**Universal Periodic Review 41– Bahrain**

**Statement by the Kingdom of the Netherlands**

Mr. President,

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

The Netherlands commends Bahrain on extending an alternative sentencing reform for prisoners and the maintenance of a positive record on freedom of religion or belief.

We do, however, remain concerned about reports of further shrinking civil society space and encourage increased opportunities for broad political participation by means of political associations, in particular in light of the upcoming elections.

We would equally welcome further measures to ensure protection against torture and ill-treatment in detention.

The Netherlands **recommends** the Government of Bahrain to:

1. Reinstate political associations and create equal opportunities for political participation, allowing the exercise of the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly.
2. Extend a standing invitation to all special procedures as soon as possible, including to the Special Rapporteur on Torture, and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment.

I thank you.

[1m20s]