**Universal Periodic Review 31 – Belize
Statement by the Kingdom of the Netherlands** **- 12 November 2018**

Thank you, Mr. President,

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

We commend Belize on their efforts to decrease gender-based violence and provide better support to victims through their National Gender-Based Violence Plan. We compliment the efforts made by the National Women’s Commission on promoting gender equality.

While appreciating the positive developments in Belize, we remain concerned about several aspects of sexual and reproductive rights and sexual orientation and gender identity.

The Netherlands **recommends** Belize:

1. To take timely measures to ensure the rights of girls and women, in particular by raising the minimum legal age of marriage to 18 to prevent forced child marriages, and by guaranteeing independent access to sexual and reproductive health services in accordance with the age of consent and without parental permission.
2. To include an explicit prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity in the Constitution and to amend any other relevant legislation, such as the Administration of Estates Act and the Social Security Act, in order for same-sex couples to enjoy equal rights as heterosexual couples.

The Netherlands wishes Belize every success with the implementation, reporting and follow-up of all the UPR recommendations that it receives during this third UPR cycle.

I thank you, Mr. President.