



AUSTRALIA



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Plenary, Item 69: Report of the Human Rights Council

**Statement by Jo Feldman
First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Australia to the United
Nations**

(Check against delivery)

Australia thanks the President of the Human Rights Council for his presentation of the report from the Council. As a Member of the HRC Australia is pleased to take this opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to the Council as a leading component of the multilateral human rights system.

We commend the President for his determined and ongoing leadership in efforts to strengthen the Human Rights Council and improve its efficiency.

Australia will continue to engage constructively in these efforts – supporting outcomes which enhance the Council’s core mandate of promoting and protecting human rights and preventing and addressing human rights violations.

Australia also believes that measures taken must not hinder the ability of civil society or small states, including those not present in Geneva, to engage in the work of the Council.

Australia has supported a range of proposals under discussion, including capping the number of panel discussions, improved transparency on potential budget impacts and biennial-ising or triennial-ising resolutions. We remain open to further creative and constructive ideas from member states to strengthen the Human Rights Council.

While Australia recognises that efficiencies can and must be found, UN member states must also ensure the Human Rights Council is adequately resourced to carry out its mandate.

Efforts to improve the efficiency of the Human Rights Council are closely linked to efforts to improve its effectiveness. We remain committed to strengthening the HRC through co-operation, transparency and objectivity – a point Australia made in our incoming members' pledge, delivered during the HRC's first session in 2018.

We hope to see this pledge taken up by all members and we invite all states recently elected to the Council for the term 2019-21 to adopt the pledge at HRC40.

We continue to stress the need for stronger processes to ensure HRC members uphold the highest human rights standards. We should also strengthen civil society engagement and reduce the number of resolutions and proliferation of mandates to allow States to focus on implementation as the crucial next step in improving human rights.

Australia was proud to co-sponsor the NGO-led HRC candidates event held here in New York in September, to promote greater transparency. We urge all states seeking election to the HRC to participate in these events.

Thank you