Griffith University event

The drafters of the UDHR could reasonably have expected that the practice of protecting and promoting human rights would have advanced beyond where is it today. That we might have learned more lessons from history.

For example, at the recent UN General Assembly Third Committee, Australia initiated and led, with a small group of countries Chile, Japan, Spain and the UAE a Joint Statement calling for protection of the human rights of women and girls in Afghanistan.

Over 80 countries signed on to the statement, including 12 Organisation of Islamic Cooperation member states.

The initiative reflected our determination to work with a broad range of international partners to reduce contestation, while ensuring diverse voices can speak together on the need to advance and protect gender equality.

Universality also underpins our work to de

The appointment of inaugural Ambassador for First Nations People (a world first) provides us with a unique opportunity to lead on expanding that dialogue.

At the last session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, 21 countries signed on to an Australian-

participation of Indigenous Peoples at the Council. We then worked closely with Mexico and Guatemala on their resolution which mandated, for the first time, the participation of Indigenous Peoples in formal meetings of the UN Human Rights Council.

We know, however, that emphasising the universality of human rights, while important,

For the UDHR to have the impact it should, we need to get better at talking about human rights and why they matter.

We know that when we talk about the universality of human rights, responses can vary.

Being attuned to local contexts and priorities is also critical for us to be able to talk about human rights in ways that are practical and relevant. And enables us to identify the tools likely to have the most influence or impact in any given context.

Ovil society organisations often play an invaluable role through their first-hand understanding of local contexts and needs, as partners to deliver programs, and as sources of advice to ensure we do no harm in our work to support human rights defenders.

This is why consultation with civil society is an important component in the development of several strategies DFAT is currently working on, all with human rights angles, on:

- . Gender equality
- . Disability equality and rights
- . Humanitarian action
- . A refresh of our strategy for abolition of the death penalty.
- . LGBTQIA+ human rights engagement strategy which also covers the newly established Inclusion and Equality Fund, which will see \$3.5 million go to LGBTQIA+ civil society organisations and human rights defenders across Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

Recognition of the value of our work with civil society is also why we maintain our Australian NGO Cooperation Program - where many of the projects have a positive bearing on human rights.

the new International Development Policy, a Civil Society Partnership Fund is being established, to support the contribution of local civil society organisations -Invest-Reach Partnership, which supports local

utilising the deep expertise of the Australian Human Rights Commission, who DFAT funds to provide technical assistance and capacity building on human rights in Vietnam and Laos.

This has involved, for example:

. In Vietnam, development of a Master of Human Rights Law course at Vietnam

Centre, with funding for 100 scholarships for Vietnamese students.

. Partnering with the Laos Department of Treaty and Law, in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to provide support to Laos to meet its UN treaty body reporting obligations, including in respect of the Universal Periodic Review process.

In all our international efforts, we of self-reflection is important for promoting universality, as no country has a perfect human rights record. So we engage in a spirit of self-reflection open to fair scrutiny and constructive feedback with a view to also improving human rights in Australia.

essor Harris Rimmer and her team at Griffith University for their initiative in organising this event, and thank you for the opportunity to share perspectives with you this morning.

a privilege to be able to join you to reflect on the timeless principles enshrined in the UDHR and the invaluable role that Australians have played in promoting human rights at home and abroad.