**UN Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review – 45th Session**

**Universal Periodic Review of the Republic of the Congo**

**30 January 2024**

**Statement by Australia**

Thank you, [President/Vice President]

Australia commends the Republic of the Congo for enacting the Mouébara law since its last review, to combat violence against women. We also commend the Republic of the Congo for its ongoing moratorium on use of the death penalty.

Australia remains concerned by limits on freedom of expression, including journalists’ freedom to report, and by the prevalence of human trafficking.

Australia recommends **the Republic of the Congo**:

1. **Ratify the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.**
2. **Ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.**
3. **Protect the rights to freedom of opinion and expression, including by ceasing state harassment of journalists.**

[119 words]