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Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 17th Session

Universal Periodic Review of Saudi Arabia

Statement by Australia

Australia welcomes Saudi Arabia's reforms on human rights, including the establishment of the National Human Rights Commission and the National Human Rights Society.

Australia is concerned about the continued use of the death penalty, including its use against women, the poor and foreign workers. **We recommend Saudi Arabia declare a moratorium on the death penalty and accede to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.**

We welcome progress the Government of Saudi Arabia has made on women's rights, including appointing women to the Shura Council, granting the vote in municipal elections, implementing legislation to address domestic violence and granting residency to foreign mothers of Saudi children.

Australia urges Saudi Arabia to implement further reform to overcoming the continued discrimination women face in law and practice. **We recommend Saudi Arabia dismantle the system of male guardianship and allow women to freely travel, work, study, marry, and access healthcare and other public services.**

We are concerned that many of the Kingdom's laws do not conform to international human rights standards and widespread breaches of human rights continue. **We recommend Saudi Arabia implement legal reforms to promulgate a criminal code, ensure transparent and fair criminal trials, and prevent arbitrary, secret and indefinite detention and torture in custody.**

Australia holds strong concerns that the rights of the child fail to be fully protected. **We recommend Saudi Arabia implement legal reforms recognising a legally-defined age of minority that prevents early and forced marriage, detention of minors as adults, and exposure of minors to the death penalty.**