the country and acknowledges the challenges and constraints faced by Gambia in securing the human rights of its citizens, which have been clearly outlined in a candid and forthcoming manner in the National Report. In addition to the 1997 Constitution, a number of legislations relating to human rights have been enacted by Gambia over the last decade, including the Child Act; Trafficking in Persons Act; Legal Aid Act; the Criminal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code; Ombudsman Act; and Refugee Act.

03. In particular, we welcome the proposed Women's Bill which mandates the National Women's Council to carry out a periodic review of the government policy with a view to bringing it in line with international best practices relating to the protection and enhancement of the rights of women, and requires all public and private institutions to be guided by the national gender policies in the formulation and implementation of any initiatives and programmes. We are also encouraged by the proposed

legislation of the Elections Bill 2009 which seeks to regulate the conduct of Presidential, National Assembly and Local Government Elections and enhance grass-roots democracy across the country.

Mr. President,

04. The establishment of the National Planning Commission in 2008 as the nodal institution for the coordination of all development plans and interventions has been a significant development. Equally noteworthy has been the adoption of a comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy which seeks to mainstream the Millennium Development Goals in all national plans and sector specific strategies.

05. While we take note of the constitutional and policy measures adopted to protect the rights of the disabled, we would encourage Gambia to consider ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. We would also encourage Gambia to consider ratifying the two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography; both of which Gambia is already signatory to.

06. To conclude, Mr. President, we request the delegation to share more information about the country's progress in attaining Millennium Development Goals relating to extreme hunger and poverty, as also its plans to strengthen its justice administration. Also, while we take note of the functioning of the Office of Ombudsman, we would urge Gambia to establish a National Human Rights Institution in full compliance with Paris

Principles accredited by the International Coordinating Committee at the earliest. We wish them well in this endeavour.

Thank you, Mr. President.
