**Universal Periodic Review 46 – Afghanistan**

**Statement by the Kingdom of the Netherlands**

The Kingdom of the Netherlands appreciates the presentation of the report.

We condemn the unparalleled human rights violations against vulnerable groups in Afghanistan. The aggravation of the systematic exclusion of women – with no access to education, work, political participation, and judicial protection against gender-based violence – is deplorable.

Substantial measures must be taken to ensure the protection of fundamental rights for women, minorities, civil society, and LGBTIQ+ persons. Afghanistan remains bound by the international human rights laws and conventions to which it is a state party.

The Netherlands therefore recommends Afghanistan to:

1. Eliminate restrictions on- and promote women’s full, equal, and meaningful participation in all aspects of social, political, economic, legal, and public life, including re-opening secondary and university education for women and girls.

2. Immediately release and cease arbitrary arrests and detentions of civil society members, including human rights defenders and journalists, and enable them to work freely.

Thank you.