

Human Rights Council – 41<sup>st</sup> session

Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus

1 July 2019

**Australian Statement**

Australia thanks the Special Rapporteur for her report on the situation of human rights in Belarus, and welcomes the recommendations to the Government of Belarus and the international community.

We are encouraged by Belarus' engagement and cooperation with the international human rights system in recent years. However, we are disappointed that Belarus has continued its policy of non-engagement with the Special Rapporteur.

Australia shares the Special Rapporteur's concern, based on the information collected, that there have not been substantial improvements, either legally or in practice, in terms of respect for human rights in Belarus. This includes allegations of torture, ill-treatment or arbitrary detention, and the documented deterioration in relation to fundamental freedoms.

We note the death penalty continues to be used in Belarus, which is of deep concern to Australia. We support the Special Rapporteur's repeated recommendation that the Government of Belarus consider establishing a moratorium on executions as an initial step towards the abolition of the death penalty.

We call on the Government of Belarus to show leadership on the issue of human rights and to act on the recommendations set out in this report.

**188 words**