**Universal Periodic Review – Turkmenistan (7 May 2018) Statement by the Kingdom of the Netherlands**

Thank you Mr. President,

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

We welcome the important steps undertaken by the Government of Turkmenistan to strengthen its human rights framework, including the adoption of a national action plan for gender equality and the national plan for human rights.

The Netherlands remains concerned about the continued pressure on human rights defenders, civil society and independent media in Turkmenistan. An enabling space for civil society, including in the online sphere, is indispensable for the protection and promotion of all human rights.

Therefore, the Netherlands would like to make the following two recommendations:

1. First, to ensure unobstructed internet access and cease censorship of online media, including foreign websites and communication applications. This includes the repeal of all provisions from the Law on the Regulation of the Development of the Internet and the Provision of Internet Services that require state licencing of the activities of internet providers.
2. Second, to tackle the issue of enforced disappearances, *inter alia* by acceding to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance;

We thank the delegation of Turkmenistan and wish Turkmenistan all the best in its UPR.

Thank you, Mr. President