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

**Universal Periodic Review of Switzerland**

**Statement by Australia**

**27 January 2023**

Thank you, [President/Vice President]

Australia commends Switzerland for its longstanding efforts to protect and promote human rights, including through its constitution, domestic legislation and diplomacy.

We acknowledge work undertaken to implement the recommendations of Switzerland’s third Universal Periodic Review, in particular the adoption of Switzerland’s 2030 Gender Equality Strategy. Australia welcomes Switzerland’s plans for the founding assembly of its National Human Rights Institution in May 2023.

We welcome the passage in 2020 of laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, and encourage similar protections for gender identity and intersex status. We are concerned about the impact on the rights of women and girls, and on freedom of expression and religion, of the March 2021 popular referendum banning full-face veils in public.

**Australia recommends that Switzerland:**

1. Consider ways to ensure popular referenda are consistent with the international human rights treaties to which Switzerland is a party.
2. Ensure Switzerland’s National Human Rights Institution has appropriate resources and budget to fully implement its mandate once established.
3. Introduce specific legislation prohibiting discrimination based on gender identity or intersex status.

**[180 Words]**