

28th session of the Human Rights Council (2-27 March 2015)

**Clustered Interactive Dialogue
SR on the situation of human rights defenders &
SR on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment**

**9 March 2015
Statement by Ireland**

Mr. President,

Ireland warmly welcomes the **Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders** and we thank you for your presentation today.

We particularly appreciate the clear outline of how you will carry out your mandate and in that regard, the importance you attach to follow up in relation to visits, communications and urgent appeals. These components of the mandate should be seen as valuable tools in assisting all Stakeholders, particularly States, to better support human rights defenders and strengthen their protection on the ground. We hope that this increased focus on follow up, along with your intended emphasis on good practices, will foster an enhanced constructive dialogue with States, encouraging greater engagement and technical cooperation.

We also welcome your intention to increase the visibility of the mandate itself, and to reinvigorate interest and action in relation to the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, sixteen years after its adoption. Recognition of human rights defenders is crucial, not only to protection of human rights defenders, but also to their empowerment and to combating impunity for threats and violations. It has a strong preventative as well as a protective dimension. This is particularly pertinent for defenders most at risk and those in isolated areas.

You mention the extraordinary vitality of defenders who have been able to develop and improve effective mechanisms of protection in the face of threats and attacks. Could you elaborate on any such mechanisms which specifically focus on groups of defenders most at risk, or those in isolated or remote areas?

Turning to the **Special Rapporteur on torture**, we would like to sincerely thank you for your presentation today. We welcome your report and its focus on children deprived of their liberty.

We share your view that, owing to their unique physiological and psychological needs, children are more vulnerable to ill-treatment and torture than adults. The particular vulnerability of children demands that the best interests of the child must be a primary consideration in every decision on initiating or continuing the deprivation of liberty of a child.

In Ireland, the Irish Youth Justice Service, which is responsible for improving the delivery of youth justice services and reducing youth offending, focuses on diversion and rehabilitation programmes, involving greater use of community-based interventions and the promotion of initiatives to deal with young people who offend.

We would be grateful if you could outline any concrete examples of the preventive mechanisms which could be put in place, such as diversion and early identification and screening mechanisms.

Thank you, Mr. President.