**Opening Statement by Minister of Foreign Affairs and Culture, Jenis av Rana**

Madame President, distinguished delegates

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the Human Rights Council for the opportunity to participate in this dialogue.

Due to COVID-19, the public hearing in preparation for the Faroese report was held in writing. The hearing offered NGOs and the general public the opportunity to present their views on human rights in the Faroe Islands.

The submissions and input received have served as essential elements in our preparation for today’s review and will continue to do so in the process ahead.

The Faroese report addresses a number of human rights issues, although these are by no means exhaustive. Due to the limited space, not all issues are included in the final report.

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‘The Kingdom of Denmark` is the Contracting Party to International Conventions on Human Rights. The Faroes are, however, a separate jurisdiction. The Faroese Government has assumed exclusive competence in most areas and is therefore consulted prior to the ratification of international agreements. As a rule, Denmark makes geographical reservations for the Faroes unless the Faroese Government has decided that the Faroes should be covered by the agreement.

We have chosen to be subject to seven UN treaties and since 2004 we have actively submitted dedicated contributions from the Faroe Islands to reports from the Kingdom of Denmark to the relevant UN treaty bodies.

We consider the UN monitoring processes important to the strengthening of human rights. The recommendations are recognized and given serious consideration.

The Faroe Islands are home to around 53,000 inhabitants and we are ambitious when it comes to securing our citizens, the living as well as unborn, a decent standard of living and fundamental human rights. The Faroe Islands are a close-knit community with strong local democracy and social cohesion. Although a National Human Rights Institution is yet to be established, there are several systems in place to protect the rights of citizens.

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Promoting and ensuring human rights is a dynamic and ongoing process. We appreciate such hearings as an opportunity for input and we look forward to today’s review.

Thank you for your attention.