

**Human Rights Council – 40th Session**

**Annual Full Day Discussion on the Rights of the Child**

**4 March 2019**

**Australian Statement**

Australia is committed to empowering children with disabilities: we must enable their full inclusion in education on an equal basis with all children.

Education is a fundamental right that must be realised without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity. Inclusive education is also key to empowering children to understand and realise other human rights.

Education systems should be inclusive of all children, including children with disabilities. Inclusive education requires an integrated approach. We need to get certain things right: inclusive policies and curricula, accurate data collection, well-trained teachers, infrastructure and equipment, and do all this within a supportive community. Australia is committed to this integrated approach.

Australia recognises the fundamental need for accessible and affordable assistive technologies and reasonable accommodations to enable equal participation by children with disabilities.

Australia is committed to supporting the full educational needs of people with disabilities in developing countries. Our aid program supports people with disabilities as both participants and beneficiaries of quality, comprehensive education development efforts so that no one is left behind.

Australia has 21 inclusive education programs across 15 countries including the Equal Access to Quality Education Program which increases educational opportunities for children with disabilities through awareness raising, teacher training, curriculum development and education infrastructure.

We need to commit and hold ourselves accountable for ensuring children with disabilities have the same educational opportunities as all children.

*A question for the panel: how can we galvanise the wider community to recognise the many benefits of inclusive education for all children, not just children with disabilities?*

**Word count: 260**