Human Rights Council - 19th Regular Session

Interactive Dialogue with the High Commissioner for Human Rights

2 March 2012

Australia thanks the High Commissioner for her sustained efforts to strengthen global human rights.

We reiterate our support for the independence of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and commend the High Commissioner’s strong and constructive responses to human rights crises in Syria and other countries. The High Commissioner has principal responsibility for United Nations human rights activities under the direction and authority of the Secretary-General and all states should continue to support her in this regard.

We encourage the High Commissioner to continue her valuable support to states in preparing for and implementing their Universal Periodic Reviews. The Office’s assistance in this regard is crucial, especially for states without permanent representation in Geneva. We welcome the work the Office is already undertaking to support states to implement UPR recommendations.

We commend the High Commissioner for her ongoing leadership on treaty body strengthening. Australia recognises the importance of strengthening and improving the efficiency of the treaty body system, particularly in light of the essential role the Committees play in enhancing people’s enjoyment of their rights all across the world and the serious resource constraints across the UN system. Australia looks forward to the release of the High Commissioner’s report on these important reforms in June.

Australia values the High Commissioner’s support for National Human Rights Institutions across the globe, and acknowledges her important role in the establishment and strengthening of such institutions in more than 40 countries.

We would be grateful for the High Commissioner’s views on the current collaboration between her Office and the International Coordinating Committee of National Human Rights Institutions.