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

**Universal Periodic Review of the United States of America**

**Statement by Australia**

**9 November 2020**

Thank you, [President/Vice President]

Australia welcomes the delegation of the United States to the UPR.

We commend the United States for its longstanding leadership in shaping and protecting international human rights, including those developed in the decades since the conclusion of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We appreciate in particular US efforts to drive international action on protecting the right to freedom of religion or belief. We encourage the United States to reinforce its leadership by resuming full engagement with the Human Rights Council, and proceeding to ratify core human rights instruments.

Australia welcomes the trend towards death penalty abolition in the United States, with over half of US jurisdictions having now de facto or de jure abolished the death penalty. We are deeply concerned at the decision to resume executions at the Federal level, which runs counter to this trend, and encourage the US government to take steps towards abolition at the federal level.

We urge the United States to build on administrative actions taken thus far to combat racism and excessive use of force in policing, particularly in the context of protecting the right to peaceful assembly.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights are essential to achieving gender equality, and strengthening women’s and girl’s health, development, wellbeing and empowerment. We urge the United States to remove any obstacles towards to the realisation of these rights.

Australia recommends that **the United States of America:**

1. **Ratify the ICESCR, CEDAW, CRC and CRPD**
2. **Reimpose the federal moratorium on capital punishment, with a view to eventual abolition of the death penalty.**
3. **Continue to take concrete steps to eliminate racial discrimination and excessive use of force in policing.**
4. **Ensure that laws permitting refusals of care based on religious and moral beliefs do not restrict women’s sexual and reproductive health and rights, and that measures are put in place to monitor and prevent violations of these rights.**

**[323 Words]**