

Human Rights Council
Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review
13th Session

Review of the Netherlands

Intervention made by Egypt
31 May 2012

Madame President,

My delegation welcomes H.E.....and his accompanying delegation and takes note of the national report that outlines the achievements and the existing challenges in the human rights field.

We note the decision to establish a national human rights institution, and would like to learn more on steps taken in this regard.

My delegation acknowledges the efforts exerted to ensure human rights of women and children. However, we are concerned about discrimination against women in the labour market, and would like to learn more on efforts to address such discrimination. My delegation is also concerned about the women's right to live in dignity, jeopardised by the legalisation of prostitution in the Netherlands. We are further concerned about the existence of child sex tourism.

My delegation is deeply concerned about the human rights situation of migrants and national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, in particular their enjoyment of their rights to housing, education, health, work and employment in addition to being subjected to racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance. This is notable at the societal level as well as by racist and xenophobic speech emanating *unchecked and unpunished* from extremist political parties. It is to be highlighted that the Freedom Party's leader was acquitted in June 2011 of inciting hatred against Muslims, citing free speech as a reason for acquittal.

My delegation takes note of measures taken to raise awareness about the need to report alleged discrimination cases. My delegation would like to learn more on the impact of such measures and on measures to promote tolerance and non-discrimination. It also notes that the Dutch Criminal Code includes offences of incitement to hatred. However, more needs to be done.

Finally, we would like to recommend the following to the government of the Netherlands:

1. to provide its national human rights institution with requisite financial and technical support to ensure its effectiveness, proper functioning and independence.
2. To establish mechanisms for the monitoring, investigation, prosecution and punishment of incitement to as well as acts of hatred, intolerance, racism and xenophobia.
3. To review, amend and repeal its national discriminatory laws and regulations against persons of certain religious backgrounds, in particular Muslim migrants.
4. To enact laws and legislation on freedom of expression in a manner that balances its obligations under both articles 19 and 20 of the ICCPR.
5. To review and amend its national integration laws, regulations and policies with a view to respect the cultural and religious backgrounds of migrant communities, in particular Arab and Muslim communities.
6. Sign and ratify the international convention on the protection of the rights of migrant workers and members of their families.

I thank you.