

Annual full day discussion on the Rights of the Child 2016

Information and communications technology and child sexual exploitation

Statement of Ireland

7 March 2016

Mr. President,

Ireland welcomes the report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Information and communications technology and child sexual exploitation.

The report is timely given that modern technology has rapidly become an integral component of the everyday lives of children and young people.

Ireland firmly believes that information and communication technology is an important educational and social development tool for children and young people, through which they can pursue their natural sense of curiosity and creativity.

However, this rapidly evolving online environment, and growth in connectivity through sophisticated mobile technology, also exposes more children and young people to new and pervasive forms of sexual exploitation such as sexual abuse material, grooming, “sextortion” and child sexual abuse live streaming.

The scale and impact of offline harm resulting from these activities is immense as are the related challenges of detection, investigation, victim identification and law enforcement.

Given the global nature of online sexual exploitation of children and young people how can States strengthen cooperation through multilateral, regional and bilateral arrangements?

Turning now to prevention, it is clear that education and awareness-raising play a critical role. This is particularly relevant in an age of mobile technology where self-generated content is sometimes used by perpetrators for the extortion or coercion of children and young people.

Could the panel elaborate on examples of best practice in and beyond the school system to raise awareness, particularly in relation to the potential risks of self-generated content?

Thank you.