

Universal Periodic Review-25th cycle (2 – 13 May 2016)

Review of Suriname: Statement by Ireland 2 May 2016

Ireland welcomes the delegation of Suriname and thanks it for the presentation of its report.

We commend the positive efforts undertaken by Suriname since its first review, including the effective abolition of the death penalty through its elimination from the Criminal Code which came into effect on 13 April 2015. However, we note that references to the death penalty remain present in the Military Penal Code and encourage Suriname, in line with its stated intentions, to amend the Military Penal Code in order to fully abolish the death penalty.

Ireland is concerned that Suriname's legislative environment can interfere with the enjoyment of the right to freedom of expression, in particular for journalists and the wider media. We are especially concerned about the chilling effect of the criminalisation of defamation, which is currently punishable by fines or prison terms for up to three years, as well as the lack of freedom of information legislation, which is key to ensure free and open debates in all societies. Ireland **recommends** to Suriname to decriminalise defamation and place it within the civil code in accordance with international standards, and adopt a freedom of information law in line with international standards.

We further note that while consensual same-sex relations are not criminalised, members of the LGBTI community continue to face stigmatisation, discrimination and to experience violence, including at the hands of security forces, as well as obstacles in their enjoyment of the right to privacy and family life. We urge Suriname to legally recognise same-sex unions, and **recommend** that Suriname develops and implements training programmes for current and trainee police officers to address stigmatisation and discrimination of LGBTI persons.