

Human Rights Council – 42<sup>nd</sup> session

General Debate on Item 10 Statement

26 September 2019

Australian Statement

Australia strongly supports the provision of technical assistance and capacity building as critical means of promoting and protecting human rights. We thank the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General for their reports on assistance provided to Cambodia, Georgia and Yemen.

Australia welcomes Cambodia's ongoing cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. We welcome Cambodia's rapid economic growth and progress towards Sustainable Development Goals, and urge Cambodia to take parallel steps to rebuild its democracy and to allow free and open political debate without intimidation.

Australia is a strong and consistent supporter of Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We do not recognise Abkhazia and South Ossetia's claims to independence and we reject continued steps by the authorities in control of those regions to undermine Georgia's territorial integrity. We welcome the OHCHR report reaffirming the need for unimpeded access to Georgia's occupied territories, and call on the authorities in control of these regions to uphold human rights. Continued engagement and reporting are critical to prevent further deterioration of the situation.

Australia restates its deep concern at reported violations and abuses of international human rights law and international humanitarian law in Yemen, including sexual and gender-based violence. We welcome the technical cooperation provided by the OHCHR to Yemen, including to the National Commission of Inquiry, and welcome all efforts to increase transparency of the humanitarian situation. We acknowledge that technical cooperation assists authorities to address such situations and strengthen protections for people who may be vulnerable. Australia encourages all parties to engage constructively with the UN Special Envoy for Yemen, Mr Martin Griffiths, to reach a lasting political solution to the conflict.

Australia would welcome a discussion on what states can do to encourage authorities in control of those regions to allow unimpeded access to occupied territories.

*(292 Words)*