**Universal Periodic Review 34 – (El Salvador)**

**Statement by the Kingdom of the Netherlands – (4 November 2019)**

Thank you, Mr President,

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

The Netherlands commends El Salvador with the progress it made regarding gender equality, with a view to achieving SDG 5.

However, the Netherlands regrets the fact that El Salvador has not yet ratified the Optional Protocol of CEDAW, despite our previous recommendation. Specifically, the Netherlands is concerned about the criminalization of abortion in all circumstances and the obligation of health professionals to report suspected abortions to the authorities. We are also extremely concerned to see the active prosecution of women for abortion or other obstetric emergencies, and extreme sentences (up to 40 years) that they receive.

We are also concerned about a new Amnesty Law that seeks to limit or avoid punishment for those responsible for crimes against humanity and other serious human rights violations during the Civil War.

The Netherlands therefore **recommends** El Salvador to:

1. Legalize abortion, if not completely, at least in cases of incest and rape, fetal impairment and in cases in which the mother’s life or health is in danger, bringing the law in line with several human rights conventions.
2. Adopt a National Reconciliation legislation that takes into account the voices of the victims and helps to ensure truth, justice and reparation for the serious human rights violations committed during the armed conflict. And to avoid a bill that would promote impunity for those responsible for serious human rights violations committed in the past.

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

Thank you, Mr President.