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Universal Periodic Review of Pakistan – 14th session

Chargé d'Affaires

Statement by Australia

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Australia commends Pakistan's engagement in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process and its progress since its last review, including its ratification of a number of international human rights instruments, one of which was the Second Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, consistent with Australia's comments during Pakistan's first UPR. Australia also welcomes Pakistan's implementation of domestic human rights legislation such as the Acid Control Bill and the Anti-Women's Practices Bill, and the creation of domestic human rights institutions, such as the Commission for the Status of Women and the National Human Rights Commission. **Australia recommends that Pakistan take steps to continue to strengthen the operation of these domestic human rights institutions, including the Human Rights Ministry, National Human Rights Commission and the Commission on the Status of Women.**

Australia also recommends that Pakistan continue to provide access to UN Special Procedure mandate-holders who are seeking to help Pakistan to identify and address human rights challenges.

Australia is deeply concerned that the brave work of Pakistani human rights defenders such as Malala Yousafzai, Shahbaz Bhatti and Salman Taseer has made them the target of life-threatening violence. **Australia recommends that Pakistan implement measures to protect the right to life and freedom of expression of human rights defenders, and ensure that the perpetrators of violence are brought to justice.**

Australia is concerned with ongoing religious and ethnic-based violence in Pakistan, and encourages Pakistan to continue to provide legal human rights protections and opportunities to all of Pakistan's minority groups and to foster greater levels of religious freedoms and tolerance.

Australia recommends that Pakistan establish a moratorium on the death penalty, as a first step towards complete abolition of this practice and accession to the Second Optional Protocol of the ICCPR.