**Human Rights Council – 45th session**

**Interactive Dialogue on the**

**Report of the Secretary-General on cooperation with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights**

**30 September 2020**

**Australian Statement**

Australia thanks the Secretary-General for his report, and reiterates its unequivocal condemnation of all acts of intimidation and reprisal against those cooperating with the UN and its representatives and mechanisms. We are particularly concerned that many members of this council are among those countries cited in the Secretary-General’s report. We note also that several states seeking election to the HRC form 2021 are also cited, and we encourage all UN member states to take this into consideration when casting their votes.

We note with concern that the Secretary-General has continued to receive many reports of intimidation and reprisal against individuals and groups cooperating, or seeking to cooperate, with the UN - despite the cancellation of many activities due to COVID-19.

We call on all states named in this report to ensure there is accountability for the reprisals documented in their jurisdictions, including prompt and independent investigations and remedies for victims, and to ensure appropriate protections and safeguards are put in place to discourage future reprisals.

How can states better support and protect these human rights defenders? Particularly those working towards protecting and promoting gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights.

192 Words