

Human Rights Council – 44th Session

Resolution: Enhancement of international cooperation in the field of human rights

17 July 2020

Australian Statement: Explanation of Vote

We thank the main sponsor for presenting resolution L.22, *Enhancement of international cooperation in the field of human rights*, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Australia remains steadfastly committed to the principle of international cooperation. The purpose of the United Nations as stated in the Charter includes achieving international cooperation in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights. Indeed, the need for cooperation is one of the founding principles of this Council.

A resolution on this important topic deserves consensus, as occurs in New York. We are disappointed that, once again, we as a Council were unable to find a consensus position. There was a genuine option on the table – one born of good will and flexibility – that would have offered a pathway to consensus.

It is deeply unfortunate that the inflexible position of a number of states on the issue of autonomous sanctions has blocked progress. We continue to reject the inference that autonomous sanctions are unjust or contrary to international law. Targeted sanctions, fully compliant with international law, are a legitimate instrument of foreign policy, and can be a powerful tool to promote human rights and to hold accountable those who violate or abuse them.

Draft resolution L.22 as presented is largely unchanged from the 2018 and 2019 resolutions on international cooperation, and the problems that we and many other delegations have with this resolution remain unaddressed. We are concerned at ongoing efforts in this resolution to elevate certain rights over others, an effort which is incompatible with the principle that human rights are universal, indivisible and inalienable. We are also concerned at persistent efforts to introduce language from the political declarations of a body in which many of the states here in this Council are not represented. We deeply regret ongoing attempts to use this resolution to introduce concepts, which diverge from core principles of international human rights law.

Our concerns and those of other delegations were and are well-known to the main sponsors of this text. We would like to extend our thanks to Azerbaijan for its constructive leadership on this resolution and its efforts to find a pathway to consensus. We regret that it was not enough. We call for a vote on this resolution and will vote no.