DRAFT

Special Envoy on Freedom of Opinion and Expression

Rationale: Freedom of opinion and expression are human rights enshrined in the UDHR and the ICCPR. They are widely recognised as key enabling rights that support the vindication of other human rights and are a cornerstone of democracy. Now more than ever, threats to these rights in online and offline spaces are growing[1].

A Government Envoy focussing on FOE, would provide enhanced capacity for high-level engagement on a small number of established Irish human rights priorities, across regional and multilateral architecture. These are priority areas that have been outlined in "The Global Island: Ireland's Foreign Policy for a Changing World", specifically

- Civil society space
- Human rights of LGBTIQ+ persons
- Freedom of expression and opinion including freedom of the media and freedom of association

Tasking:

1. To support the Government's objectives on these issues at relevant high level events (including Irish-organised side-events) in multilateral for a with a particular focus on the UN framework including:
   - UN General Assembly 3rd Committee (October – December 2021)
   - Freedom Online Coalition (December 2021)
   - Commission on the Status of Women (March 2022)
   - Human Rights Council (June – July 2022)

2. Support the implementation of LGBTI+ at international level (Action 25 of the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy, led by DFA)

3. Support Ireland's international advocacy initiatives around key annual events (World Press Freedom Day, International Women's Day; IDAHOT day; PRIDE month) and undertake 2-3 country visits to promote Irish Embassy in-country advocacy work.

Support:

An informal DFA taskforce comprising the Human Rights, Emigrant Support, Communications and Corporate Support Directorates, meeting monthly.

Secretary General, 20th July 2021

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[1] Article 19 Annual Report 2019: https://www.article19.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/A19_AnnualReport_2019_Final_22June2020-min.pdf "Global Freedom of Expression at 10-year low";