**Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 37th Session**

**Universal Periodic Review of Rwanda**

**Statement by Australia**

**25 January 2021**

Thank you Vice President

Australia acknowledges Rwanda’s leadership role in regional peacekeeping. We welcome legislative revisions that have enhanced the sexual and reproductive rights of women.

**Australia recommends that Rwanda:**

1. **Enhance freedom of expression by amending the 2018 Penal Code to repeal the offence of ‘spreading false information or harmful propaganda with intent to cause a hostile international opinion against the Rwandan Government’ and ‘insults or defamation against the President’.**
2. **Take action to eliminate all cases of enforced disappearance and ensure that all cases of enforced disappearance are thoroughly and impartially investigated and perpetrators are brought to justice.**
3. **Increase transparency in the legal system and commission independent investigations into allegations of extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests, deaths in custody and unlawful detentions.**
4. **Recommit to Rwanda’s previous declaration under Article 24(6) of the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights to allow individuals and NGOs to bring cases directly to the African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights.**