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**Statement by the Kingdom of the Netherlands**

Mr. Vice-president,

The Kingdom of the Netherlands commends the government of Guatemala for increasing the budget allocated to the human rights Ombudsman.

The Netherlands is, however, concerned about reports on the weakening of anti-corruption measures, as well as the criminalization of judges, prosecutors, journalists and human rights defenders, in the context of the fight against corruption. These developments have an adverse effect on democratic stability in the country and have forced many judicial actors, as well as human right defenders and journalists into exile.

The Netherlands is furthermore concerned about the pervasive nature of violence against women in Guatemala and the lack of accountability of perpetrators, as only a small number of cases is prosecuted. Indigenous women deserve particular attention as they face intersectional forms of violence such as racism, sexism, political violence and criminalization.

The Netherlands **recommends** Guatemala to:

1. Halt and prevent attacks on independent judges, including the use of spurious legal proceedings to remove their immunity, and respect the constitutional mandate of judicial actors.
2. Refrain from acts leading to the dissolution of NGOs or the suspension of their peaceful activities, *inter alia* by repealing Decree 4-2020 reforming the Law of NGOs for Development in order to remove undue restrictions on the freedom of association, and instead promote a meaningful political dialogue that allows and embraces diverging views, including those of NGOs, human rights defenders, journalists, political activists and other stakeholders.

Thank you.

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