



AUSTRALIA



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UNGA Third Committee

Item 74(b): (b) Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms;

Statement delivered on 26 October 2018

Thank you Chair/President.

As 2018 draws to a close, Australia is pleased to reflect upon its first year as a member of the Human Rights Council (HRC).

Australia is committed to promoting and protecting the international rules that support stability and prosperity, and to enabling cooperation to tackle global challenges. We are convinced that the Human Rights Council plays an invaluable role in promoting and protecting human rights worldwide. We are also open to identifying alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights worldwide.

With this in mind, Australia used its first year of HRC membership as impetus for increased advocacy and engagement on human rights, within the UN system and beyond.

In **March**, Australia presented to the **HRC an Incoming Members Pledge**, in which new members affirmed their commitment to supportive and constructive engagement with the Council. This innovative pledge, which was supported by 10 other states, aims to strengthen the Council's effectiveness and credibility through cooperation, transparency and objectivity. We urge newly elected members to also make this pledge.

In **June**, Australia operationalised its commitment to increase **civil society engagement in the HRC**, by supporting two representatives to attend the Council's 38th session. We were particularly pleased that these advocates represented the true diversity of Australian society – including youth, cultural and linguistic diversity, and sex and gender minorities. These representatives: gained first-hand experience of the UN human rights architecture; shared their unique perspectives with the international community; and have helped build the capacity of Australian civil society on their return.

In **August**, as part of “*Leaving No One Behind: the Equal Rights Coalition Global Conference on LGBTI Human Rights and Inclusive Development*”, Australia partnered with Canada to present a **discussion on the intersecting challenges faced by indigenous peoples who also identify as LGBTI**. Indigenous LGBTI individuals have unique experiences, but this intersectionality has not been widely considered. We are proud to have highlighted this issue and look forward to continuing discussions about how the experiences of members of the LGBTI community differ and converge based on other important elements of their identities – including indigeneity.

In **September**, during the Council's 39th session, Australia presented its biennial **resolution on National Human Rights Institutions** (NHRIs). In doing so, we streamlined the text of this resolution to concisely capture the fundamental contribution NHRIs make domestically and internationally, in support of the implementation of human rights obligations.

This resolution, for the first time, explored how NHRIs – through the performance of their core functions as set out in the Paris Principles – foster the development and maintenance of inclusive societies, and support the 2030 Agenda's commitments to 'seeks to realise the human rights of all' and to 'leave no-one behind'.

NHRIs are particularly well placed to support the **2030 Agenda**. By connecting States' human rights obligations with the lived experience of individual rights holders, they make a daily contribution highlighting inequity and marginalisation, and encouraging inclusion and equality; which is fundamental to combating poverty and fostering sustainable development.

In **October**, Foreign Minister, Senator the Hon Marise Payne, launched Australia's **whole-of-Government strategy for the abolition of the death penalty**. This strategy, the first of its kind in Australia, sends a clear message: we oppose the death penalty in all circumstances, for all people. The strategy will see our nation work closely with our partners across the world to protect and promote our shared human rights, by working towards global death penalty abolition. Abolition is a gradual process, but all steps towards abolition – large or small – take us towards a more civil and humane world.

In reflecting on the year that has been, Australia is proud of the contributions we have made, particularly through championing the innovations mentioned today. In anticipating 2019, Australia remains committed to seeking novel ways to protect and promote human rights – both at home and abroad. We look forward to working with all UN member states to: decrease the risks of human rights abuses; prevent human rights violations; and foster a global culture of participation, accountability and acceptance of the universality of all human rights.

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