**Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 42nd Session**

**Universal Periodic Review of Benin**

**Statement by Australia**

**26 January 2023**

Thank you, [President/Vice President]

Australia commends Benin for removing all references to the death penalty from its updated Criminal Code (2018). Australia also commends Benin’s efforts to support survivors of gender-based violence, including through the new National Institute for the Promotion of Women (2021), and for efforts to eliminate human trafficking.

Australia remains concerned by reports of overcrowding, malnutrition and poor sanitation in prisons and detention centres. We also urge Benin to ensure the consistency of the application of its laws, including the Digital Code (2018), and Electoral Code (2018), with the right to freedom of expression.

**Australia recommends Benin:**

1. **Continue to strengthen the capacity of law enforcement and judicial institutions to prosecute perpetrators of gender-based violence.**
2. **Take immediate steps to improve prison conditions, by addressing overcrowding and providing adequate sanitation, nutrition and access to health services.**
3. **Review the impact of the Digital Code (2018) and Electoral Code (2018) to ensure the protection of freedom of expression and political participation.**

[163 words]