

## **Human Rights Council 38<sup>th</sup> session**

### **Enhanced Interactive Dialogue on the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

**3rd July 2018**

#### **National Statement of Ireland**

Ireland aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and adds the following

Mr President,

Ireland thanks the High Commissioner for his update on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and in particular the Group of Experts for their report on human rights violations in the Kasai region.

The reports of extrajudicial killings, forced labour and sexual violence are deeply disturbing. We urge the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo to swiftly bring those responsible to justice. Ireland supports the extension of the mandate of the Group of Experts, so that their important work can continue.

Ireland is also seriously concerned at violence and human rights abuses in other regions. We call on all armed groups to immediately cease the recruitment of child soldiers, and facilitate the safe return of children already in their ranks. We also urge all groups, including the national army, to respect international humanitarian law and make every effort to protect civilians.

Finally, Ireland would like to again stress the importance of a lasting political solution to end the ongoing violence. We commend the progress made so far to prepare for the December elections, and urge the Government to adhere to the electoral timetable. It is essential that the elections take place as planned, and that existing constitutional term limits are respected. If the elections are both credible and fair, they could herald a new and positive chapter for the country.

Thank you.