**Universal Periodic Review 28 – Pakistan**

**Statement by the Kingdom of the Netherlands**

Thank you Mr President,

The Kingdom of the Netherlands thanks the government of Pakistan for its comprehensive report and wishes to congratulate Pakistan with its recent election to the Human Rights Council. The Kingdom of the Netherlands welcomes Pakistan’s commitment to human rights, particularly its efforts in drafting new legislation. We urge Pakistan to ensure effective implementation of these laws.

The Netherlands remains concerned about the violence and discrimination against religious, ethnic and gender based minorities. We encourage Pakistan to advance a climate of tolerance, inclusiveness, offline and online freedom of expression, diversity and equal rights for all, especially for women and girls, the LGBTI community and religious minorities.

* The Netherlands recommend Pakistan to adopt and implement legal and practical measures, following ICCPR recommendation 34, to ensure the protection of religious minorities, including Christians, Ahmadis, Hindus and Sikhs. In particular measures to prevent the abuse of blasphemy legislation, halt forced conversions and marriages, and prevent and prosecute hate speech and violence against members of religious minority communities.
* The Netherlands recommend Pakistan to adopt effective measures, in line with ICCPR recommendations 11 and 12, to prevent and punish all forms of discrimination against minority groups by adding clear provisions to articles 25 to 27 of the Constitution to ensure prohibition of discrimination on all grounds, including sexual orientation and gender identity, as well as by adding clear protection provisions in criminal laws concerning public assembly, obscenity and public nuisance.

Finally we ask Pakistan to ensure implementation of human rights legislation by building the capacity of law enforcement agencies, empowering and resourcing human rights institutions, such as the national commission for enforced disappearances, and by protecting, enabling and encouraging the role of civil society and human rights defenders.

Thank you Mr President.