

ADVANCE QUESTIONS TO PAKISTAN Add.2

NETHERLANDS

- The Netherlands welcomes the Pakistani commitment to establish an independent national human rights commission, as put forward in Pakistan's voluntary pledge for renewed membership in the UN Human Rights Council. The Netherlands would welcome information on government plans to implement this commitment.
- The Netherlands remains concerned about the aftereffects of the imposition of a state emergency in November and December 2007, especially regarding the temporary suspension of fundamental freedoms as guaranteed by Pakistan's Constitution. The Netherlands finds the explanation of reasons for the imposition the state of emergency as given in the government's report (p.2/3) unsatisfactory and would like to ask what the new government's plans are with regard to the full restoring of all fundamental freedoms, as well as to fully restore the integrity and independence of the judiciary.
- The Netherlands, while recognizing progress made on the situation of women by the introduction of the Women's Protection Act in november 2006, remains concerned about discrimination against women, as well as against other vulnerable groups such as religious minorities, in Pakistani society. The recent trend of growing religious fundamentalism is worsening the situation of women and religious minorities in parts of the country. There are concerns about reports of frequent abuses of the Blasphemy Law, despite legal amendments adopted in 2004. The Netherlands would like to know what measures Pakistan will take to effectively protect the rights of all minorities – including amendments to the blasphemy law.