

30th session of the Human Rights Council (14 September – 2 October 2015)

Interactive Dialogue with the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Statement of Ireland

14 September 2015

Ireland aligns itself with the statement of the European Union and adds the following.

High Commissioner

Ireland thanks you for presentation of the update on the work of your Office to the Human Rights Council today.

Now one full year into your term as High Commissioner, we commend you for the determination, strength and passion which you have continuously brought to your role in the promotion and protection of human rights in all regions worldwide.

An old Irish proverb says that the eye of a friend is a good mirror. Over the past year, your voice and the expertise of your Office have been that mirror, offering us all an important reality check, sometimes including a less than flattering view on our actions. Ireland welcomes and values this exchange because, as we have said before, we view your role not only as one of supporting States in meeting our responsibilities but also, where necessary, criticising and challenging us to do better. We agree with you that sovereignty cannot be damaged by commentary or criticism. At a time when we collectively face a myriad of crises and challenges to the very system of human rights and international law, your unfettered independence and that of your Office is indispensable, so as to fully fulfil that role for us and for all States

High Commissioner

We agree that at times the challenges faced today by ordinary people in many regions of the world are almost overwhelming. We agree that if we fail to address and give adequate attention to these major issues – migration, climate change, conflict and impunity – we are failing in our duties as members of this Council and the international community.

All States in this room have a particular and shared responsibility to respond to the terrible range and scope of human rights abuses and violations occurring

worldwide. The credibility of this Council demands that we do not confine ourselves to academic discussions or indeed only to the very important issues of prevention and technical cooperation; but rather to also consider and take appropriate action where abuses and violations are alleged to occur.

A vital part of this is to more fully integrating the input and perspective of the field into Geneva debates. In that regard, we commend all those officers working tirelessly to bring human rights closer to the rights-holders on the ground and look forward to the upcoming oral update on OHCHR field-based structures.

We are also grateful for the invaluable support of your Office to States and the Council by way of reports, including the reports of special procedures. The reports emanating from your Office to the Council deserve close attention and study. In our experience, they can serve not alone to underpin and facilitate our debates and work in this Room, but also to raise greater awareness of human rights issues in our domestic systems. These frequently excellent reports can have these effects only when we have sufficient time to study and absorb them. Early production and release of all reports, at latest before opening of HRC sessions, would be conducive to more substantive and in depth debates.

High Commissioner

We agree with you on the extraordinary potential of civil society in assisting us to meet the challenges we face, as you put it this morning, to assist in building more healthy, more secure and more sustainable States. This potential – as well as the threats to civil society – is the reason why Ireland together with our partners Chile, Japan, Sierra Leone and Tunisia have led a resolution on civil society space at the Council for the past 2 years. We echo your call for contributions to the report requested by the last such resolution, HRC 27/31, and welcome in that regard also the initiative of civil society organisations which have undertaken to organise regional consultations on the topic.

We look forward to hearing your further thoughts on these and other issues in the remainder of this debate and throughout the 30th session of the Council.

Thank you