

19 March 2014

Human Rights Council 25th Session: Item 6

Universal Periodic Review - China

UK statement

Thank You Mr President

The UK regrets that China rejected our recommendation to set a clear legislative time-table for ICCPR ratification. We hope that China will nevertheless take steps to respond to the proliferation of Chinese civil society voices calling for timely ICCPR ratification.

The UK also regrets that China rejected our recommendation to abolish all forms of extra-judicial and arbitrary detention. We continue to urge the abolition of all such forms of detention, including 'custody and education' for sex workers, compulsory drug rehabilitation, 'black jails', and Party custodial investigation of corruption allegations, known as '*shuang gui*'. We reiterate our hope that any measures replacing Re-education Through Labour will be ICCPR-compliant.

We welcome China's commitment to continue tightening standards for application of the death penalty, but are disappointed that all recommendations to increase transparency around its use were rejected. Greater transparency would support a constructive and informed debate about reform, and enable popular supervision of the administration of justice.

The UK was deeply saddened by the death of UPR activist Cao Shunli on 14 March, six months after she was detained at Beijing airport en route to Geneva. Ms Cao was reportedly denied access to adequate medical care in detention for serious health problems including tuberculosis and liver disease.

We continue to urge the Chinese authorities to ensure all detainees have access to adequate medical care, and to release all those detained for exercising their Constitutional rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly. We also call on the relevant authorities to ensure that there is a timely, transparent and independent investigation into the circumstances leading to Cao's death,

While the UK welcomes China's acceptance of Switzerland's recommendation on the rights of human rights defenders to participate in international mechanisms, we remain concerned about barriers to independent Chinese civil society actors engaging in the UPR process. We believe this is vital to the credibility of the UPR process, and urge China to take appropriate steps to ensure that independent civil society is fully engaged in this next UPR cycle.

Thank you