**Universal Periodic Review 35 – Armenia**

**Statement by the Kingdom of the Netherlands** **– 23 January 2020**

Thank you, Madam President,

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

1.5 years since the Velvet Resolution, the Netherlands commends the government of Armenia with the recent constitutional reform. The government has demonstrated commitment to Human Rights with progressive changes in the areas of freedom of expression and media, among others.

Yet, important challenges remain. Especially with regards to the protection and promotion of human rights for all citizens in Armenia, including the protection of vulnerable groups. Further steps need to be taken to foster the freedom of religion and belief.

The Netherlands **recommends** Armenia to:

1. Include sexual orientation and gender identity as protected grounds in the anti-discrimination legislation.
2. Implement the recent recommendation of the OSCE-ODIHR by revising and clarifying the Draft Law on ensuring Equality Before the Law and ensure credible and effective oversight of its enactment.

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

Thank you, Madam President.