

## Human Rights Council 25<sup>th</sup> Session

### Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief and the Special Rapporteur on Counter Terrorism

10 March 2014

#### Ireland Statement

Mr. President,

Ireland welcomes the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, and the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism to the 25<sup>th</sup> regular session of the Human Rights Council, and thanks them for their reports.

#### Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief

In relation to the report by the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief on the need to tackle manifestations of collective religious hatred, Ireland welcomes the emphasis placed on the interdependence between the rights to freedom of expression and to freedom of religion or belief. We share the view that a high threshold for limitations of freedom of expression should be respected, in line with the Rabat Plan of Action and General Comment 34 on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. We agree with the report's support for the role of civil society, investigative journalism, artists, lawyers and human rights defenders in tackling manifestations of religious hatred, and believe that these actors should be free to operate in a safe and enabling environment. The report refers to social media and the Internet having become major tools for fostering advocacy of religious hatred. *Does the Special Rapporteur believe that the Internet can also have a positive role in dealing with manifestations of religious hatred and, if so, how?*

#### Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism

Ireland takes a close interest in the issue of drones, or remotely piloted aircraft. We consider the issue chosen by the Special Rapporteur on countering terrorism for his report on the use of drones in extraterritorial lethal counter-terrorism operations and its impact on civilians to be of high importance. Having consistently taken the view that the use of drones must be in accordance with international law, Ireland agrees with the Special Rapporteur that States should take responsibility for their actions, and welcomes the report's attention to the issue of accountability. We are deeply concerned by reports of numerous instances in which the use of drones may have resulted in civilian casualties and deaths, including of women and children. *In this respect, Ireland would be grateful if the Special Rapporteur could outline potential best practices in providing protection to civilians, including women and children, in the context of the use of drones in extraterritorial lethal counter-terrorism operations.*

Ireland wishes both Special Rapporteurs well in their work for the future.

Thank you Mr. President.