**Universal Periodic Review 14 – Pakistan**

**Intervention by the Netherlands**

Madam President,

The government of the Netherlands would like to thank the government of Pakistan for its national report and mr/mrs (?) for his/her introductory statement.

The Netherlands notes the positive attitude by the Government of Pakistan towards UN mechanisms, as recently displayed on the occasion of the visit of the Working Group on Disappearances.

We have three recommendations:

* Blasphemy Law

The Netherlands expresses its concern about persistent religious discrimination, harassment and attacks on minorities. It calls on Pakistan to step up its efforts to protect all its citizens. In this context, the Netherlands RECOMMENDS the repeal or thorough reform of the so-called Blasphemy Law.

* Internet

[The Netherlands welcomes the inclusion of the right to information in the Pakistani Constitution (par. 79 of Pakistan’s report). According to the Human Rights Committee, the right to information includes internet based expression.] Par. 53 of the Summary report states that the Pakistani government will shortly establish an electronic barrier to filter the internet. The Netherlands RECOMMENDS Pakistan to remove restrictions on accessing internet in the country which run counter to the criteria of ICCPR and the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality.

* Education for girls

Par. 91 of Pakistan’s report states that the literacy rate in Pakistan is 58 percent, and that there is a disparity between men and women. The Netherlands expresses its concern about this gender based discrimination. It RECOMMENDS Pakistan to increase its allocation of resources devoted to education, specifically for girls’ education, in all provinces.

Thank you, Madam President.