**Universal Periodic Review 28 – Benin**

**Statement by the Kingdom of the Netherlands – check against delivery (ST 1:30)**

Thank you Mr. President,

We would like to thank Benin for its comprehensive report and welcome the importance Benin attaches to promoting and protecting human rights. We also note the efforts that have been made by Benin in improving prison conditions. We encourage the government to proceed swiftly with the development of a concerted strategy to reduce prison overcrowding.

The Netherlands remains concerned about the situation of vulnerable groups in Benin. We urge the government to take further measures in this regard.

1. The Netherlands therefore recommends that the government of Benin continues to strengthen efforts to provide better legal protection for vulnerable groups, especially women, children and youth by increasing the number of (specialized) judges and providing free legal services for those who seek it.
2. We also recommend that Benin undertakes the necessary steps to ensure that the National Human Rights Commission is operating in line with the Paris Principles, particularly in terms of its financial independence and with sufficient human and material resources to enable it to effectively exercise its mandate.

The Netherlands welcomes Benin’s formal abolishment of the death penalty and in that light encourages the government to swiftly remove the death penalty provisions from all national legislation.

We wish Benin every success in the implementation of the accepted UPR recommendations.

Thank you, Mr. President.