

**Human Rights Council – 31<sup>st</sup> session (29 February – 24 March)**

**Panel on the human rights dimensions of preventing and countering violent extremism**

**Statement by Ireland**

**17 March, 2016**

Ireland aligns itself with the statement of the European Union and adds the following:

Mr President

Ireland welcomes and thanks the distinguished members of the panel for their presentations today. We are confident that the range of expertise and experiences shared in these presentations will make a real contribution to our ongoing shared efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism.

Ireland is fully committed to preventing and combatting violent extremism in all its forms. We support efforts to do so in all appropriate ways which are in compliance with international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law. We remind of the key importance of human rights education, including in light of its role in preventing and countering violent extremism.

We welcome the Secretary General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. This is a useful framework for the ongoing efforts which all stakeholders are making in this field.

We further welcome consideration by the Human Rights Council of this topic. The Council has an important role to play in teasing out the human rights dimensions of the issue. For these human rights dimensions are multi-layered - promotion and protection of human rights can assist in creating an environment which is not conducive to the *growth* of extremism; human rights education should be a key feature of efforts to *prevent* radicalisation and extremism; and all efforts to *counter* violent extremism must be conducted in a manner which respect human rights.

Our view is that an independent, diverse and pluralistic civil society is a particularly key partner in this field. The very process of partnership is healthy and helpful in that it ensures that a range of views are brought to bear on the challenges which we all jointly face. We again call on all States to recognise the important and legitimate role of civil society as well as the value of open debate including dissenting views; and to create and maintain in law and in practice a safe and enabling environment for civil society.

Our question to the panel concerns this issue.

Many national systems are attempting to address the challenge of violent extremism. Can you give examples of best practice in terms of partnership with civil society in this regard?

Thank you