

Universal Periodic Review working group – 19th session

Statement by Ireland on the review of Qatar

7 May 2014

Ireland thanks the delegation of Qatar for its presentation today. We welcome Qatar's cooperation with this Council's special procedures, as well as the important role played by Qatar's National Human Rights Committee.

However, Ireland has concerns in relation to the situation of human rights in Qatar.

There are widespread reports of violations of the rights of migrant workers, especially in the context of preparations for the 2022 FIFA World Cup. Ireland is particularly concerned by the *kafala* system of sponsorship. While noting the delegation's comments today, we encourage Qatar to undertake a thorough review of the regulatory regime for migrant workers with the aim of bringing it into line with international human rights and labour standards.

Ireland also notes that foreign workers must obtain an exit visa from their sponsor in order to leave Qatar, a provision which has reportedly led to widespread denial of the right to freedom of movement. Ireland **recommends** that Qatar abolish the "exit visa" system for migrant workers.

Finally, Ireland is deeply concerned by restrictions faced by civil society organisations in Qatar, including discriminatory registration requirements, resulting in a limited number of civil society organisations in the country. To facilitate a safe and enabling environment in which civil society can flourish, Ireland **recommends** that Qatar amend relevant national legislation, including the Law on Associations and Institutions, to reduce restrictions on the procedures for establishing associations.