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Mr President

New Zealand welcomes Saudi Arabia’s participation today.

New Zealand **welcomes** efforts to improve the position of women in Saudi society – including by issuing driving licences to both men and women. New Zealand **recommends** Saudi Arabia continue to introduce steps to achieve gender equality, in particular the abolishment of the system of male guardianship.

New Zealand is very concerned about the restrictions on the right to freedom of expression including peaceful criticism, and **urges** Saudi Arabia to ensure that journalists, advocates and human rights defenders can carry out their work independently while protecting their well-being.

New Zealand **recommends** Saudi Arabia investigate all instances of torture and extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, including such acts committed extraterritorially, and bring all perpetrators to account, in accordance with international human rights law. In this context New Zealand is deeply disturbed by the case of Mr Jamal Khashoggi and urges Saudi Arabia to participate openly and transparently in the Turkish investigation.

New Zealand **encourages** Saudi Arabia to establish a moratorium on executions, working towards its abolition, including through ratification of the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR; and **recommends** it place an absolute ban on death sentences against persons below the age of 18 at the time when the offence was committed.

Finally, New Zealand **recommends** that Saudi Arabia become a party to the ICCPR and the ICESCR.

Thank you Mr President.