**Universal Periodic Review 31 - Malta**

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

Mr. President,

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

The Netherlands commends Malta on its first place in the ILGA-Europe rating on LGBTI laws. The Netherlands is pleased to see Malta’s commitment to establish the independent human rights institute.

However, there are increasing concerns about reports concerning the safety of journalists in Malta. SRHR also remains an important concern. Although the Netherlands commends Malta for making the morning after pill more accessible, we regret that abortion, under all circumstances, is still a criminal act under Maltese law.

Therefore, the Netherlands **recommends** Malta:

1. To decriminalize abortion, preferably completely, but at least when the life or health of the mother is in danger, by bringing the law in line with obligations deriving from several human rights conventions.
2. To assure that crimes and offences are investigated thoroughly and court cases are concluded within a reasonable amount of time.

The Netherlands wishes the government of Malta 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.