

Inter-Departmental Committee on Human Rights

Terms of Reference: *as adopted 25/03/2015*

Composition:

1. The Inter-Departmental Committee will be chaired by the Minister of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
2. The Committee will comprise focal points from each Department as well as the Office of the Attorney-General. Departments should be represented at Assistant-Secretary level.
3. The Committee secretariat will be provided by the DFAT Human Rights Unit with assistance from and working in close cooperation with the Department of Justice and Equality (DJE). With DJE, the Secretariat will liaise with other Departments to help ensure the smooth running of the Committee.
4. It is expected that the Inter-Departmental Committee on Human Rights will meet two to three times per year.

Purpose:

5. The Inter-Departmental Committee on Human Rights is being established to improve coordination across government on the promotion and protection of human rights in Ireland's foreign policy. Regular meetings will allow for dialogue among Government Departments on human rights issues arising from our foreign policy engagement and coherence with the domestic situation.
6. The Committee will serve as a means for Department representatives to raise and clarify any concerns or queries their Departments may have with respect to this engagement.

The Inter-Departmental Committee will:

7. Assist progress towards ratification by Ireland of key international human rights treaties and optional protocols;
8. Monitor and facilitate the implementation of Ireland's treaty obligations and the timely reporting to UN, the Council of Europe, and other international treaty bodies (in accordance with our Treaty obligations);
9. Explore means and ways of ensuring coherence across Departments between human rights priorities in our foreign policy and the domestic human rights situation;
10. Facilitate inter-Departmental input into human rights issues which arise in international fora (Third Committee, Human Rights Council, Council of Europe); and
11. Help ensure coherence in the communication of Government policy in respect of human rights nationally and internationally.

END.