

**Human Rights Council – 28<sup>th</sup> session (2-27 March 2015)**

**Statement by Ireland under agenda item 5 –**

**Human Rights Bodies and mechanisms**

**18 March 2015**

Ireland aligns itself with the remarks made on our behalf by the European Union, as well as the Statement delivered by Uruguay on behalf of a group of States, and adds the following remarks.

Mr President,

Ireland welcomes the report of the **annual meeting of Special Procedures** and the additional and detailed information contained in that report on the activities of the Special procedures system in 2014. We also welcome the presence today of the Chair of the Special Procedures Coordination Committee, as a way to optimize regular interaction with the Special Procedure system. Special Procedures are a vital mechanism of the Council in the promotion and protection of human rights. The expertise and analysis of the mandate holders is crucial in translating the work of the Council to the rights holders and duty bearers on the ground. We appreciate efforts undertaken to enhance coordination among the mandate holders and to explore synergies between the provision of, and follow-up to, recommendations by Special Procedures, Treaty Bodies and the UPR.

We particularly welcome the focus in the Special Procedures report on follow up. Country visits should be seen as part of a constructive dialogue in assisting States to meet their human rights obligations. Ireland was delighted to welcome the recent visits of the then Independent Expert on Extreme Poverty and the then Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders and we appreciate the value of these visits in assisting us to meet our obligations across the UN human rights mechanisms.

The Secretary General's Report to the Council in September last year on **cooperation with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights** outlined an extensive number of disturbing reprisals cases, which was described as just the

“the tip of the iceberg”. We note this analysis is shared by the Special Procedures, with many reporting cases of intimidation and reprisals against persons willing to engage with them before, during and after country visits. We have also noted reports during this current session of Council of acts of reprisals and intimidation against civil society actors attending, or attempting to attend, the Council as also referred to in this meeting by the President. Ireland unequivocally condemns all acts of reprisal. The work of the OHCHR, the Special Procedures, Treaty Bodies, the Council, and indeed, of Member States, could not be successfully carried out without the efforts of civil society. We need their continuing support and contributions to realise progress. As the High Commissioner has stated: “Freedoms of expression, association and peaceful assembly are rights that enable people to share ideas, form new thinking, and join together with others to claim their rights. It is through the exercise of these public freedoms that we make informed, considered and intelligent decisions about our development. To restrict them undermines progress.”

Accordingly, we reiterate our strong belief that the UN must address cases of reprisals through a more effective and coordinated approach, with a view to ultimately ensuring we all uphold the principles and purposes of the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.