On the Draft General Comment relating to Article 15: 15.1.b, 15.2, 5.3 and 15.4 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: on the right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications and other provisions of article 15 on the relationship between science and economic, social and cultural rights,

The Netherlands would like to highlight two points regarding the General Comment and

UNDERLINES that **Open Science**[[1]](#footnote-1), a worldwide phenomenon, is essential for this right, for reasons of both principle and practicality, as stated in the Netherlands’ written contribution to the consultative process in the drafting of a General Comment on this article.[[2]](#footnote-2)

The Netherlands reiterates the importance of Open Science. The outcomes of publicly funded research should be available to all. With reference to p.10, #53 of the General Comment, the Netherlands stresses that Open Science cannot be achieved alone. Stakeholder involvement and cooperation are essential. It is a common endeavor to which all stakeholders involved should contribute, State Parties and other stakeholders alike, nationally and internationally: scientists, universities, publishers, science associations, funding agencies, libraries and governments. All play a decisive role in the distribution of knowledge and have an obligation to do so when it comes to outcomes publicly funded research. Together they can decide on the direction that Open Access should take.

With reference to page 7, section C, the Netherlands

UNDERLINES that **Diversity** enriches scientific research and enhances excellence. This reaches further than the enjoyment of the benefits of science and having equal rights to participate alone. The General Comment specifically refers to gender, persons with disabilities and low-income persons. However, other groups should also be included, such as people from various cultural backgrounds, among them generations of migrants and refugees. Different cultural backgrounds and lived experiences enrich science as well. Most groups, referred to as `specific groups’ in the General Comment or others that are not specifically mentioned in the text, are facing similar challenges. By describing them separately the text focusses on differences and `being different’, rather than on the similarities and on the enriching contributions of various groups to science and on the importance of inclusion. The focus also goes to specific problems and special requirements rather than to creating an inclusive (academic) culture for everyone.[[3]](#footnote-3) Inclusion is the binding factor. This could e.g. be highlighted in the first general paragraph.

1. Definition of open science as used by the European Commission:

“Open Science represents a new approach to the scientific process based on cooperative work and new ways of diffusing knowledge by using digital technologies and new collaborative tools. The idea captures a systemic change to the way science and research have been carried out for the last fifty years: shifting from the standard practices of publishing results in scientific publications towards sharing and using all available knowledge at an earlier stage in the research process”. source: `Open innovation , Open Science, Open to the World – a vision for Europe’, European Commission, 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The Netherlands’ contribution can be found on <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CESCR/Pages/Discussion2018.aspx> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The position paper `Equality, diversity and inclusion at universities: the power of a systematic approach’ of the League of European Research Universities (LERU) is a relevant piece on this topic. <https://www.leru.org/files/LERU-EDI-paper_final.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)