

Human Rights Council – 29th Session (15th June – 3rd July 2015)

Annual full-day discussion on Women's Rights

**Panel 2: Women's human rights and participation in power
and decision-making**

19 June 2015

Statement by Ireland

Ireland aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and would like to add the following.

Madame Vice-President,

Ensuring women's effective participation and equal opportunities at *all levels* of decision-making is central to ensuring that our political institutions promote the rights and the well-being of women and girls and further, that those institutions are effective. Doing so requires building women's capacity at both the individual and collective levels.

Ireland is committed to gender equality and we recognize that further action is required to empower women in the political sphere, where only 16% of the seats in Ireland's Lower House of Parliament are held by women. To address this, Ireland enacted legislation in 2012 linking State funding for political parties to a condition that their candidates for election must include at least 30% women and at least 30% men. After seven years the targets will increase to 40%.

Parties not meeting these targets forfeit half their State funding. This legislation comes into effect at the next general election, expected to be in 2016.

We must also remember that political participation is about more than just having a seat at the table in formal political spaces. Real and effective participation requires the elimination of the legal barriers and the societal norms which impede women from participating on an equal footing with men in decision-making *at all levels*.

Could the panel provide examples of good initiatives have been taken at local or national level to empower women in the decision making processes, for example we are aware of the Women's Situation Room which has been replicated in several African States. Are there other good practices which the panel can recommend?