

38th Session of the Human Rights Council

Draft Resolution L.17 entitled: “Civil Society Space: Engagement with International and Regional Organisations”

Introductory Statement by Ireland – Item 3

Mr. President,

On behalf of a cross-regional core group of Chile, Ireland, Japan, Sierra Leone and Tunisia, I am honoured to introduce to the Council draft resolution L.17: “Civil Society Space: Engagement with International and Regional Organisations”. A total of 57 States have now cosponsored this draft resolution.

Globally, the space for civil society is challenged and is shrinking. Civil society actors continue to face threats, attacks, reprisals and acts of intimidation. The issue of civil society space is vital in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and it is clear that it must be addressed as a human rights concern. The core group therefore considered it timely and important to once again present a resolution for consideration by the Human Rights Council.

Mr. President,

The core group has engaged in extensive negotiations and outreach on this text. We have held five informal negotiation meetings and several bilateral discussions. We listened to, and reflected on, comments and views from all perspectives, and have made every effort to reflect these in our text. We also sought the views of civil society and we thank them for their contributions. Our determination has been to take a constructive approach to the draft text. As late as yesterday, we have proposed an oral revision in response to concerns raised by delegations.

We believe that the text now before the Council is a carefully balanced one.

It takes a practical and constructive approach to the operative outcomes. It captures, concisely, the challenges faced by civil society and the value and importance of their contribution, with a particular focus on regional and international organisations.

We have been mindful of wider discussion on HRC reform and we have been creative in our approach to the proposed operative outcomes. Our aim is to send a strong message that the Human Rights Council values, and is determined to protect, the space for the vital work of civil society.

Finally, may I pay tribute to the many individuals behind the scenes who have helped the core group prepare this text for presentation today. We thank in particular the editors, translators, interpreters and Secretariat staff for their tireless work.

I am honoured now to hand over to the distinguished delegation of Tunisia to complete the introductory remarks on this resolution.