

Human Rights Council – 37th Session

Resolution on Promoting Mutually Beneficial Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights – Australia's Explanation of Vote 23 March

Australian Statement

Thank you Mr President.

We have negotiated in good faith with the drafters of L.36. We welcome the drafter's efforts to accommodate the range of views put forward during negotiations. We regret however that all our concerns have not been addressed in the final text. We continue to be of the view that L.36 lacks balance.

We consider the content of this draft resolution focuses overly on the relations between States, instead of on the human rights of individuals as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Vienna Declaration and Plan of Action, and seeks to embed new, undefined concepts into the human rights discourse.

We are of the view the phrases "community of shared future" and "mutually beneficial cooperation" should not be included in this resolution. These phrases are not clearly understood in the Human Rights Council, or in other UN Forums, and their meaning has not been clearly explained.

We regret that the language on technical assistance and capacity building lacks recognition of the importance of monitoring, accountability and transparency, which help ensure international resources are utilised effectively.

We consider the calls within L.36 for technical assistance and capacity building to be linked to mutually beneficial cooperation to be inappropriate. While cooperation is vital to enable technical assistance and capacity building, the role of such assistance, in the human rights context, is to assist States to meet their obligations to protect and promote the human rights of individuals.

We are also disappointed that L.36 does not sufficiently acknowledge the important role of other stakeholders, such as National Human Rights Institutions and civil society in the international system.

Finally, we are concerned that L.36 may attempt to influence reform of the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms. Australia is committed to ensuring the HRC is fit for purpose. But reform should be conducted in a considered manner as part of the HRC review and not through a resolution.

For these reasons, Australia will abstain on this resolution.