**Universal Periodic Review 34 – Republic of Madagascar**

**Statement by the Kingdom of the Netherlands – 11 November 2019**

Thank you, Mr. Vice President,

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

The Netherlands welcomes steps taken to combat violence against women. We encourage Madagascar to continue their efforts to fully and meaningfully implement the National Strategies to Combat Gender-based Violence and Child Marriages, in line with SDG 5.

The Netherlands is concerned about the high level of impunity for the excessive use of force by security forces, a lack of due process and the overcrowded and inhuman prison conditions.

Furthermore, the ongoing harassment and intimidation faced by journalists, human rights defenders and political dissidents is disconcerting. Concrete measures need to be taken to secure the freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and civic space.

The Netherlands recommends Madagascar to:

1. Ensure accountability for cases of excessive use of force by security forces by effectively investigating all allegations, and bring suspected perpetrators to justice in fair trials that meet international standards.

2. Enhance the freedom of expression by amending all restrictive provisions of the Law on Communication and the Cyber Crimes Law, and to align these laws with the constitutional provisions and international human rights standards.

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

Thank you, Mr Vice President.