

## **53<sup>rd</sup> session of the Human Rights Council**

### **Item 3 – Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the right to health**

#### Benelux statement

22 June 2023

Mr. President,

I speak on behalf of Belgium, the Netherlands and my own delegation, Luxembourg. We fully align with the EU statement.

The Benelux countries welcome the Special Rapporteur's timely report: the speed of the digital transformation is often outpacing the ability of States effectively to safeguard human rights.

We have all witnessed the extensive and unprecedented use of digital technologies to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, allowing governments to compensate for existing weaknesses in health systems.

However, the use of digital technologies can also seriously impede the enjoyment of the right to health. Many people, such as children, poor, or older persons, face multiple barriers to access health care, like a lack of digital literacy or digital equipment. Moreover, digital technologies can perpetuate or exacerbate existing vulnerabilities of marginalised groups, particularly women. We are deeply concerned by the practice of intrusive data collection and surveillance by states and private companies: in the context of criminalized health services, such as abortion, this can cause harm at many levels.

The Benelux countries call on all States to step up the regulation of the collection and storage of personal information and to prevent its unauthorized use or disclosure.

Dr Mofokeng,

How is the EU General Data Protection Regulation in your opinion currently faring in regulating the collection and storage of health-related personal information, and in preventing its unauthorised use or disclosure? Are there lessons for other regions, or flaws to be corrected?

Thank you.

(242 words – 1m30s max)