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**UPR Morocco**

**Intervention by the Netherlands**

**His Excellency, Mr. Roderick van Schreven**

**Permanent Representative**

Madame President,

The Netherlands would like to thank the Honourable Mr. Mustapha Ramid, minister of Justice, for his introduction of Morocco's national report before the Human Rights Council.

Madame President,

Concerning the rights of women and girls, my delegation is aware that recently legal rulings in several cases of rape of young girls have led to strong national and international protest. Protest because the Moroccan Penal Code allegedly enables perpetrators of rape to escape a criminal conviction by marrying their young victims. These cases constitute a possible breach of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and CEDAW. The Netherlands would therefore like to recommend that the Moroccan Government takes all necessary actions to eliminate these practices and safeguard the rights of rape victims.

In relation to the freedom of expression and the press, my delegation notes that a free press, including a ban on censorship, is guaranteed in the new Moroccan constitution. However, my delegation has received some reports that recent publications from respected newspapers, such as Le Monde and El Pais, have been banned from Morocco. Although we recognise the answer provided by your delegation, the Netherlands would nevertheless recommend that article 28 of the Moroccan Constitution is fully implemented.

Thank you, Madame President.