



THE HON JULIE BISHOP MP

Minister for Foreign Affairs



Dr Dennis Jensen MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Dr Jensen

Thank you for your letter of 2 January 2014 on behalf of the Standing Committee on Petitions regarding a petition on the 28 July 2013 National Assembly elections in Cambodia. I regret the delay in response.

In accordance with Standing Order 209(b), I wish to lodge the following response with the Committee:

Australia has had a strong and long-standing commitment to the process of democratisation in Cambodia.

During my recent visit to Cambodia on 22 February 2014, I canvassed Cambodia's domestic political situation with Cambodian counterparts.

Ultimately these are matters for the Cambodian people, but Australia encourages the Cambodian Government and opposition to remain in dialogue on election related issues.

The Australian Government welcomed the joint statement released by the major political parties in Cambodia on 16 September 2013 committing both parties to work to establish a mechanism to reform the election process.

In a statement at the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Cambodia in Geneva on 28 January 2014, Australia noted allegations of electoral irregularities surrounding the elections and welcomed the Cambodian Government's stated commitment to undertake electoral reforms. We recommended the Cambodian Government undertake electoral reforms to ensure credible elections. I reaffirmed Australia's UPR statement during my visit to Cambodia.

The Australian Government welcomes the agreement of the Cambodian Government and opposition parties on 18 February 2014 to establish a joint committee on electoral reform. The parties agreed that the joint committee would prepare a framework for electoral reform to ensure free and fair elections and would arrange a national workshop on electoral reform.

The Australian Government continues to monitor the human rights situation in Cambodia and is committed to working constructively with the Cambodian Government for the protection of human rights and democracy.

Yours sincerely

Julie Bishop

07 APR 2014