**Universal Periodic Review 23 – Australia**

**Statement by the Kingdom of the Netherlands**

Thank you Mr. President,

The Netherlands thanks Australia for its comprehensive report [and for addressing our advance questions].

The Netherlands welcomes the importance Australia attaches to women’s rights and would encourage the government to make available adequate funding for initiatives that aim to reduce violence against women.

Mr President, we offer the following recommendations:

1. Firstly, the Netherlands recommends Australia to adopt a National Action Plan to implement the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.
2. Secondly, the Netherlands recommends Australia to revise the Marriage Act of 1961 in a way that ensures full equality with respect to the civil institution of marriage.

Mr. President, these recommendations are based on the following considerations.

The UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights has recommended the adoption of National Action Plans for implementation of the Guiding Principles. As a proponent of these Principles, the Netherlands would be more than willing to share our experiences in this regard.

Secondly, as a strong advocate of marriage equality and equal rights for all, the Netherlands notes that Australia’s Marriage Act de facto discriminates against LGBTI people.

 Thank you Mr. President.