**Universal Periodic Review 33 – Equatorial Guinea**

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

Thank you, Mr President,

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

The Netherlands commends Equatorial Guinea for undertaking initial steps towards legislative reform by the establishment of the National Codification Commission, in order to streamline domestic law with international standards.

However, the Netherlands is concerned about the lack of progress in this reform, specifically regarding the independence of the judiciary, and the delay in the ratification-process of several international human rights instruments.

The Netherlands also remains concerned about limitations on several fundamental freedoms, such as freedom of expression and association, freedom of the press, as well as persisting gender inequality.

Therefore, The Netherlands **recommends** Equatorial Guinea:

1. To bring legislation on freedom of expression and association in line with international standards, including through the amendment of NGO regulation Law 1/1999;
2. To ensure the implementation of a legal framework that clearly prohibits discrimination and violence against women, in line with SDG 5.

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

Thank you, Mr President.