**Universal Periodic Review 23 – Mauritania**

**Statement by the Kingdom of the Netherlands**

Thank you Mr. President,

The Netherlands would like to thank Mauritania for its introduction of the national report on the human rights situation.

The Netherlands commends Mauritania for having ratified outstanding Human Rights treaties, particularly the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

1. The Netherlands recommends Mauritania to fully and effectively implement the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and to ensure that the rights of women and children are respected, most particularly when they are in detention.
2. We also recommend Mauritania to follow the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur regarding contemporary forms of slavery and to implement the 2014 roadmap of the government to eradicate slavery.

The Netherlands strongly regrets the fact that slavery is still widespread in Mauritania and that legislation criminalizing slavery is not enforced. Thousands, mostly of Haratine origin, live under direct control of their masters and do not receive payment for their work. They face verbal and physical abuse, and slave-status is hereditary. We furthermore regret that in 2014 anti-slavery activists have been arrested and remain in detention as of today.

We also regret the fact that not all children in detention are held separately from adult detainees and that women have been subjected to torture and other ill-treatment while in detention.

Thank you, Mr. President.