

Human Rights Council -28th session
(2 March – 27 March 2015)

Item 9 – Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, follow-up to and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

24 March 2015

Statement by Ireland

Thank you Mr President,

Ireland aligns itself with the statement of the European Union and adds the following remarks.

Ireland reiterates its commitment to the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. All members of our societies, irrespective of their gender, disability, age, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender identity must be treated equally in law and in practice. This can only be achieved through the promotion and protection of freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and respect for human rights and human dignity.

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. As we celebrate its 50th anniversary, we call on all States who have not done so to ratify this important Convention. We also recognise the important work being carried out by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

2015 marks the start of the International Decade of people of African Descent. The Decade can only successfully achieve its objectives if all States engage in

the process, and we expect all stakeholders, nationally and internationally, to implement the Decade collaboratively and constructively.

Ireland is deeply concerned that the freedom of religion and belief is threatened in many places worldwide, with people of many faiths subjected to appalling violence, discrimination, and harassment. As noted in the report by the OHCHR on ‘Combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against, persons based on religion or belief’, Article 44 of the Constitution of Ireland specifically protects religious freedom and the right to freedom of expression of conviction and opinion. The law also provides for strong protection against discrimination on a number of grounds, including religious belief, through the Employment Equality Acts, which cover discrimination in the workplace, and the Equal Status Acts, which provide for protection against discrimination in the provision of goods and services. We will continue to promote a tolerant and inclusive society, free from racism, intolerance and discrimination.