

27th session of the Human Rights Council (8-26 September 2014)

Statement by Ireland under item 2 – Report of the High Commissioner

Thank you Mr President

Ireland aligns itself with the Statement delivered by Italy on behalf of the European Union.

High Commissioner

First, allow me to warmly congratulate you on your appointment and thank you for your compelling presentation to the Council today. We are confident that the extraordinary commitment you have shown throughout your career to rule of law, justice and accountability will serve you well in this challenging role.

The Reports of your Office and your update today are vivid reminders of the scale of the challenge of ensuring the promotion and protection of all human rights for all. The breadth of that mandate is a challenge and call to action for all States and other actors – to examine afresh and improve the manner in which we protect human rights domestically; and elsewhere to engage with others to seek enhancement of human rights protection.

As you have said, this is particularly important at this critical juncture, when we see daily reports of atrocities and the most egregious abuses of human rights committed without regard for human dignity, in some cases by those who falsely seek to divide us along religious or cultural lines. Our response must be to recommit to that basic principle we have all agreed – that human rights are universal, interrelated and interdependent and must be protected.

High Commissioner

We welcome your comments today on the importance and value of civil society. We join your encouragement to this Council to strengthen its constructive engagement with civil society actors and ensure their voices can be raised safely and without reprisals.

In our view, the Human Rights Council at its best serves as a platform for open dialogue, sharing of opinions and experiences for the common goal of human rights protection. Civil society is a vital part of that dialogue and to shut down debate in this Chamber goes against one of the fundamental reasons for our presence here. We believe that NGOs must, in accordance with established practice, be permitted to take the floor and express their views, whether or not we agree with the substance of any particular statement made.

We also welcome your reflections on constructive engagement with states, regional human rights mechanisms, UN Country Teams and other stakeholders. This, along with your intention to work for greater integration of the recommendations of the UPR, Treaty Bodies and Special Procedures into UN country programmes, holds the promise of real and effective impact on the ground.

Finally

Ireland has always strongly supported the mandate and independence of your Office. In your tenure as High Commissioner, we know that you will challenge as well as support us; and have we no doubt that you will contribute significantly to the protection of human rights worldwide.

Thank you