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Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 22nd Session

Universal Periodic Review of Liberia

Statement by Australia

Australia commends Liberia's transition from civil war to peace, including successful elections in 2011. We hope the 2017 election will also be conducted fairly and peacefully. We also commend Liberia's plans for long term development.

We note the strain the Ebola outbreak is having on all aspects of life in Liberia and hope gains that have been lost due to the outbreak will be recovered quickly.

We note the improving climate in Liberia for freedom of expression, but there is much yet to do, including greater support to its Independent National Commission of Human Rights. **We recommend Liberia repeal all laws and policies that discriminate against human rights defenders.**

Australia remains concerned that despite Liberia acceding to the Second Optional Protocol against the death penalty in 2005, Liberia's Constitution has not abolished the practice. **Australia Recommends Liberia amend its constitution to abolish the death penalty.**

Australia remains deeply concerned by reports of sexual and gender based violence against women and children. In Liberia, it is estimated that 70 percent of rape victims are minors, 18 per cent of which are girls under 10. **Australia recommends Liberia fast track the enactment of its Domestic Violence Act, criminalize female genital mutilation, enforce laws that protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation, and prosecute and punish complicit officials.**