**Human Rights Council – 45th session

General Comment**

 **Resolution on the Safety of journalists**

**Australia Statement**

 **6 October 2020**

We thank the core group for this resolution which highlights the critical importance of freedom of expression and of a free, independent, plural and diverse media, online as well as offline.

Threats to the safety of journalists are an affront to all countries that embrace human rights. Freedom of the press plays an essential role in any vibrant democracy by helping to create a culture of accountability.

We have also seen the crucial role journalism plays in times of crisis. As the resolution highlights, it will be important to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the provision of vital information to the public and the sustainability of media environments, especially as we strive to counter misinformation and disinformation.

We welcome the resolution’s condemnation of attacks and violence against journalists around the world and call for thorough investigations into these incidents. As the resolution makes clear, we need to do more to combat violence against women journalists and bring perpetrators to justice.

Australia is proud to be a member of the “group of friends” on the safety of journalists in UNESCO and in Geneva, as well as a member of the Freedom Online Coalition. We encourage other countries to consider joining these groups to defend freedom of expression and freedom of the press.

We commend resolution L.42 and fully support it.

 **222 words**