



AUSTRALIA



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UNGA Third Committee Item 74: Promotion and Protection of Human Rights

Statement delivered on 18 October 2019

Thank you Chair / President.

As Australia's Foreign Minister, Marise Payne, underscored in her address to the High Level Segment of the Human Rights Council in February this year, the indivisibility, universality and inalienability of human rights are principles that Australia has consistently championed. Australia is proud to have been one of the eight nations to draft the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and an original signatory. We were an advocate for the Universal Declaration, and a supporter of the creation of the Human Rights Council in 2006.

As the end of Australia's second year on the Human Rights Council approaches, it is timely to reflect on the contributions we have made as a member of the Council and the goals we continue to strive for.

Australia has continued to focus our efforts on our priority areas for advancing human rights: gender equality; freedom of expression; freedom of religion or belief; good governance; the rights of indigenous peoples; strong national human rights institutions; the death penalty; the rights of LGBTI persons; the rights of persons with disabilities; and civil society engagement.

But today I would like to highlight some of the key achievements Australia has made during the last year.

Australia is proud to continue our leadership in **amplifying the voices of Pacific countries**. We warmly welcomed Fiji in joining the Human Rights Council this

year, the first ever Pacific Island member, and we welcome the Republic of Marshall Islands' candidacy for the Human Rights Council in 2020. Voices from the Pacific region have an important place in discussions about human rights. We are pleased to have been able to engage closely with our Pacific island neighbours to promote the interests and concerns of our region in New York and Geneva, including by developing joint statements.

Gender equality and the rights of women and girls are also key priorities for Australia. Australia continues to advocate for gender equality and women and girls' empowerment, including in discussions on economic empowerment, gender-based violence and discrimination; through national statements and strong support for resolutions. At HRC 41 we were proud to partner with other countries to lead a new resolution to promote equal pay for work of equal value. Australia also signed a joint statement on Accountability for the Rights of Women and Girls in Humanitarian settings. Australia is proud to be a Vice Chair of the Bureau of the Commission on the Status of Women and the UN Women Board.

We promoted the rights of **indigenous women and girls** by working with Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner [Ms June Oscar] on a photographic exhibition in New York titled "Hear us, See us", documenting Ms Oscar's Women's Voices project; and hosted an event just last month on women's empowerment and gender equality with Elizabeth Broderick - Deputy Chair of the UN Working Group on Discrimination against Women and Girls.

Australia will continue to work for the promotion and protection of human rights, both at home and abroad. At the highest levels, we have underscored our long-standing commitment to human rights principles and our commitment to the international rules-based order. We look forward to working with all UN member states during UNGA74 to further the promotion and protection of human rights.

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