

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

**General Debate – Item 8
Statement by Ireland**

29 September 2015

Ireland aligns with the statement of the European Union and would like to add the following:

Mr. President,

With adoption in 1993 of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, all States reaffirmed that human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent; and reaffirmed our commitment to promoting and protecting all human rights without discrimination of any kind and in a fair and equal manner. While we face a number of crises and challenges in our world today, this commitment applies in all circumstances and is a baseline below which none may fall.

Mr President

We note with interest the report of the High Commissioner on the impact of the world drug problem on the enjoyment of human rights submitted to the Council under this item. Though we do not necessarily agree with all its conclusions, Ireland shares the concern expressed in the Report regarding human rights violations and abuses suffered by persons who use drugs, including torture and the death penalty.

We further recall the report presented under this item at the 29th session regarding discrimination and violence against individuals based on their sexual orientation and gender identity. We continue to be deeply concerned regarding the serious human rights abuses and violations detailed in the report. We remain committed to combatting discrimination and violence against persons on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity and to look forward to working with partners to give appropriate attention to this issue at the Council on an ongoing basis.

By way of update in terms of Ireland's domestic situation, we are pleased to announce that following approval by popular vote in May of this year for same-sex marriage in Ireland, draft legislation was presented to Dail Eireann (lower

house of parliament) this month which will make the necessary legislative changes to enable same-sex couples to marry in Ireland.

Mr. President

22 years ago, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action recognised the important role of civil society in the development and strengthening of human rights and called for special emphasis to it. Nonetheless, it is unfortunately the case that civil society actors continue to face barriers, in law and in practice, to their work in many parts of the world. Ireland, as part of a cross-regional core group consisting of Chile, Japan, Sierra Leone and Tunisia, has been proud to present an initiative on the issue of civil society space as a human rights concern for the past 2 years. We recall that the Council has, in that context, by consensus recognised the important role of civil society and urged States to create, in law and in practice, a safe and enabling environment in which civil society can operate free from hindrance and insecurity. We urge all States to input examples of best practice to the report requested of OHCHR pursuant to resolution 27/31

Thank you