

**27th session of the Universal Periodic Review
(1 – 12 May 2017)**

Review of United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Statement by Ireland

Thank you, Mr. President.

Ireland welcomes the delegation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and thanks it for its presentation.

Ireland commends the United Kingdom for its continuing efforts to tackle modern slavery and its multifaceted, ongoing work to reduce violence against women and girls. We commend too the UK's engagement with UN human rights mechanisms, including submission of a voluntary mid-term review in the second UPR cycle.

While we appreciate the update on implementation provided in connection with the 3rd cycle, we regret that the UK has sought to change position from acceptance to rejection on a number of 2nd cycle recommendations. We consider this approach may risk impacting on clarity in the UPR process.

Ireland shares the concerns of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child regarding corporal punishment of children in the United Kingdom. Ireland **recommends** that the United Kingdom take all the necessary steps to prohibit corporal punishment in all settings, including the family, and to explicitly prohibit it in all schools and educational institutions, other institutions and forms of alternative care.

Ireland acknowledges its unique cooperation with the United Kingdom as the co-guarantors of the Good Friday Agreement - a treaty registered with the United Nations - which is the foundation of the peace process in Northern Ireland.

A fundamental provision in the human rights chapter of the Good Friday Agreement is the incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights into Northern Ireland law, which the UK has done through the Human Rights Act 1998. Ireland notes that while a proposal for a domestic British Bill of Rights could complement the Convention's incorporation, it could not replace it and encourages the UK Government to provide reassurance on this matter, in particular in the context of Northern Ireland.

Also, in relation to the full implementation of all provisions of the Good Friday Agreement, Ireland **supports** the call by the UN Human Rights Committee and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and others, that a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland to reflect the particular circumstances of Northern Ireland should be pursued. In the context of the UK's departure from the European Union, Ireland believes that such a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland would help to provide continuity, clarity and consensus on the legal framework for human rights in Northern Ireland

Acknowledging that this is a primarily a matter for the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly, Ireland looks forward to continuing its close co-operation with the UK, as co-

guarantors of the Good Friday Agreement, to support a process that would see the adoption of a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland as soon as possible.

Finally, Ireland welcomes the UK Government's commitment to establish the comprehensive institutional framework provided for under the 2014 Stormont House Agreement to deal with the legacy of the Troubles in Northern Ireland in a manner fully consistent with international human rights obligations and standards.

Ireland, as co-guarantor of the Good Friday Agreement and subsequent Agreements, **recommends** that the UK should provide reassurance that any proposed domestic British Bill of Rights would complement rather than replace the incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights into Northern Ireland law; Ireland also **recommends** - acknowledging that this is primarily a matter for the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly - that a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland to reflect the particular circumstances of Northern Ireland should be pursued to provide continuity, clarity and consensus on the legal framework for human rights there.

Ireland will continue to play its part in achieving these objective, consistent with its role and responsibility as a co-guarantor of the Good Friday Agreement and subsequent Agreements and looks forward to continuing its close cooperation with the UK in that regard.

Thank you.