



## **Statement of Ireland**

### **40th session of the Human Rights Council**

*High-level panel on the death penalty: Human rights violations related to the use of the death penalty, in particular with respect to the rights to non-discrimination and equality*

**26 February 2019**

Ireland aligns itself with the statement of the European Union.

Mr President,

Ireland wishes to thank the distinguished panellists for their presentations here today.

Ireland remains strongly opposed to the use of the death penalty in all cases and in all circumstances. The final and irreversible nature of the death penalty underlines the impropriety of its use as a criminal punishment. Accordingly, Ireland continues to seek its universal abolition.

The death penalty constitutes cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and is contrary to the right to life while also negatively impacting on a number of other basic human rights. For this reason, Ireland welcomes the focus of this year's panel on the violation of the rights to non-discrimination and equality.

Evidence has shown that those from marginalised or lower income backgrounds are more likely to be sentenced to the death penalty. This can come as a result of their inability to access quality legal representation which is a direct breach of the right to non-discrimination and equality. Ireland welcomes the recognition by the UN General Assembly, in the 2018 resolution "*Moratorium on the use of the death penalty*", that there is a need to ensure that persons facing the death penalty have access to justice without discrimination.

In countries where the death penalty remains in use, Ireland is particularly worried by executions of minors, pregnant women and persons with disabilities. In countries where the death penalty remains a criminal punishment, Ireland calls for a moratorium on its use, with its abolition to be carried out in accordance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

*Distinguished panellists, how can we ensure that those countries that continue to use the death penalty do so in line with the provisions of the ICCPR?*

Thank you.