

Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Cambodia

National Statement

Thank you Mr. President.

Ireland aligns itself with the statement of the European Union and wishes to add the following.

Ireland thanks the Special Rapporteur for her work in reporting on the situation of human rights in Cambodia and asks the Government of Cambodia to note her assessment.

Ireland welcomes the positive gains made in Cambodia in respect of economic and social rights. Ireland is however concerned at the findings of the Rapporteur on the restriction of political space and that the highly restrictive environment in which the recent election in Cambodia took place was not representative of the democratic will of Cambodian citizens.

We are also concerned by the continued restrictions on civil society space, the media and on human rights defenders. We respectfully ask the Cambodian authorities to create conditions conducive to free political debate and competition with a view to rebuilding a democracy in which the media and civil society, including human rights defenders, can freely exercise their rights. In particular, Ireland supports her recommendation that the ban on the 118 former CNRP members from engaging in political activities be removed.

The recent release on bail of Mr Kem Sokha from prison on humanitarian grounds and the release and pardoning of others is a positive and welcome development, however Ireland calls for the full and unconditional release of Mr. Sokha and for measures which will allow free political engagement and the protection and freedom of human rights defenders in keeping with the Cambodian Constitution and the international treaties which Cambodia has ratified.

Finally, Ireland would like to ask the Special Rapporteur, what steps States can take to better support civil society engagement in Cambodia.

Thank you