**Universal Periodic Review 33 – Nicaragua**

**Statement by the Kingdom of the Netherlands** **– 15 May 2019**

Mr President,

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

The Netherlands recognizes the excellent position of Nicaragua at the Global Gender Index of the World Economic Forum, which reflects Nicaragua’s efforts of gender parity in public office.

Nonetheless, the high rate of violence against women and girls, including sexual violence remains worrisome. This is a large contributor as to why, according to UNICEF, Nicaragua rates highest in the western hemisphere when it comes to child and teenage pregnancies. In this light, the Netherlands hopes that Nicaragua considers to facilitate the voluntary termination of pregnancies.

Moreover, the Netherlands is concerned about the lack of freedom of expression in Nicaragua, especially for journalists, human rights defenders and persons with a different political opinion than the regime.

Therefore, the Netherlands **recommends** Nicaragua:

1. To draft and implement an action plan to reduce child pregnancies consisting of awareness raising campaigns, active persecution of rapists, comprehensive sexual education and access to emergency contraception.
2. To respect and guarantee freedom of expression for all civilians; which includes the unconditional release of incarcerated journalists and political prisoners and the return of confiscated material of the media and human rights organizations.

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

Thank you, Mr President.