**Human Rights Council – 39th Session**

**Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

**19 September**

**Australian Statement**

Like the Special Rapporteur, Australia is concerned by the increase in attacks against, and criminalisation of, indigenous human rights defenders and welcomes the Special Rapporteur’s report on this timely and important issue.

As reaffirmed in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous peoples have the right to the full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms recognised in international human rights law instruments.

Human rights defenders play a significant role in promoting and protecting the rights contained in these instruments. At home and abroad, Australia strongly supports the role of civil society, which incorporates human rights defenders, in contributing to the equal enjoyment of rights for all people.

In addition to our domestic efforts, Australia firmly believes in the value of the international system as a means to protect indigenous peoples. In this regard, Australia supports the work of this Council, including its special procedures mandate holders, like the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Special Rapporteurs, in addressing indigenous peoples’ concerns.

Australia thanks the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples for its work over the last year, including its study on Free, Prior and Informed Consent. Australia recognises the importance of meaningful consultation and collaboration, and is working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to refresh the national framework for addressing Indigenous disadvantage, *Closing the Gap*.

We ask both the Special Rapporteur and EMRIP, how can States and indigenous peoples continue to develop best practice mechanisms for consultation and collaboration?

***254* Words**