**Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 29th Session**

**Universal Periodic Review of Burundi**

**Statement by Australia**

Australia notes Burundi’s cooperation during the visit by the UNSG Special Envoy, but remains concerned about ongoing disappearances, arbitrary arrests, torture, extrajudicial executions, rape and sexual violence, often committed by military, police, and the youth wing of the ruling party (*Imbonerakure)*. Australia is disappointed by Burundi’s withdrawal from the International Criminal Court. **Australia recommends Burundi cooperate with the UN Commission of Inquiry, and ICC investigation, to help ensure perpetrators of abuses are brought to justice.**

Australia recognises that the Arusha Agreement has been the basis for a decade of peace, and adherence to its principles remains vital to stability. **Australia recommends Burundi engage in open and constructive dialogue with all stakeholders to end the political impasse, and take steps to ensure inclusive and equal participation in political decision-making.**

Australia is concerned about the ‘official hunt’ for LGBTI persons. **Australia recommends Burundi take steps to decriminalise same-sex relations. Australia also recommends Burundi establish legal protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.**

Concerned by extrajudicial killings occurring in Burundi, **Australia recommends that perpetrators of extrajudicial killings are investigated and held to account.**

While acknowledging Burundi has not carried out an execution for some time, **Australia recommends that Burundi formally abolish the death penalty, and accede to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.**