

29th session of the Human Rights Council (15 June – 3 July 2015)

Interactive Dialogue with the High Commissioner for Human Rights

**Statement of Ireland
15 June 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.

Your report reminds us in the starkest terms of the scale of challenge faced in promotion and protection of human rights in all regions worldwide. Addressing these challenges is a shared task, in which we all have a role to play.

Your role, High Commissioner, and that of your Office, is crucial – not only supporting us States in meeting our responsibilities but also, where necessary criticising and challenging us to do better. Your unfettered independence and that of your Office is indispensable in that regard.

We also note with appreciation your expressed commitment, since appointment, to translation of human rights norms into reality on the ground. While entirely a matter for you and your Office, we commend the decision to rebalance work at headquarters and in the field, including through expansion of field presences and creation of regional hubs. We see a dual potential in this decision – first, to bring the work of the Office closer to the rights-holders on the ground; but crucially also to ensure that the all-important field perspective is more fully understood and appreciated here in Geneva.

For the reality is that the Office cannot function only in the abstract or on the basis of academic theory; just as the HRC cannot fully realise its mandate and potential without addressing the full range of issues, including not only thematic resolutions but also country-specific discussions and, where necessary, initiatives.

High Commissioner

We were particularly pleased to hear your reference this morning to rule of law, to accountability and to the role of the ICC. We too are deeply concerned at instances of failure to fully respect orders of the Court.

We also echo your remarks this morning that when governments attack civil society, they undermine the foundations of stability and prosperity and create opportunities for extremist or sectarian movements. We again call on all States to work to establish a safe and enabling environment for civil society actors in their territories; and to avoid impinging on the crucial role in this Council's work of civil society voices.

We conclude by wishing you and your Office well in your challenging work on the protection and promotion of human rights worldwide.

Thank you