**Universal Periodic Review 36 – Belarus**

**Statement by the Kingdom of the Netherlands** **– 2 November 2020**

Madame President,

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

We commend Belarus for the involvement in promoting the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Netherlands is, however, deeply concerned about the human rights situation in Belarus, including the grave human rights violations in the context of the recent presidential elections.

We urge the Belarusian government to cooperate fully with the OSCE fact-finding mission, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus, OHCHR and other human rights mechanisms, including by granting full and unimpeded access to the country.

We further note the lack of a comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation to ensure access to justice for victims of discrimination.

The Netherlands therefore recommends Belarus:

1. To amend the Criminal Code with an article providing for liability for all kinds of torture and join the Optional Protocol to the Convention against torture, and to ensure full accountability;
2. To adopt a comprehensive anti-discriminatory legislation defining direct and indirect discrimination, as well as other forms of its manifestation.

We thank the delegation of Belarus and wish Belarus every success in this UPR session.

I thank you, Madame President.