**Universal Periodic Review 23 – Rwanda**

**Statement by the Kingdom of the Netherlands**

Thank you Mr. President,

The Netherlands thanks Rwanda for its comprehensive report and appreciates the progress made since the last UPR, particularly in amending the 2009 media law.

1. The Netherlands recommends ratification and implementation of international human rights treaties, in particular the International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance (CED).
2. We also recommend to increase the space for civil society in Rwanda. A first step should be to simplify regulations for NGOs, making it easier to register, in order to support a thriving civil society which will contribute to Rwanda’s progress and prosperity.

The Netherlands is concerned about reports of disappearances, unlawful detention and unfair trials of vulnerable people and minorities. We call on the Government of Rwanda to ratify and implement the International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance (CED).

We believe that an enabling environment for civil society and the media is of utmost importance for social and economic development. In Rwanda however, procedures and regulations for registration of NGO’s are complex and too many government institutions are involved, which often leads to unnecessary delay and deferral.

We hope that the 2017 elections will be seized by Rwanda to show that openness and debate in society is possible, and that democratic values laid down in the constitution are respected.