

Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 21st Session

Universal Periodic Review of Lesotho

Statement by Australia

Australia welcomes the delegation from the Kingdom of Lesotho and appreciates its engagement in the Universal Periodic Review Process.

Australia recognises that poverty, HIV/AIDS and food insecurity continue to present significant obstacles to the enjoyment of human rights in Lesotho. Accordingly, we welcome the Government's National Strategic Development Plan 2012/13 to 2016/17 as an implementation strategy to address these issues.

Australia welcomes planned legislation to establish a Human Rights Commission and recommends the Government of Lesotho expedite its enactment. The independent statutory organisation will ensure the promotion and protection of human rights in Lesotho.

However Australia remains concerned about the use of the death penalty as a form of punishment in Lesotho. **Australia recommends that Lesotho establish a formal moratorium on the death penalty with a view to ratifying the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR.**

Australia is also concerned at continued incidents of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. **Australia recommends Lesotho repeal all provisions of law criminalising sexual activity between consenting adults.**

Ricky Macourt