



Statement of Ireland

50th session of the Human Rights Council

Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Education: Digitalisation of Education and its impact on human rights

Thursday, 23rd June 2022

Mr. President, *[Mr/Madame Vice-President,]*

Ireland aligns with the statement of the EU and thanks the Special Rapporteur for her timely report.

Ireland agrees that the digitalisation of education is highly complex, presenting opportunities and challenges that must be carefully managed in the context of the right of all persons to access quality education.

Ireland recognises that digital technologies played an instrumental role in the delivery of educational services during COVID-19 lockdowns, offering many students the opportunity to continue their studies remotely to ensure continuity in their education. However, this opportunity was not universal.

Within Ireland, we acknowledge the efforts needed domestically to address the role of digitalisation in potentially exacerbating existing inequalities, particularly those based on socio-economic status, as well as those faced by persons with disabilities and persons belonging to minorities.

Further, as your report highlights, investment in the digitalisation of education should not undermine or replace face-to-face interaction in the education system. Digitalisation should, instead, complement and enhance existing education structures to support delivery, improve educational outcomes and ensure equality of access for all.

Ireland therefore remains committed to working with stakeholders to improve our education and digital infrastructure to reduce existing inequalities and further support teachers and students.

Special Rapporteur, what should States consider in designing a child rights impact assessment, including incorporating an intersectional perspective, to ensure digital technologies improve the realisation of the right to education?

Thank you.