

Mr. President,

The following concerns have been prioritized by the Dutch coalition of 17 NGOs that are involved in the UPR process. We want to stress the importance of NGO participation in all human rights debates. NGOs provide the checks and balances that give human rights a real meaning. The Dutch government has conducted an open dialogue with NGOs. We highly appreciate this approach, but we still have concerns on substance.

The Netherlands should speed up the ratification of important human rights instruments, such as the Convention against Disappearances, the Convention on the Rights of Migrants, and the Optional Protocols to the CRC and CAT.

The Netherlands should comply with the recommendations made by Treaty Bodies. For example, CEDAW has recommended that the government discontinue supporting a political party that discriminates against women. *Aim for human rights* and others have successfully sued the government to force it to implement this recommendation. But the government, by appealing against the verdict, still postpones living up to its obligations.

In the Netherlands there is no ministry that is responsible for domestic human rights; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs only has a coordinating role. The Netherlands has recently drafted a human rights strategy for its foreign policy, but strategies should also be developed for domestic human rights policies.

Moreover, the government has delayed the establishment of a National Human Rights Institution for 15 years now. We recommend that such an Institution in accordance with the Paris Principles should be established before the end of 2008.

The Netherlands should develop and implement a holistic approach to prevent the spread of intolerance and discrimination on grounds of religion, race, sexual orientation and ethnic origin. Human rights education should be promoted in all schools. Children should be made aware of the principles of universal human rights and tolerance, as early as possible.

The Netherlands has not yet implemented all pledges it made two years ago to this Council. We request that you urge our government to implement its pledges, as well as the outcomes of the UPR.

Thank you, mr. President.

Contact information:

- *Aim for human rights*: Martha Meijer, director, + 31 6 2181 5853, m.meijer@aimforhumanrights.nl
- UPR Coalition of the Netherlands: Maria Lourijsen, +31 6 2468 5370, njcm@law.leidenuniv.nl
- Dutch Human Rights Coalition (Breed Mensenrechten Overleg): Friederycke Haijer, +31 70 3136800, f.haijer@justitiaetpax.nl