

ADVANCE QUESTIONS TO OMAN

CANADA

- Oman is one of the most progressive countries of its region in terms of human rights. However, Oman would really set the example for higher human rights standards in the region by ratifying key human rights instruments such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights as well as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its two Optional Protocols. When does the government of Oman plan on signing and ratifying these Covenants?
- What steps has the government of Oman taken to promote freedom of speech and of the press, and ensure relevant national law is implemented in greater respect of the standards established by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?
- When does the government of Oman plan to adjust its national legislation to better protect women, including criminalization of spousal rape and domestic violence, prohibition of feminine genital mutilation and legal measures against sexual harassment?
- What progress was made in better implementing legal prohibition of human trafficking and of forced and compulsory labour and what resources have been established to prevent it?

DENMARK

- Which steps is Oman planning to take in order to fight the *de facto* inequality of women in society and lift some of the social and legal obstacles leading to this inequality?
- Will Oman consider lifting its reservations to CEDAW as part of these steps?
- When does Oman intend to ratify UN Convention against Torture?
- Which measures is Oman planning in order to strengthen its efforts to combat human trafficking?
- How will the Omani government offer protection for its “domestic servants and temporary workers” who are at present not protected under the Labour Law?

GERMANY

- In 2006, the Special Rapporteur on trafficking of persons following his visit to Oman recommended inter alia:

- the sponsorship system be abolished and migrant workers be allowed to change employers more easily
- bilateral and multilateral cooperation agreements be established with countries of origin and transit to prevent trafficking.

Germany would appreciate information on how the government of Oman did follow up on these recommendations.

LATVIA

- According to the information by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 73 countries from different regions of the world have issued standing invitations to all special procedures of the Human Rights Council. Considering previous cooperation of Oman with special procedures mandate holders - would your country consider extending a standing invitation to all special procedures of the Human Rights Council in the future?

NETHERLANDS

- Freedom of Association

With regards to concerns voiced in paragraph 21 of the stakeholder report on the difficulties of forming associations, such as the need for approval to form non-governmental organisations and the need for permission to conduct any activity, what measures does the Government of Oman plan to take in the current review of the Law of Associations (14/2000) to make the formation and functioning of associations easier?

- Freedom of expression

In light of the remarks in paragraph 40 of the OHCHR compilation on the removal of criminal liability for activities that constitute the legitimate exercise of the freedom of expression, and the concerns raised in paragraphs 19 and 20 of the stakeholder reports which similarly address the issue of journalists risking prison sentences in the course of their work, does the Government consider to amend the Law of Publication (49/1984) and related media regulations, in particular with regard to abolishing stipulations regarding penalties for journalists and the possibility of imprisonment?

- Rights of migrant domestic workers

With reference to paragraph 89 of the national report which states that since 2004 domestic workers are protected by Ministerial Decision 189/2004, and in light of the concerns and recommendations of *inter alia* the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons on the position of migrant domestic workers and their insufficient legal protection, mentioned in paragraphs 11, 31, 45, 46, 55, 56, 57 and 60 of the OHCHR compilation, does the Government consider to take measures to provide the large group of mostly female expatriate domestic workers with legal protection under the Labour Law or any other law, or to protect their rights through solid standard contracts?

- Rights of migrant workers

In light of the concerns voiced in paragraphs 25, 55 and 60 of the OHCHR compilation on the protection of migrant workers and with reference to the recommendation given in paragraph 9 of the stakeholder report to provide adequate information on means of protection against trafficking, such as hotlines and shelters, is the Government considering – in cooperation with the International Labour Organization - the possibility of operating shelters and safe houses to protect and help expatriate workers who are in urgent problems, to give them access to free legal counsel, and to consider a role for civil society and possibly religious institutions in providing these services?

- Rights of children with disabilities

Paragraphs 81 and 82 of the national report detail the efforts taken by the Government of Oman to protect and care for children with disabilities. Concerning these efforts, and with reference to paragraph 27 of the OHCHR compilation which notes the efforts of the Government of Oman but raises concerns about insufficient data on disabilities and the very limited number of children with disabilities in mainstream education, does the Government consider to further increase screening possibilities for disabilities to enhance information on numbers and nature of disabilities in the country, does the Government look into the possibility of providing families of children with disabilities with services like counselling and rehabilitation to promote the integration of these children in society, and will the Government further step up action to ensure that all children with disabilities have access to education?

- Law on Citizenship

In reference to paragraph 23 of the OHCHR compilation and paragraphs 4, 14 and 15 of the stakeholder report in which concerns are expressed about restrictions on Omani nationals wishing to marry a foreign national and the fact that children of an Omani mother and non-Omani father are not entitled to the Omani nationality, does the Government of Oman intend to amend the Law on Citizenship?

SWEDEN

- Could the Government of Oman elaborate on the status of women's rights and discrimination against women?
- What measures are being taken to effectively combat gender-based discrimination in law and practice?
- Sweden would like to ask the Government of Oman to elaborate on the status of the death penalty, including if there are any plans to ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty?
- Does the Government intend to ratify and incorporate into national law the ICCPR and the ICESCR?
- Could the Government of Oman elaborate on what measures it has taken to reinforce its legislation with a view to protect the right to freedom of expression?

- What is presently being done to implement existing legislation to promote and protect the citizens' fundamental rights to freedom of expression and freedom of the press?
- Could the Government of Oman elaborate on the status of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons' rights?
- Does the Government plan to abolish homosexuality as a criminal offense in the near future?

UNITED KINGDOM

- How will the Government of the Sultanate of Oman manage follow up of the UPR process and who will be responsible for oversight of implementation, monitoring and reporting? How does the Government intend to engage with civil society?
- What plans has the Government to ensure that the National Human Rights Commission operates in accordance with the Paris Principles designed to guide the practice of such institutions?
- What plans does the Government have to ensure an end to discriminatory practices against migrant workers, including reports of withholding of passports and documents; non payment of wages; long working hours; and physical and sexual abuse?
- Could you please outline what steps have been taken by the Government to adopt a proactive and comprehensive strategy to eliminate discrimination against persons with disabilities?
- Could you please elaborate on what steps have been taken by the Government of the Sultanate of Oman to address the concerns of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) about continuing discrimination against children born out of wedlock; abuses and ill treatment within the family and institutions; and disparities in access to health and education faced by children in rural areas and children of foreign nationals.
- We would welcome an update on whether Oman has plans to sign or ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Furthermore we would welcome details on any plans held by the Government to end the use of the death penalty and whether they have plans to sign the Convention Against Torture and its Optional Protocol.
- What steps is the Government of the Sultanate of Oman taking to eliminate discrimination against women and girls in law, particularly family law, and whether it has any plans to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women Optional Protocol.
- What steps has the Government of the Sultanate of Oman taken to foster an environment that encourages freedom of expression and freedom of speech.