**Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 25th Session**

**Universal Periodic Review of Sudan**

**Statement by Australia**

Australia welcomes the delegation from Sudan and appreciates its UPR engagement. We commend Sudan on the establishment of its National Human Rights Commission in 2012.

Australia welcomes Sudan’s commitment to a United Nations Action Plan to protect children from violations in armed conflict. However, **Australia recommends Sudan raise the minimum age for marriage to comply with international child rights standards in order to prevent early, child and enforced marriages.**

Australia is gravely concerned by violations of human rights in conflict zones and condemns the impunity allowed to perpetrators. We strongly condemn the use of violence against women and girls, torture and killings, arbitrary imprisonment, the use of the armed forces against civilian populations, forced displacement and hindrances made to providing humanitarian relief.

**Australia recommends revisions to the National Security Act, which allows for civil and criminal immunity for security forces in relation to serious human rights violations and abuses committed in their official capacity, and those responsible for serious human rights violations and abuses be held to account.**

**Australia recommends Sudan establish a formal moratorium on the use of the death penalty with a view to ratifying the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.**

Australia remains concerned by restrictions on freedom of religion, including punitive legal decisions. **Australia recommends Sudan revise the 1991 Penal Code and abolish the penalisation of apostasy.**