**Universal Periodic Review 22 –Maldives**

**Statement by the Kingdom of the Netherlands**

Thank you Mr. President,

The Netherlands thanks the Maldives for its report [and for addressing our advance questions].

We have noted with appreciation that, since their first UPR, the Maldives have taken important steps to improve the human rights situation by making positive changes and amendments to key legislation. We do note with concern that many of the accepted recommendations of the first UPR-cycle remain to be implemented.

1. The Netherlands recommends the Maldives to fully implement the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers and to ensure that the concept of separation of powers is fully respected.

2. The Netherlands recommends the Maldives to take concrete measures to guarantee freedom of expression and media and to address limitations in the existing law governing the operation of civil society organizations.

We make these recommendations because we are concerned about the decline in public confidence in democratic institutions, the apparent use of the judiciary as a political tool and the erosion of freedom of expression and media. We expect the Maldives to live up to international obligations and standards in this regard.

Thank you Mr. President