**Universal Periodic Review 43 – Tonga**

**Statement by the Kingdom of the Netherlands**

Mr. President,

The Kingdom of the Netherlands welcomes the delegation of the Kingdom of Tonga and thanks them for the presentation of their national report.

The Netherlands commends the Tongan Government for establishing the Family Protection Legal Aid Centre to protect survivors of domestic and gender-based violence and for ensuring that these services are extended to LGBTQI+ persons and diverse family contexts.

Nonetheless, we remain concerned about the challenges that prevent the full inclusion in society and enjoyment of human rights by LGBTQI+ persons in Tonga.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands recommends Tonga to:

1. Amend the Criminal Offences Act to decriminalize consensual same sex activities and to amend existing legislation that discriminates against LGBTQI+ persons, including those related to gender identity and expression, access to health care, and same-sex marriage;
2. Eliminate discriminatory norms based on gender from the legal system and redouble efforts to combat any discriminatory practices against women and girls, in particular regarding their right to property, including through the ratification of CEDAW.
3. Establish an independent National Human Rights Institution compliant with the Paris Principles.

The Netherlands wishes the esteemed delegation of Tonga every success with the implementation and follow-up of all accepted recommendations it receives during this fourth UPR cycle.

Thank you, President.