



Permanent Representation of the  
Kingdom of the Netherlands to the  
United Nations Office and other  
International Organizations in Geneva

REF: GEV-PA 2026/23

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and, with reference to the communication of November 26, 2025 (ref. **AL NLD 4.2025**) of the Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 52/17.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands first wishes to reiterate its full support and appreciation for the mandates of the Working Groups and Special Rapporteurs. It gives serious consideration to their views. The Kingdom will always seek to respond and actively engage with UN mandate holders and has extended a standing invitation to all UN special procedures. The Kingdom is open to dialogue with its international partners on the protection of human rights in the Netherlands, in a spirit of self-reflection and with a view to improving the implementation of human rights. In this context, the Kingdom appreciates the opportunity provided by the Special Rapporteur to respond to their concerns and questions regarding the recent cuts in Official Development Assistance (ODA) executed by the Netherlands.

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva avails itself of the opportunity to renew to the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.

Geneva, 20 January 2026

*Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*  
[ohchr-registry@un.org](mailto:ohchr-registry@un.org)

## Response to communication AL NLD 4.2025 / 26 November 2025

1. Could you please provide any additional information and/or comment(s) you may have on the concerns that have been mentioned above?

2. Could you kindly provide information on the rationale behind your Excellency's Government's decision to reduce Official Development Assistance (ODA) substantially, and whether this measure is intended to be temporary?

The level of ODA is determined by the Dutch government. As one of the few countries in the world, the Netherlands was dedicated to the 0.7% ODA commitment from 1975 to 2012 (and in 2015).

In 2024, the Netherlands spent 0.62% of its gross national income (GNI) on official development assistance (ODA), making it the sixth-largest donor among all Development Assistance Committee (DAC) member countries.

Please find below the expected ODA totals and ODA percentages for the Netherlands, which are also to be found in appendix 6 (bijlage 6) of the following document: <https://open.overheid.nl/documenten/15f4bc2d-ebdc-407f-bc5a-e4a19853487e/file>

in EUR millions	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Projected ODA total	6,735	6,715	6,088	5,754	6,093	6,313
Projected ODA percentage	0.57%	0.55%	0.48%	0.44%	0.45%	0.44%

In line with the coalition agreement of the current government, which has caretaker status,<sup>1</sup> the Netherlands will reduce its ODA budget by €2.4 billion by 2027. This reduction will be implemented gradually over the coming years. In parallel with this budget reduction, as of 2027 in-donor refugee costs (IDRC) will be capped at a maximum of 10% of Dutch ODA.

The largest contributor to Dutch ODA is the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Development. On 20 February 2025 the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development sent a Development Policy Letter to the House of Representatives, detailing the ministry's budget priorities for the coming years as they pertain to development.

The Netherlands will explicitly seek opportunities for cooperation that benefit both the Netherlands and recipient countries. The aim is to contribute to greater prosperity and more stability in and less migration from the regions where the Netherlands is active, since those are the places where we can make a meaningful difference through international development.

3. Please describe the measures taken by your Excellency's Government to mitigate the adverse impacts of the decrease and termination of Official Development Assistance (ODA) on climate action and human rights, in line with its international obligations.

The Netherlands will continue to contribute to international climate finance. One of the ways we will do this is by sharpening the focus of our efforts on combating the consequences of climate change within themes such as water management and food security. In addition, the Netherlands seeks to mobilise more private finance for climate action and continues to contribute to the main international climate funds. The Netherlands will also continue to support the promotion and protection of human rights via various funds and programmes.

4. Please indicate if your Excellency's Government is considering a review or reversal of the decision to reduce or terminate ODA in the short term.

<sup>1</sup> At the time of writing, political negotiations are under way to form a new government. Until the new government takes office, the policy of the previous government – which currently has caretaker status – will remain in effect.

The budget cuts were a political decision of the current government, which has caretaker status. At the time of writing, political negotiations are under way to form a new government. Until the new government takes office, the policy of the previous government – which currently has caretaker status – will remain in effect.

*5. What measures will your Excellency's Government take to uphold security and development through human rights amidst the cuts in ODA?*

Protecting and promoting human rights, democracy and the international legal order lie at the heart of the foreign policy pursued by the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The human rights ambitions and objectives are set out in our policy document 'Human Rights, Democracy and the International Legal Order'.<sup>2</sup> These ambitions and objectives are based on the international obligations of the Kingdom of the Netherlands with regard to human rights, such as the UN human rights treaties (including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights), as well as the European Convention on Human Rights, the European Social Charter and European Union human rights instruments, such as the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

Our main objectives relating to human rights are: protecting and promoting the observance of human rights, with a particular focus on five priorities (equal rights for women and girls; equal rights for LGBTIQ+ persons; freedom of religion and belief; protecting freedom of expression, online and offline; protecting human rights defenders and civic space); opposing democratic backsliding around the world and strengthening the rule of law; and promoting the development of the international legal order (in accordance with Article 90 of the Constitution).

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.government.nl/binaries/government/documenten/policy-notes/2023/11/09/policy-note-human-rights-democracy-and-international-legal-order/EN+-+Policy+document+Human+Rights+-+Democracy+-+the+International+Legal+Order.pdf>

