**Human Rights Council – 39th Session**

**Item 8 General Debate**

**24 September 2018**

**Australian Statement**

Australia thanks the Secretary General for his reports.

We commend the work of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions and of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in supporting the establishment, strengthening and operation of National Human Rights Institutions globally. We particularly welcome their ongoing efforts to accredit National Human Rights Institutions based on their compliance with the Paris Principles.

National Human Rights Institutions are a critical element of the international human rights architecture. They support the implementation of human rights obligations by States, and connect those obligations to the lived experiences of individual rights holders. This work is critical for groups that can be vulnerable to systemic human rights violations, including women and girls, people with disabilities, religious, racial and ethnic minorities, and LGBTI persons.

Australia is pleased at the progress made across the UN system on enhancing participation of National Human Rights Institutions in relevant UN mechanisms and processes. We must redouble these efforts. We encourage all UN entities to do more to enshrine the independent participation of National Human Rights Institutions into their modalities, working methods, and rules of procedure.

Mr President, our ultimate goal in this Council, and throughout the international system, is the protection and promotion of the human rights of individuals. Paris Principles-compliant NHRIs, as independent organisations that can connect international debates relevant to local circumstances, are uniquely powerful and essential partners in achieving this goal.

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