

26th session of the Human Rights Council (10-27 June 2014)

Statement by Ireland under item 9 - Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, follow-up to and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

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

People in all parts of the world continue to suffer discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, descent, nationality, or ethnic origin. We all – States and UN mechanisms – share a duty to work towards societies free of inequalities and discrimination. Human rights law provides a range of tools to assist us in that goal.

Ireland is firmly committed to the principle of non-discrimination, as set out in the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination. We look forward to the universal ratification of this important Convention and recognise the important work of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Further, we remain committed to contributing to a successful International Decade for People of African Descent, through the work of the International Working Group and the negotiations which are continuing in New York.

It is also the case that, in order to combat the roots of racism and discrimination, States must ensure their legislative systems provide adequate and effective guarantees of freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief to all people without distinction. Ireland is deeply concerned about the growth of religious intolerance, which is closely linked to discrimination, and will continue to work for the elimination of all forms of religious intolerance at both the international and national levels.

Ireland shares the concerns of the Special Rapporteur, outlined in his report to this session, as to the enabling effect which new communication and information technologies including the Internet and social media has had on the dissemination of racist and xenophobic content that incites racial hatred and violence. States and other relevant stakeholders need to address this in a robust and coordinated manner, while fully taking into account States' obligations to protect other fundamental rights, particularly freedom of expression and opinion.

While Ireland can be proud of its achievements in combating racism and related intolerances we are not complacent. We will continue to promote a tolerant and inclusive Ireland free from racism, intolerance and discrimination. Immigration over the past 20 years has had a transformative impact on Irish society for the better. The migrant community is playing an increasingly important role in many

walks of life and has greatly enhanced the social, cultural and economic fabric of our society.

Following from our National Action Plan against Racism, the Irish Government recently established a Cross Departmental Group on Integration, which will review our approach and produce an updated strategy for the integration of migrants into Irish society. This is part of the Government's commitment to promote policies which integrate minority ethnic groups in Ireland, and which promote social inclusion, equality, diversity and the participation of immigrants in the economic, social, political and cultural life of their communities.

Combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance requires partnership and cooperation with all social partners and civil society. We are committed to working with all partners – national and international – to overcome racism and related intolerances.