

Universal Periodic Review – 20th Session
Statement by Ireland on the review of Madagascar
3 November 2014

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

Ireland would like to congratulate Madagascar on its progress on the negotiated road map for political transition, and in particular on the successful holding of internationally acknowledged free and credible elections in 2013. Ireland also commends Madagascar for having extended a standing invitation to Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council. Building on these steps, Ireland urges Madagascar to make every effort to prepare and submit its overdue reports to the UN Treaty Bodies as expeditiously as possible and to engage fully with them, including in relation to follow-up.

Ireland is also concerned that, despite some positive measures to combat violence against women, gender based violence has increased, marital rape has not yet been criminalised, and a significant level of trafficking continues, including trafficking for the purposes of domestic servitude and sexual exploitation.

Ireland **recommends** that Madagascar adopt a national action plan to combat sexual and gender based violence, criminalise marital rape as a matter of urgency and strengthen laws and their implementation on trafficking in persons.

Ireland is troubled by reports, including by UNESCO and the United Nations country team, which indicate that there are significant limitations on freedom of expression in particular in relation to the media. We believe that a free, uncensored and unhindered media is essential in any democratic society and is vital to continued progress in Madagascar.

Ireland **recommends** that Madagascar decriminalise defamation, abolish insult laws and take all additional necessary measures to ensure, in law and in practice, a safe and enabling environment for journalists.