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Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 18th Session

Universal Periodic Review of Eritrea

Statement by Australia

Australia commends Eritrea for its progress against the health-related Millennium Development Goals and for the Government's efforts to prioritise education for girls. We also welcome continued efforts to raise awareness against female genital mutilation.

In 2009, Eritrea accepted recommendations on cooperating with the UN special procedures and undertook to consider visits on a case-by-case basis. Australia is therefore disappointed that no mandate holder has been permitted to visit Eritrea. **Australia recommends Eritrea invite the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea to visit the country.**

We regret that Eritrea has still failed to implement its own Constitution. **We recommend again that Eritrea implement fully the 1997 Constitution and the rights that it enshrines, including allowing independent political parties and non-government organisations to function freely.**

Australia is concerned about continuing reports of torture, harsh and life-threatening prison conditions and incommunicado detention. **Australia recommends Eritrea ratify the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and fully implement its provisions.**

Australia remains deeply concerned about compulsory military service in Eritrea and the reported use of conscripts for forced labour in various sectors of the economy. We are also concerned by reports of reprisals against family members of people who evade military service. **Australia recommends Eritrea abolish military conscription and compulsory military training, particularly for children.**

Speaker: Ms Roth Stone.