**Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 28th Session**

**Universal Periodic Review of Zambia**

**Statement by Australia**

Australia encourages the Government of Zambia to engage in constructive dialogue with all political parties and welcomes the release from prison of opposition leader Hakainde Hichilema. Australia encourages all parties to work together to entrench respect for democracy, human rights – including the right to freedom of expression and to freedom of association – and the rule of law.

Whilst noting that Zambia is abolitionist in practice, and welcoming the Presidential clemency granted to 332 inmates on death row in 2015, we are concerned that the death penalty remains part of the law and is a mandatory sentence for certain crimes. **Australia recommends Zambia formalise abolition of the death penalty and accede to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.**

Australia acknowledges the work of the Human Rights Commission in promoting human rights protections, and **recommends Zambia consider ways to strengthen its national Human Rights Commission in line with the Paris Principles.**

**Australia recommends that Zambia decriminalise same-sex relationships between consenting adults and strengthen efforts to address inequality and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity**.