

Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Human Right to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation and the Special Rapporteur on Hazardous Waste

9 September 2014

Statement by Ireland

Thank you Mr President

Ireland welcomes the first report of the Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes.

In his report, the Special Rapporteur expresses his intention to focus his work on the new dimensions added to the mandate since 2011. In particular, as established by the Human Rights Council Resolution 21/17, the Special Rapporteur is required to report on human rights violations committed against human rights defenders due to their activities relating to the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes.

Ireland attaches the greatest importance to the protection of human rights defenders. Human rights defenders too often face arrest, loss of employment, harassment, stigmatisation, violence, torture and even the threat of death as a result of their activities. In this regard, we would like to ask to the Special Rapporteur

How do you intend to fulfil your mandate with respect to human rights violations perpetrated against human rights defenders as a result of their activities in defence of the environment?

Ireland wishes to express our appreciation and gratitude to the Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation for her substantial efforts over the past six years.

Water and sanitation challenges are central to human development and economic growth. Sustained and equitable access to water is not only a life saving intervention in humanitarian responses, it is also critical to address the complex and multi-dimensional nature of poverty and vulnerability; especially issues around child mortality, food security and gender equality.

The availability of the handbook to help us assess the level of compliance with the right to water and sanitation is particularly timely given the post-2015 negotiations. Ireland

recognises the centrality of ensuring access to safe water and sanitation to all the goals under consideration in the new post-2015 framework.

MDG7 on water and sanitation has been successful in some respects; more people than ever have access to water and sanitation. This shows us that political commitment matters; however, we still have a long way to go.

Taking the findings and recommendations of these reports, we would like to ask the Special Rapporteur what are the key next steps going forward?