**Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 36th Session**

**Universal Periodic Review of Maldives**

**Statement by Australia**

**Wednesday 04 November 2020**

Thank you, Madam Vice President,

Australia commends improvements to human rights in Maldives since 2018, and applauds Maldives’ renewed engagement with international human rights mechanisms.

Australia recommends that **Maldives**:

1. **Maintain its moratorium on executions, amend legislation to remove the death penalty for any crime and accede to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.**
2. **Continue to promote gender equality, in particular women’s economic participation and representation at all levels of decision-making, and ensure the effective implementation of the Domestic Violence Prevention Act including with adequate funding and staffing to implement the domestic violence prevention strategic plan and national action plan.**
3. **Strengthen the independence, accountability, and functioning of the Human Rights Commission of Maldives, including with adequate funding and staffing in full compliance with the Paris Principles.**
4. **Guarantee freedom of expression for all, including human rights defenders, and ensure all citizens are protected against threats, intimidation and violence when engaging in public discourse.**
5. **Continue progress on transitional justice mechanisms as an essential component of a comprehensive commitment to good governance.**

[179 words]