**Universal Periodic Review 35 – Lesotho**

**Statement by the Kingdom of the Netherlands** **– 22 January 2020**

Thank you Madam President,

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

The Netherlands appreciates the government’s commitment to the SDG agenda as demonstrated by the introduction of the National Strategic Development Plan II. We encourage the government to ensure a human rights based approach in its further implementation.

In line with our previous recommendations in the first and second UPR cycle, we remain concerned about the high level of discrimination and violence against LGBTI individuals and the widespread problem of gender based violence. Moreover, we are worried about undue restrictions placed on the freedom of expression.

The Netherlands **recommends** Lesotho to:

1. Review and amend the legislative framework to ensure that sexual orientation and gender identity is included as a protection ground for non-discrimination.
2. Bring national legal provisions in line with international standards on freedom of expression under the ICCPR.

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

Thank you Madam President