**Universal Periodic Review 22 – Panama**

**Statement by the Kingdom of the Netherlands**

Thank you Mr. President,

The Kingdom of the Netherlands thanks Panama for its report.

We welcome the efforts made by the government, the private sector and employers’ organization CONEP to reduce child labor.

We have noted with appreciation that Panama has recently ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. We also welcome the draft bill in parliament for a more detailed elaboration of the principle of equality as laid down in the constitution.

1. The Netherlands recommends the government of the Republic of Panama to step up its efforts to ease overcrowding of the prison system and especially look for alternative non-custodial measures for adolescents.

2. The Netherlands also recommends the Government of the Republic of Panama to adopt comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation, including on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

We make these recommendations because we remain concerned about the prison system in Panama that reportedly does not meet international standards. Overcrowding is still a problem and conditions and programs in juvenile detention centers are inadequate.

Furthermore, we have noted with concern that Panama does not have any comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation to protect all its citizens. We expect implementation of our recommendations to help in this regard.

Thank you Mr. President