**Universal Periodic Review 32 – Vanuatu**

**Statement by the Kingdom of the Netherlands** **– 24 January 2019**

Thank you, Mr President,

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

The Netherlands commends Vanuatu’s strong efforts to combat climate change, attested by its own very low emissions per capita, and by the important voice Vanuatu provides in international fora.

However, The Netherlands remains concerned about gender equality in Vanuatu. Although we commend Vanuatu’s accession to CEDAW and its Optional Protocol more than a decade ago, the provisions of this treaty are still not enshrined in Vanuatu’s laws. Harmful practices such as child, early & forced marriage continue to be prevalent. This also contributes to a persistent low participation of women in public and political life, exemplified by an all-male parliament.

Therefore, The Netherlands **recommends** Vanuatu:

1. To abolish child, early & forced marriage by setting the minimum age for marriage for both men and women at 18.
2. To strengthen efforts to achieve SDG 4 and 5 by expanding access to education, and by offering support programmes to encourage female entrepreneurship and participation in political life.

The Netherlands wishes Vanuatu success with the follow-up of all recommendations it receives during this third UPR cycle.

Thank you, Mr President.