**Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 26th Session**

**Universal Periodic Review of Togo**

**Statement by Australia**

Australia welcomes the delegation from the Republic of Togo and appreciates its engagement in the Universal Periodic Review process.

We commend Togo for its ratification of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aimed at the abolition of the death penalty.

Australia notes efforts by the Government to promote women’s rights. **Australia recommends Togo continue to pursue gender equality by adopting the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.**

Australia notes with concern the lack of parliamentary oversight of the National Human Rights Commission. **Australia** **recommends Togo review the way Commission members are appointed, to ensure its independence.**

Australia notes the adoption of the new Criminal Code in 2015. However, **Australia recommends Togo bring its legal definition of torture into line with the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; and that Togo decriminalise sexual relations between consenting adults of the same sex.**

Australia is concerned with restrictions on freedom of expression and assembly, with the Criminal Code including provisions that may restrict freedom of the press and civil society, and that ban demonstrations. **Australia recommends Togo take steps to protect the freedom of expression and opinion, as provided for in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.**