**Universal Periodic Review 31 – Congo**

**Statement by the Kingdom of the Netherlands - 14 November 2018**

Thank you, Mr President.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands thanks the Republic of the Congo for the presentation of its national report.

The Netherlands welcomes in particular its efforts to improve the rights of women and children in the country, two groups making up the great majority of the Congo’s population.

The Netherlands is however concerned to note that several gender-related recommendations that were accepted in 2013, have so far not been implemented. Particularly those relating to female genital mutilation, on which no progress is mentioned in the national report.

The Netherlands **recommends** the Republic of the Congo:

1. To adopt and implement a comprehensive law addressing and outlining punishment for all forms of violence against women, including early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation, marital rape and sexual abuse.
2. To consider establishing a specific human rights mechanism, independent and in full compliance with the Paris Principles, to protect the rights of the child, potentially within the framework of the NHRI.

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

Thank you, Mr President.