

Universal Periodic Review working group – 19th session

Statement by Ireland on the review of Dominica

1 May 2014

Ireland welcomes the delegation of Dominica and thanks it for its presentation today.

Ireland is pleased to note Dominica's progress in strengthening its legal framework to combat domestic violence and physical abuse of children, as well as to support gender equality and the empowerment of women. We encourage Dominica to continue to make improvements in these areas. Ireland commends Dominica for having issued a standing invitation to Special Procedures mandate-holders to visit the country. We acknowledge that a moratorium on the death penalty has existed in Dominica since 1986 and urge Dominica to reconsider its position with respect to the abolition of the death penalty and ratification of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Ireland is gravely concerned that consensual adult same-sex activity is criminalised in Dominica through the Sexual Offences Act of 1998. We note that Dominica, during its first cycle review, recognised that the Act is discriminatory, and we regret that recommendations made then regarding this legislation did not enjoy the support of Dominica. Ireland **recommends** that Dominica decriminalise consensual adult same-sex activity by amending article 14 and repealing article 16 of the Sexual Offences Act.

Ireland is also concerned that defamation remains a criminal offence in Dominica. We consider the criminalisation of defamation to be a disproportionate restriction on freedom of expression. Ireland **recommends** that Dominica decriminalise defamation and place it under the civil code in accordance with international standards.