**Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 33rd Session**

**Universal Periodic Review of the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

**Statement by Australia**

**7 May 2019**

Thank you [President/Vice President]

The 2018 national elections present an opportunity for the renewal of democratic discourse in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Challenges remain, however, in **respect of the rights of women and girls, child labour and illicit weapons flows.**

Australia recommends that the **DRC**:

1. **Lift media restrictions implemented over the electoral period, and bring to justice those responsible for threats against journalists, the political opposition and human rights defenders.**
2. **Institute a legal framework that criminalises and punishes domestic violence and marital rape, trains officials in responding to such crimes, and extends services to survivors.**
3. **Take steps to eliminate child labour, including in illegal mines, and establish structures to support affected children.**
4. **Address the accumulation and illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons through improved stockpile management, effective prosecution of unauthorised sellers and distributors, and progression of legislative controls.**
5. **Formally abolish the death penalty.**

**153 Words**