



## **Statement of Ireland**

### **50th session of the Human Rights Council**

*Interactive Dialogue on the High Commissioner's oral update on Afghanistan*

**Wednesday 15 June 2021**

Mr. President,

Ireland aligns with the EU statement and thanks the High Commissioner for her update.

Ireland unequivocally condemns Taliban harassment of and violence against human rights defenders, civil society activists, journalists, ethnic and religious minorities, former government employees and military personnel, and LGBTI+ persons.

Afghanistan will never reach its potential while the majority of its people are denied their rights. The restrictions on women and girls' access to education are unacceptable. Women and girls must be able to participate freely in all aspects of public and private life, free from the threat of violence, reprisals and intimidation. Their full participation is vital for Afghanistan's social and economic development. The economic crisis and the humanitarian crisis are interlinked with the human rights crisis.

Ireland also remains gravely concerned at the humanitarian challenges facing the people of Afghanistan. They face a potential humanitarian catastrophe this winter. We continue to support all efforts to prevent the humanitarian crisis, including through engagement with EU partners and the UN. The Taliban must allow unhindered humanitarian operations, including for female staff.

Ireland deplores the dissolution of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission. High Commissioner, could you expand on your engagement with the Taliban in relation to the Human Rights Commission? With its dissolution, are there concrete steps that can be taken to address the monitoring and accountability gap?