**Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 32nd Session**

**Universal Periodic Review of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan**

**Statement by Australia**

We thank the delegation of Afghanistan for its report.

Australia is encouraged by the possibility of peace talks in Afghanistan. **Australia** **recommends that Afghanistan ensure that constitutional human rights protections are a key component and objective of any peace negotiations.**

Australia remains concerned by continuing high numbers of civilian casualties in Afghanistan. **Australia recommends continued implementation of the National Policy on Civilian Casualty Mitigation and Prevention.**

We acknowledge progress made by Afghanistan in strengthening women’s rights. **Australia** **recommends Afghanistan ensure the meaningful participation of women in peace negotiations.** Further, **Australia** **recommends Afghanistan fully implement and enforce its Elimination of Violence Against Women Law and its National Action Plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325.**

Australia commendsthe Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) for being re-accredited with Paris Principles ‘A’-status. **Australia recommends Afghanistan take continued steps to strengthen the AIHRC’s capacity, including by ensuring its fiscal sustainability.**

Finally, **Australia recommends Afghanistan reinstate its moratorium on executions, remove the death penalty from all criminal laws, and ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR*.***

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