

Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 31st Session

Universal Periodic Review of Belize

Statement by Australia

Australia thanks Belize for its report, and commends Belize on the steps it has taken to improve its approach to development and human rights, including implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals through its Horizon 2030 national development blueprint.

Australia recognises that Belize has not carried out an execution since 1985. As a next step, **Australia recommends Belize ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.**

Australia remains concerned by reports of security officials using excessive force and engaging in corrupt activity. **Australia recommends Belize investigate and prosecute all alleged cases of security officials using excessive force or engaging in corrupt activity and appropriately penalise offenders.**

Australia commends Belize for supporting the Office of the Ombudsman. **Australia recommends the Government of Belize fully resource and empower the Ombudsman to act as a National Human Rights Institution in full compliance with the Paris Principles, including through investigating complaints against public authorities and police misconduct.**

We are encouraged by legal progress towards decriminalisation of consensual same-sex relationships since Belize's second cycle review. **Australia recommends Belize take further measures to reduce the societal stigma faced by LGBTI persons, including through enacting laws that prohibit discrimination against them.**

199 words