

Human Rights Council – 29th Session (15th June – 3rd July 2015)

General Debate – Items 2 & 3

Statement by Ireland

22 June 2015

[Ireland aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and adds the following]

Mr. President,

Ireland welcomes the Summary Report on the full-day discussion on human rights and climate change which was held during the 28th session of the Council. That Panel served as a stark reminder of the all too real and negative impact that climate change is already having on the lives of so many, in every region of the world. Empowering those vulnerable to the adverse impact of climate change on their human rights can be achieved through ensuring participation, sustainability, transparency, accountability, education and access to information.

Therefore, we whole-heartedly agree with the call of the members of that Panel; an inclusive human rights based approach must be integrated into our climate actions.

Ireland is a proud signatory of the *Geneva Pledge for Human Rights in Climate Action* which highlights the importance of integrating human rights in climate action and fostering greater contact between human rights and climate change experts. We urge States to consider signing up to the pledge as a practical means to ensure States promote and protect human rights when addressing climate change.

Mr President

We would also like to express our appreciation for the High Commissioner's timely update on initiatives taken to raise awareness and promote the protection of the rights of persons with Albinism.

We, like many others, have learned a lot over the 2 years since the first resolution on persons with albinism came before the Council, that is resolution 23/13 on

attacks and discrimination against persons with albinism. We have learned of the severe stigmatization, social exclusion and discrimination suffered by persons with albinism in various regions, based on erroneous beliefs and superstitions; of the challenges experienced by many persons with albinism in securing enjoyment of their right to education; and, as again sadly confirmed by the OHCHR report now before us, of the severe violence and the hundreds of ritual attacks, particularly against children, which have occurred in at least 25 countries.

The multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination faced by persons with albinism – and in particular the horror of the violence inflicted on them with a view to use of their body parts for ritual purposes - demands serious attention as well as significant education and awareness-raising initiatives at all levels- local, national, regional and international.

As we look forward to appointment later this session of the first Independent Expert on the enjoyment of human rights by person with albinism, we remember Yohana Bahati, a 1-year old child with albinism mutilated and murdered for ritual purposes as our last session got underway, and the many other victims of attacks and discrimination on this ground. We remember too Ambassador Bari-Bari of Somalia and his tireless work to raise awareness on this issue; and pay tribute to Ambassador Stevens of Sierra Leone who has taken up the mantle after his untimely passing. We very much hope that this mandate will shed further light on the issues facing persons with albinism and play a crucial role in changing attitudes towards them.

Thank you