**Universal Periodic Review 37 – Lebanon**

**Statement by the Kingdom of the Netherlands – 18 January 2021**

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

The Netherlands commends Lebanon for the legislative progress on sexual and gender based violence, specifically by criminalizing sexual harassment late 2020. Yet, we encourage Lebanon to intensify efforts to improve the legal position of women, specifically by combatting violence against woman by eliminating existing loopholes in legislation and by lifting reservations to CEDAW article 9.

The Netherlands expresses its concern about the worrying state of freedom of expression, the rights of LGBTI and the waning respect for international law regarding the rights of refugees.

Therefore, the Netherlands recommends Lebanon:

1. To promote and uphold the right to freedom of expression, including press freedom, and to ensure that legislation and state practice are brought in line with Article 19 of the ICCPR.
2. To repeal Article 534, and other articles of the Lebanese penal code that are used to criminalize same sex relations and nonconforming gender identities and expression.
3. To uphold the principle of non-refoulement as per commitments under CAT.

The Netherlands wishes Lebanon success with the implementation of the recommendations it receives during this third UPR cycle.

Thank you.