



AUSTRALIA



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Statement on the promotion and protection of human rights
Third Committee Human Rights General Discussion - Item 68(b)
Delivered 31 October by Ambassador Gillian Bird, Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations

Madam/Mr Chair

The Charter of the United Nations expressed the world's determination to promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all people without discrimination.

From that beginning, Australia, as one of the countries actively engaged in drawing up the Charter and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, has based its engagement in the United Nations on these principles – principles that promote inclusivity and respect.

Today, as the world focuses on implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development, we still apply that human-rights lens to our engagement.

If elected to the Human Rights Council, Australia would continue to demonstrate our strong commitment to promoting and protecting human rights, both at home and abroad.

Madam/Mr Chair

Australia wishes to express concern about growing acts of violence and related human rights violations based on a person's actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity.

While acknowledging that matters of sexual orientation and gender identity are sensitive issues for many, there is common ground in our shared recognition that no-one should face stigmatisation, discrimination, violence or abuse on any ground.

We must be guided by the principles of universality and non-discrimination.

These principles need to be recalled in relation to other vulnerable groups, including women and children, people with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and ethnic and religious minorities. The vulnerability of groups is particularly heightened during times of crisis.

Madam/Mr Chair

Australia believes that we need to work with a broad range of partners to address international human rights violations, to stand up for universal values, and to enhance the protection and promotion of human rights.

Active engagement by civil society and National Human Rights Institutions strengthen the work of the United Nations. It helps

connect the work of the UN to the lived experience of individuals around the globe.

We are pleased to be hosting visits from five Special Rapporteurs over the next six months, and welcome civil society engagement in those visits.

Australia was pleased to present the resolution on National Institutions for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights at the September session of the Human Rights Council. Its adoption by consensus demonstrates the strong commitment of States to the engagement of National Human Rights Institutions in discussions at the United Nations.

We were also pleased to support the application of the non-government organisation, the Youth Coalition of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, in the recent session of the NGO Committee. While we regret this matter was brought to a vote, its passage demonstrated our commitment, and the commitment of many States, to increase civil society engagement in the UN.

Madam/Mr Chair

On the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of the International Covenants on human rights – the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights – we reaffirm our commitment to promoting the rights established by these key instruments.

The UN has achieved much through these instruments and other human rights treaties and processes, including the Universal Periodic Review process.

I take this opportunity to briefly note Australia's continuing support for the United Nations 'Human Rights Up Front' initiative, which seeks to strengthen the preventative work of the UN and to recognise the value of early warning signals. Our work on prevention is more vital than ever given the grave and complex challenges the world is facing.

Madam/Mr Chair

Australia will continue to engage actively and constructively in UN human rights processes, and looks forward to playing a strong role working with partners to make our world an even fairer place. We are committed to human rights and dignity for all people, all around the world.