

28th session of the Human Rights Council (2-27 March 2015)

Statement by Ireland - Interactive Dialogue with the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Ireland aligns itself with the Statement of the European Union and adds the following.

High Commissioner

Thank you for presentation to the Council of your annual report. Ireland has strongly supported the mandate and independence of your Office since its establishment over 20 years ago and continues to do so today. This report on the work of your Office vividly lays before us the scale of the challenge involved in efforts to, as you put it, “translate human rights norms into reality for people across the globe”.

The litany of horrors referred to in your report can too easily lead to a sense of being overwhelmed by the wanton violence, atrocity and violation which sadly continue to blight our world. Recognising the individual human tragedies which make up each of those situations, our collective choice is a stark but a simple one- to surrender to chaos, or to re-commit to national and international rule of law.

High Commissioner

Ireland considers that education and in particular human rights education have a crucial role to play in seeking progress towards a life of dignity for all persons.

- *Are there particular actions which you recommend States should take, at the domestic level, in the field of education and in particular human rights education?*

Freedom of expression too has a special place as an enabling force, integral to the attainment and enjoyment of all rights; and difficult or dissenting voices form an important and protected part of that equation. We strongly welcome the work of your Office on civil society space and more generally on widening democratic space.

- *Could you elaborate on whether your Office’s activities on civil society space and widening the democratic space might complement or feed into the Secretary-General’s Rights Up Front initiative?*

Ireland is honoured to have been tasked to co-facilitate, together with Kenya, the international negotiations on a new global development agenda. As Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Charles Flanagan said during the High-Level Segment this week, our ambition is to achieve a transformative Post-2015 Development Agenda that will both eradicate extreme poverty and promote sustainable development based on equality and human rights.

- *You referred to access to information, freedom of expression, assembly, and association as vital to development. Apart from these 'public freedoms', do you see a particular role or importance for civil society and democratic space in the achievement of sustainable development?*

High Commissioner

We note with interest your announcement of reorganisation of OHCHR and commend you for this practical and considered response to the functional review. We note with particular interest the possibilities which an enhanced New York presence holds for yet-greater involvement of the Office in discussions on peace and security, development and the rule of law.

High Commissioner

We are interested in your desire to find ways to increase the interactivity on the impact of these discussions and are happy to engage further on this.

We wish you well in this and all aspects of your work on the protection and promotion of human rights worldwide.

Thank you