**Universal Periodic Review 24 – Paraguay**

**Statement by the Kingdom of the Netherlands**

Thank you Mr. President,

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

We welcome the steps Paraguay has taken in the field of promotion and protection of human rights and we commend Paraguay for being a global example in the field of international human rights mechanisms, such as the UN treaty bodies.

However, we note that, as far as we have been able to ascertain, no specific steps have been taken to defend the safety and rights of human rights defenders.

1. The Kingdom of the Netherlands recommends Paraguay to take steps to reduce the harassment, intimidation and death threats against defenders of human rights, and publicly recognize the legitimacy and importance of the role of these defenders.
2. We recommend Paraguay to take additional measures, including providing resources and assistance, access to courts and appropriate punishment for violations, to tackle sexual and intimate partner violence and exploitation of women and girls.

According to 2014 figures there are 684 known cases of girls within the age group of 10-14 years, who became pregnant as a result of sexual violence; one particular case in 2015 drew publicity to the abuses and the legal constraints. Adopting policies and programs to protect sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls would represent a good step in the direction of protection of this vulnerable group.

Thank you, Mr. President.