**Universal Periodic Review 24 – Niger**

**Statement by the Kingdom of the Netherlands**

Thank you Mr. President,

The Kingdom of the Netherlands thanks the Niger for its comprehensive report. Especially in view of the scarcity of resources available, it commends the Niger for progress made since last review, among others with respect to the creation of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights.

We welcome the importance the Niger attaches to women’s rights. However, we note that limited progress has been made with respect to access to maternal health care; and reducing the practice of female genital mutilation and early marriage.

We have two recommendations:

1. The Netherlands recommends Niger to increase efforts to improve women’s health; in particular access to family planning services, maternal health care and eliminating the practice of female genital mutilation.

2. We also recommend Niger to refrain from criminalizing the legitimate activities of human rights defenders and repeal or amend all laws and policies which restrict their activities and rights, including by ensuring that anti-terrorism legislation is not misused.

The NL is concerned about the treatment of human rights defenders. Particularly those working on corporate accountability and transparency issues face arrest, arbitrary detention and spurious charges.

Thank you, Mr. President