Ireland welcomes the delegation of São Tomé and Príncipe and thanks it for its presentation today.

We commend the positive efforts undertaken by São Tomé and Príncipe since its first review, including the entry into force of the new Penal Code (Law 6/2012) in 2012 which ceases to criminalise consenting same-sex relations between adults. We encourage the government of São Tomé and Príncipe to continue in this direction by taking the necessary steps to combat discrimination against LGBTI persons in all areas of life.

Ireland welcomes the positive developments in promoting the rights of children in São Tomé and Príncipe, such as the decrease in infant and under-5 mortality rates and the expansion of primary school enrolment. We further commend São Tomé and Príncipe’s steps to criminalise the trafficking of minors in Article 181 of the Penal Code (2012). However, we remain concerned at reports of child trafficking and exploitation, including the barriers to rehabilitation of child victims.

We recommend that São Tomé and Príncipe develop programmes and policies for the prevention, recovery and social integration of child victims of trafficking and exploitation in accordance with the outcome documents adopted at the 1996, 2001 and 2008 World Congresses against Sexual Exploitation of Children, held in Stockholm, Yokohama and Rio de Janeiro, respectively.

In 2011, São Tomé and Príncipe accepted all recommendations on the establishment of a national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles. However, we note that little progress has been made in this regard. We therefore recommend that São Tomé and Príncipe establish without delay a national human rights institution that complies with the Paris Principles.