

Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 20th Session

Universal Periodic Review of Madagascar

Statement by Australia

Australia welcomes the return of democracy to Madagascar and commends the successful 2013 parliamentary and presidential elections. We are concerned by reports of the detention of former President Rabalomanana and recall that the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Roadmap for Ending the Crisis in Madagascar provides for the unconditional return of political exiles to further national reconciliation. **Australia recommends that Madagascar continue to respect the terms of the SADC roadmap and that political leaders work together towards reconciliation.**

Australia encourages Madagascar to continue efforts to increase schooling rates, particularly for girls and children in poverty.

Australia is concerned about rates of child prostitution, sexual tourism and human trafficking and by reports that gender based violence has increased, while marital rape has not been made a criminal offence.

Australia recommends that Madagascar strengthen efforts to protect its most vulnerable populations, in accordance with obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women and under the Convention on the Rights of the Child; and adopt specific legislation and programmes targeting gender based violence, including marital rape.

Australia acknowledges that Madagascar has applied a de facto moratorium on the death penalty by commuting death sentences to prison terms. **Australia recommends that Madagascar establish a formal moratorium on the death penalty with a view to ratifying the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR.**