

Universal Periodic Review working group – 19th session

Statement by Ireland on the review of Bhutan

30 April 2014

Ireland welcomes the delegation of Bhutan and thanks it for its presentation. We welcome Bhutan having become party to two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child since its last review. We encourage Bhutan to consider adherence to further international human rights instruments.

While taking positive note of the invitation extended to the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, we note that a request for a visit by the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief has been outstanding since 2006. Ireland accordingly **recommends** that Bhutan accept the visit request of the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, and consider extending a standing invitation to all special procedure mandate-holders of the Human Rights Council.

While commending Bhutan's progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), we note with concern the UNICEF finding that malnutrition is responsible for nearly half the deaths of children under five, and that Bhutan risks missing MDG 4A on reducing the mortality rate of children under five by 2015. Ireland **recommends** that Bhutan adopt a comprehensive approach, to include providing a healthy environment, safe water, sanitation and proper childcare, encouraging exclusive breastfeeding and improving the education and health of mothers, to reduce the mortality rate of children under five.