



Statement of Ireland

76th session of the United Nations General Assembly

Third Committee

Interactive dialogue with the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet

Wednesday, 13 October 2021

Thank you, Chair

Ireland aligns with the statement of the European Union and thanks the High Commissioner for her address today.

Ireland would firstly like to reaffirm our unwavering support for the work of the High Commissioner, the Office she leads, and the vital work carried out by the OHCHR.

Ireland recognises how challenging this work is. Ever before the difficulties posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, the budgetary constraints faced by the OHCHR have had a direct and negative impact on the work of the Office, including on the ability of the office to maintain a sustainable level of professional support to the treaty bodies, special procedures and mandated investigative bodies. Collectively, we must ensure your resources match your mandate.

Ireland commends the OHCHR for actively implementing its mandate remotely again this year, for instance through delivering technical assistance and capacity building online. We particularly appreciate your steadfast advocacy for the full protection and promotion of human rights for all members of society including women and girls, migrants, and LGBTI persons.

Ireland is deeply concerned about the impact of the pandemic on civil society space and on human rights defenders. We were therefore pleased to see the report focusing on the OHCHR's determined work on expanding civic space and protecting human rights defenders. This work is now more important than ever given the deteriorating human rights situation worldwide. If I might add, it is critical that civil society can return to participate in person at the UN, including in this building.

Madame High Commissioner, in the conclusions to your report you note that the OHCHR is working with Member States, civil society and the UN to ensure human rights is at the centre of our recovery from the pandemic. What practical steps can states take to ensure this becomes a reality, and how can we try to undo the damage that has been done to civil society space in the past two years?

Thank you.

325 words