**Human Rights Council – 39th Session**

**Interactive Dialogue with the Independent Expert on Sudan**

**26 September 2018**

**Australian Statement**

Australia welcomes ongoing and concerted efforts by Sudan to stabilise the country and address its human rights challenges. We commend Sudan for the positive role it is playing in regional peace and security, such as facilitating the South Sudan peace process and hosting over 700,000 refugees.

Australia acknowledges Sudan’s continued efforts to reduce internal conflicts and improve humanitarian access. We strongly encourage a full cessation of hostilities between the government and armed rebel groups in Darfur, South Kordofan, and the Blue Nile States. We urge all parties to work to ensure unfettered access to humanitarian agencies.

Australia is also concerned at continued restrictions placed on freedom of expression, association and assembly that are inconsistent with international human rights law. We call upon the Government of Sudan to protect these freedoms, and freedom of religion or belief, in accordance with recommendations by the Human Rights Council and the 2016 Universal Periodic Review.

Australia opposes the death penalty in all circumstances for all people. We urge the Government of Sudan to introduce a moratorium on the death penalty; and we ask the Independent Expert how the international community might support greater dialogue about introducing a moratorium on the death penalty in Sudan?

**Words: 200**