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**Statement by the Kingdom of the Netherlands**

Mr. President,

The Kingdom of the Netherlands thanks India for its national report.

We commend India on progress in ensuring the rights of women and girls, such as the prohibition of gender-based selective abortion, child marriages, sexual harassment in the workplace, and marital rape.

However, much remains to be done to improve the situation of women and girls and other vulnerable groups, badly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Netherlands **recommends** India to:

1. Strengthen enforcement mechanisms for the prevention of gender-based violence, by allocating additional budget for the elimination on the long term through early childhood education and awareness raising, and by establishing and resourcing institutions to support victims.
2. Take measures to prevent the abuse of so-called “anti-conversion” laws, ensuring that such laws do not infringe upon the constitutionally-guaranteed freedom of religion and belief.

Thank you.