



HAUT-COMMISSARIAT AUX DROITS DE L'HOMME • OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

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Excellency,

It was a pleasure meeting with you in Geneva on 11 September 2017. As mentioned to you during that meeting, I have been following the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Finland and welcome your constructive engagement and that of your Government during the 27th session of the UPR Working Group in early May 2017.

As the final outcome report on the review of Finland was recently adopted by the Human Rights Council at its 36th session, I am writing to follow up on a number of areas raised in two reports that my Office prepared for the review – the compilation and the summary of stakeholders' submissions – which I consider in need of particular attention over the next four and a half years until the next cycle of the UPR. In identifying these areas, I have also considered the recommendations made by 70 countries, Finland's presentation and responses, and the action taken by the Government to implement the recommendations it accepted during the second cycle of the UPR. These areas cover a range of issues and are set out in the annex to this letter.

I would like to refer to two issues that were raised during the review of Finland and which I am particularly encouraged by: namely the adoption of a Government Integration Programme for 2016-2019 to enhance immigrants' social insertion and the setting up of a new Advisory Board for the rights of persons with disabilities.

I welcome the recent adoption of the Second National Action Plan on Human Rights 2017-2019 and encourage Finland to continue strengthening the implementation of human rights and fundamental freedoms, in order to achieve concrete results in the areas contained in the annex and to facilitate Finland's preparations for the fourth cycle of the UPR. I trust that the development of the next national human rights action plan will include consultations with all stakeholders, in particular, the national human rights institution and civil society organisations, and, where necessary, the support of international organisations, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and other United Nations entities.

H.E. Ms. Pirkko Mattila
Minister of Social Affairs and Health
Republic of Finland



I also encourage Finland to strengthen its national mechanism for comprehensive reporting and follow up in relation to international and regional human rights mechanisms and treaty obligations. I strongly recommend to Finland the use of the practical guide that my Office released in 2016 on this topic and which is available at: http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/HR_PUB_16_1_NMRF_PracticalGuide.pdf.

Please be advised that I will be sharing my advice with all Member States as they go through the third cycle of the UPR with a view to assisting them to begin implementing recommendations early on, following the review. An important measure that can contribute positively to follow up action is voluntary mid-term reporting. I strongly encourage all Member States to submit a voluntary mid-term report two years after the adoption of the outcome report, and I congratulate Finland in this regard for submitting such a report in September 2014 during the second cycle. I note with appreciation Finland's commitment to prepare, with the support of human rights actors, including civil society, and submit to the Human Rights Council its mid-term report for the third cycle.

As the Secretary-General states in his 2017 report on the work of the Organization (A/72/1, paragraph 98): *"The Human Rights Council's universal periodic review process is now entering a new cycle, with every Member State scheduled for a third round of scrutiny. We will work to strengthen the relevance, precision and impact of the Council's recommendations, including by providing better support to Member States in implementation, stronger collaboration with United Nations country teams and the establishment of national mechanisms for human rights reporting and follow-up to link the universal periodic review to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals."*

I look forward to discussing with you ways in which my Office may assist Finland to take action in the areas I have identified.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein
High Commissioner for Human Rights

Annex

Scope of international obligations and cooperation with international human rights mechanisms and bodies

- Ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances, the Convention on the Non- Applicability of the Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity;
- Ratify the International Labour Organization Convention No.169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries;
- Ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families;
- Continue the implementation of the accepted recommendations from UPR.

National human rights framework

- Amend the Criminal Code to define rape as a sexual violation;
- Establish a national institution for the advancement of women in accordance with the Beijing Platform;
- Provide necessary resources to the Non- Discrimination Ombudsman.

Implementation of international human rights obligations, taking into account applicable international humanitarian law

A. Cross-cutting issues

Equality and non-discrimination

- Strengthen laws to combat all forms of discrimination focusing on prevention;
- Strengthen preventive and awareness raising program to address xenophobia and violent extremism at the national and sub regional levels;
- Prevent hate speech on the Internet and intensify the fight against hate crime through the Implementation of the National Action Plan on Fundamental and Human Rights and other measures;
- Take specific measures to address discrimination against non-native Finish citizens in the area of employment;
- Continue to promote gender equality in all public and private activities.



B. Civil and political rights

Right to life, liberty and security of person

- Consider including in its next universal periodic review report information on measures it has taken to analyse potential risk factors of atrocity crimes, including through the utilization of the Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes;
- Continue efforts to combat trafficking in human beings and take effective measures to prevent and eradicate human trafficking through the full implementation of the National Action Plan against Human Trafficking;
- Ensure proper implementation of policies directed towards combating violence against women, including the recommendations made by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women regarding sexual violence;
- Establish a national action plan to address domestic and family violence.

C. Rights of specific persons or groups

Children

- Reinforce the measures to protect the rights of the child and provide training to public officials and civil servants;
- Review national laws to prohibit the detention of minors.

Migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons

- Strengthen social integration policies for migrants;
- Adopt legislation and policy measures to effectively promote and protect human rights for refugees, migrants and ethnic minorities;
- Bring the legislation on the rights of the children during the asylum procedure in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Persons with disabilities

- Provide sufficient funds for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and adopt a new national disability policy plan (VAMPO);
- Continue efforts to promote opportunities for productive and paid employment for persons with disabilities;
- Provide the necessary protection for asylum-seekers, ensure their access to legal assistance, facilitate family reunification procedures for migrants and provide them with social security;
- Review the legislation regarding asylum and migration in line with Finland's international obligations.



Minorities and Indigenous peoples

- Consider introducing incentives for better political participation of minorities;
- Establish and promote culturally sensitive initiatives to provide services for minority groups such as Roma and Sami people;
- Continue its efforts to prevent discrimination against Roma;
- Protect the economic, social and cultural rights of Sami people.