**Universal Periodic Review 44 – Azerbaijan**

**Statement by the Kingdom of the Netherlands**

The Kingdom of the Netherlands thanks the delegation of Azerbaijan for the presentation of its national report.

The Netherlands welcomes steps taken on religious freedom in Azerbaijan but notes with concern the lack of improvements in the field of minority rights, in particular for the Karabakh Armenians and their right to return.

The Netherlands therefore recommends Azerbaijan to:

1. Adopt measures to ensure the safety and rights of Karabakh Armenians, in order to support their right to return. And to adopt measures to ensure protection of property rights and cultural heritage of Karabakh Armenians.

2. Adopt measures to ensure the safety of human rights defenders, CSOs, journalists, and political organisations without fear of harassment or reprisals.

We wish Azerbaijan success with the follow-up of all recommendations it receives during this fourth UPR cycle.

Thank you.