

## **Human Rights Council – 27<sup>th</sup> session**

### **Panel discussion on the role of prevention in the promotion and protection of human rights**

#### **Statement by Ireland**

**18 September 2014**

Mr. President, Mr. High Commissioner, distinguished panellists, ladies and gentlemen.

Ireland wishes to add some remarks in a national capacity to those made on our behalf in the statement of the European Union.

We welcome today's important discussion on the role of prevention in the promotion and protection of human rights. While this Council rightly addresses situations of human rights violations where they occur, its mandate also includes contributing to the prevention of human rights violations. Our regular discussions here, including in thematic debates, the cooperative Universal Periodic Review mechanism, the valuable work of the special procedures and treaty bodies and the technical assistance given by the Office all advance this objective.

However, the relevance of the topic goes far beyond this Council. In this regard, we warmly welcome the Secretary-General's "Rights Up Front" initiative, aimed at strengthening the early warning capacities of the whole United Nations system, as an important contribution to the prevention of human rights violations.

At the national level, a strong and vibrant civil society can be a key element in the prevention of human rights violations. We therefore emphasise the need for States to promote and maintain a safe and enabling environment for civil society.

I would also like to underline the importance and relevance to our discussion of education on human rights, and to commend the work of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and its field presences in this crucial area.

We hope that today's discussion will allow us all to gain a better understanding of the concept of prevention of human rights violations and how it can be reflected in policies and strategies at the national, regional and international levels.

We would be interested to hear the views of the panelists on aspects of the issue which could most usefully be examined in the study on the prevention of human rights violations and its practical implementation, which the OHCHR will prepare and present to this Council.