

Human Rights Council – 40th Session

Item 10 General Debate

21 March 2018

Australian Statement

Australia strongly supports international technical cooperation. While the Australian Aid Program focuses on the Indo-Pacific Region, our multilateral contributions extend our reach globally, including through to voluntary trust funds administered by the Office of the High Commissioner.

The work of the Trust Fund to Support the Participation of Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States is well known within the HRC; we see the benefits every Council session through the participation of beneficiary delegates - increasing the HRC's global reach. Australia is proud to be the largest donor over the life of the Fund.

We are also proud to make a regular contribution to the Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples, enabling indigenous people to participate in international meetings and speak about their rights and issues affecting them.

Less-well known is the Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, which provides assistance to victims of modern slavery. Since 1991, the Slavery Fund has supported more than 400 organizations in 95 countries, providing rehabilitation and assistance to thousands of victims. In a world where the number of victims of modern slavery is in the tens of millions, the assistance provided by the Slavery Fund is only a drop in the ocean, but those who benefit welcome this support

The work of these funds has an invaluable impact to the individuals involved, the states they come from and on this Council's work. We encourage all states to join us in making a contribution to the voluntary funds of the HRC; together we can make an even bigger difference.

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