**Universal Periodic Review 32 – Eritrea**

**Statement by the Kingdom of the Netherlands** **– 28 January 2019**

Thank you, Mr President,

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

The Netherlands welcomes the improved relations between Eritrea and Ethiopia and hopes that the positive developments in the Horn of Africa and Eritrea’s membership to the Human Rights Council will lead to the improvement of human rights in Eritrea.

The Netherlands commends Eritrea for its progress on preventing female genital mutilation and child, early and forced marriage.

The Netherlands, however, does remain worried about a number of human rights issues, including the national service and the punitive measures Eritreans face upon their return to Eritrea after having left the country illegally.

Therefore, The Netherlands **recommends** Eritrea:

1. To take the necessary steps to end indefinite national service and begin a phased demobilization for those serving for more than the statutory 18 months.
2. Furthermore, The Netherlands recommends Eritrea to guarantee that Eritreans are able to return to Eritrea in safety, with dignity and without fear of being penalized for having left Eritrea.

Thank you, Mr President.

\*Aanbevelingen kunnen gebruik maken van bijvoorbeeld de volgende termen: To address/further strengthen/prioritize/ intensify/implement/develop/adopt/harmonize/change article../counter/amend