

**UPR WORKING GROUP – TENTH SESSION
(24 January – 4 February, 2011)**

**UPR of AUSTRIA – INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE
January 26, 2011; 1430-1730 hrs**

INTERVENTION BY INDIA

Mr. President,

India welcomes the delegation of Austria led by the Minister for European and International Affairs and thanks the delegation for its presentation. The National Report provides an overview of the legal and institutional framework; and of various measures being adopted to address challenges in the promotion and protection of human rights in the country.

2. The national report mentions the priority attached by the Government to gender equality and the several steps taken by the Government in this regard. However, the report also acknowledges that deficits persist in attaining the objective of actual equality of women and men in many areas. Further, in 2010, the ILO Committee of Experts noted that wide remuneration gaps exist in respect of average hourly wages for men and women workers. In this regard, we would request the delegation to inform us of the measures being taken to enforce the principle of equal pay for equal work.

3. In 2008, CERD and CESCR expressed concerns about the persistence of racist and xenophobic attitudes, including reported instances of hate speech. Though the establishment of the Equal Treatment Commission and the Ombudsman for Equal Treatment are significant developments, concerns have been raised with regard to their resources and independence. Similarly, while the launch of the National Action Plan on Integration is noteworthy, lacunae have been observed with regard to the absence of concrete measures to tackle the issue of structural discrimination. In this context, and in view of the Government's stated priority to combat racism and xenophobia, we would

request the delegation to inform us about measures being taken to review and harmonise the anti-discrimination laws to ensure equal protection to all on all grounds of discrimination. We note that Austria is one of the very few EU countries which has never been visited by any special procedure. While it probably speaks well of the human rights framework in the country, it could also lead to neglect and complacency. Accordingly, we would like to seek information from the delegation as to whether Austria considers it would be useful to extend an invitation to the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance to visit the country.

4. In conclusion, Mr. President, we would recommend that the Austrian Ombudsman Board be strengthened and its mandate expanded to ensure full compliance with the Paris Principles at the earliest.

Thank you, Mr. President.
