

Human Rights Council – 30th session (14 September – 2 October 2015)

Statement on the High Commissioner's report on Sri Lanka

30 September 2015

Statement by Ireland

Mr President

Ireland thanks the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights for presentation to the Council today of the OHCHR report on Sri Lanka.

This is a clear, professional and illuminating report which Ireland welcomes and supports in full. We are seriously concerned by the report's findings of serious violations and abuses of human rights as well as related crimes during the armed conflict in Sri Lanka. It is clear to us that the report's recommendations on the way forward – including the need for a credible and effective accountability mechanism – are essential elements in the process of promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka into the future.

Ireland recognises and welcomes that the new Government of Sri Lanka has made a range of commitments on how this important goal of reconciliation and accountability is to be reached. We further recognise the steps taken to improve human rights protection and welcome the positive engagement by Sri Lanka with this Council – including the address by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka on 14 September, making undertakings on behalf of the Government in the fields of truth-seeking, justice, reparations and non-recurrence.

We will closely follow the implementation of these commitments, including in the context of the Council's future work. We fully understand, including from our own history, that as Foreign Minister Samaraweera said in this Chamber, reconciliation is a process. However this does not mean that concrete progress can be deferred indefinitely; or that outside involvement and assistance does not have an important role.

Mr President

While we would in some respects have welcomed a more robust text, we consider draft resolution HRC30/L.29 tabled by the core group consisting of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, UK and US to be a good basis for progress in Sri Lanka. We commend the Government Sri Lanka for its positive engagement and cosponsorship of the draft text. We look forward to its adoption by consensus.

We also look forward to the future oral and written reports of the High Commissioner to this Council at the 32nd and 34th sessions respectively. In those reports and discussions, we will be particularly interested in progress on domestic law reform and the concrete arrangements put in place to give effect to the provisions of draft operative paragraph 6 regarding an accountability mechanism including an international component.

For the moment, we would be interested to hear any possible elaboration from the Deputy High Commissioner on what practical support it is envisaged will be available from

OHCHR on the ground in Sri Lanka in support of the Government's work and for the implementation of draft resolution L.29, after adoption.

Thank you