**Human Rights Council – 39th Session**

**General Debate on Item 4**

**18 September 2018**

**Australian Statement**

Australia is greatly disturbed by the deterioration of human rights in some states since HRC38.

Australia strongly condemns the deaths of civilians in **Syria.**  It is unacceptable that chemical weapons have been used in the Syrian conflict. Humanitarian access and safe humanitarian corridors must be provided. The ongoing violence in Syria underscores the desperate need to forge a political solution to this conflict.

The human rights situation in the **Democratic People’s Republic of Korea** remains grave. We call on the DPRK government to halt human rights violations and abuses inflicted on large parts of its population.

Australia is concerned that recent economic decisions and ongoing violent repression in **Venezuela** will exacerbate the already precarious humanitarian situation. We note with concern the millions of people who have fled the country since July 2018.

We remain deeply concerned by the situation in **South Sudan**. Widespread attacks against civilians, including sexual violence, have continued despite ongoing peace negotiations. All parties to the conflict must demonstrate the political will to end this violence and establish the Hybrid Court to ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice.

Australia remains deeply concerned by the dire humanitarian situation caused by the conflict in **Yemen**. We urge all parties to respect international humanitarian law and facilitate humanitarian assistance, including humanitarian access. We urge all parties to engage constructively with the UN Special Envoy.

Australia remains gravely concerned by reports of human rights violations and abuses by state forces and armed groups in the **Democratic Republic of Congo**. We urge the Government to hold perpetrators of violence against civilians accountable, and ensure that all civil and political rights are upheld during this election period.

Australia delivered separate statements during the interactive dialogues on Burundi, Syria, South Sudan and Myanmar.

***290 Words [275 word limit]***