

**28<sup>th</sup> Session of the Universal Periodic Review**

**(6-17 November 2017)**

**Review of Guatemala**

**Statement of Ireland**

**Wednesday, 8 November 2017**

Thank you Mr. President

Ireland welcomes the delegation of Guatemala and thanks it for its third national report.

We take this opportunity to acknowledge the efforts which have been made to protect and promote human rights in Guatemala since the previous UPR cycle.

In relation to the rights of indigenous peoples, Ireland welcomes recent advances, noting in particular, the ministerial policy published earlier this year aimed at strengthening and improving coordination in this area. Ireland encourages the government of Guatemala to continue this important work of addressing the continued inequality and exclusion suffered by indigenous people in Guatemala

Further, Ireland notes that, also in 2017, the government launched a procedural guide for the implementation of consultations with indigenous peoples. **Ireland** welcomes this development and **recommends** that the requirement to consult with indigenous peoples on decisions concerning lands traditionally owned by them is enshrined in law, and that every effort is made by the government to ensure that this instrument complies with international standards.

Attacks on human rights defenders in Guatemala remain an issue of grave concern. There have also been worrying instances of harassment, intimidation, and criminalisation of human rights defenders. Ireland therefore **recommends** that the government takes all necessary measures to protect human rights defenders through the removal of legal and policy measures which inhibit the ability of HRDs to carry out their vital work in safety, without fear of interference, obstruction or harassment of any kind, including by finalising the Public Policy for the Protection of HRDs with strong participation by civil society and an adequate budgetary allocation.

Thank you.