**Universal Periodic Review 41 – the Philippines**

***Statement by the Kingdom of the Netherlands***

Mr. President,

The Netherlands welcomes the efforts of the Philippines to address human rights concerns through the UN Joint Programme, especially in relation to its anti-drug campaign. We encourage the Philippines to ensure full implementation of the Programme to achieve accountability.

We remain concerned about shrinking civic spaces and serious threats to civil society actors and journalists.

The Netherlands **recommends** the Philippines to:

1. Take all necessary steps to foster a safe environment for human rights defenders and journalists in the exercise of their rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association, by decriminalizing libel laws and enact a Human Rights Defenders Protection bill.
2. Decriminalize abortion and ensure that there are no criminal penalties for any services related to abortion care.

We wish the Philippines success with this UPR.

Thank you.