**Human Rights Council – 39th Session**

**Item 3: High-Level Panel Discussion on the 70th Anniversary of the Convention on Prevention of Genocide**

**13 September 2018**

**Australian Statement**

Australia abhors the crime of genocide. The *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* and the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* are two fundamental documents of the rules based international order. But too many times the international community has failed to prevent the most serious mass atrocity crimes, including in Cambodia, Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia.

Today’s discussion, marking the seventieth anniversary of these crucial documents and the twentieth anniversary of the *Rome Statute*, remains important as we witness ongoing violations of the basic tenets of international law designed to protect human rights.

In reflecting upon the international community’s commitment to uphold the *Universal Declaration* and the *Genocide Convention*, we acknowledge the significant role of mechanisms mandated by this Council to ensure human rights violations and abuses are documented and perpetrators are held to account. Of equal importance are strategies to prevent the recurrence of human rights violations and atrocity crimes, and we welcome continuing efforts to operationalise the Council’s prevention mandate.

Australia calls for States to uphold their Responsibility to Protect and supports the *Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes*. We recognise it is the responsibility of states to protect their populations from mass atrocity crimes. The international community should assist states to meet this responsibility.

We ask the Panel, how we can best utilise the Council’s mechanisms to identify and ensure early action to prevent human rights violations and abuses and mass atrocity crimes, such as genocide?

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