**Universal Periodic Review 14 – Benin**

**Intervention by the Netherlands**

Madam President,

The Netherlands would like to thank the government of Benin for its national report and the extensive explanation by mr/mrs (?) today at the interactive dialogue on the human rights situation in Benin.

The Netherlands commends the government of Benin for its accession to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty a reality since July 2012 and the Protocol will therefore entered into force in October this year.

Additionally, the Netherlands would like to recommend the government of Benin to adopt a concerted strategy to reduce prison population, as overcrowding in prisons remains an issue within Benin. The strategy could contain the adoption of alternatives to custodial matters.

Secondly, the Netherlands noted, as we did four years ago, that the government of Benin works on the protection of vulnerable groups on the ground, but certain issues in this regard, such as trafficking of women and children, FGM and sexual harassment, remain issues. Therefore, the Netherlands would recommend the government of Benin to continue to strengthen its efforts to provide a better legal protection for vulnerable groups, especially women.

Thank you, Madam President.