

Human Rights Council – 42<sup>nd</sup> session

Annual Discussion on the integration of a gender perspective throughout  
the work of the Human Rights Council and that of its mechanisms

23 September 2019

Australian Statement\*

Thank you colleagues, for this important discussion on gender mainstreaming.

The equal participation of women throughout all stages of the decision making process is paramount to achieving gender equality. It is a fundamental right that women and girls are often denied.

The Human Rights Council has a responsibility to demonstrate leadership by establishing institutional norms that promote gender equality and support diversity. This requires accountability and transparency. It requires tackling bias and challenging gender norms and stereotypes.

Australia understands that progress takes innovation and commitment.

Australia's Workplace Gender Equality Agency, established in 2012, exists to promote and improve gender equality in Australian workplaces. This year it reported that almost 75 per cent of Australian employers had a gender equality policy. As employers have taken action, gender equality outcomes have improved.

In April 2018, the Australian Government achieved the milestone of gender parity at the most senior level of the public service, with half of all departmental Secretary roles occupied by women.

We are also pursuing equality in our diplomatic representation. Today, women represent 40 per cent of senior managers in the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and make up 40 per cent of Heads of Australian Missions and Posts.

Diverse voices in the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms ensure equality and strengthen outcomes. We are interested in the panel's views on practical steps states can take to support gender-responsive perspectives in the Council and its mechanisms at all levels.

242 Words

*\*Statement not delivered verbally due to time constraints*