

**Human Rights Council – 30th session
(14 September – 2 October 2015)**

Panel on the situation of Human Rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea

21 September 2015

Statement by Ireland

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

Mr. President
Distinguished panellists

Ireland warmly welcomes the holding of this panel discussion on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. As a sponsor of the recurring resolutions on the DPRK, we again express our most serious concern on this case.

We fully support the conclusions and recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry, including the recommended referral of the situation to the International Criminal Court. We recall that Commission found that “systematic, widespread and gross human rights violations have been and are being committed” by the DPRK, and that “in many instances, the violations found entailed crimes against humanity based on State policies”.

Ireland is horrified by the catalogue and gravity of human rights violations involved, ranging from rape, forced abortion and infanticide in political prison camps, to violation of freedom of religion and belief, arbitrary detention, torture and extrajudicial executions. We are shocked too at the enforced disappearances which the Commission found to be “unique in their intensity, scale and nature”. We know from our own history the ongoing pain and loss suffered by the families of the abducted and the disappeared and we cannot fail to be shocked at the scale of the practice in DPRK.

We recall the Commission’s recommendation that this Council should “ensure that the conclusions and recommendations of the Commission do not pass from the active attention of the international community”. We are committed to this goal. Indeed in light of what the Commission called the ongoing “unspeakable atrocities” in DPRK, we believe that it is incumbent on the Council to find new ways of addressing the case. This type of innovative panel discussion is a welcome opportunity for a focused discussion and clear message to DPRK regarding our ongoing concern.

We are pleased to see that, as well as our distinguished moderator, former Chair of the Commission; and the Special Rapporteur, the panel includes representatives of civil society and of victims – your voice is crucial to understanding and ultimately resolving the terrible realities of life in DPRK.

Mr President

Ireland is a committed supporter of international justice, including the International Criminal Court. International justice may move more slowly than many of us would wish, but the history of the last 70 years has shown us that increasingly, it does come. The situation in the DPRK has now been added to the agenda of the Security Council and we continue to urge its

referral to the ICC. The message should clearly ring out from this Council to the authorities in DPRK – your impunity will not last forever. You will be held accountable for the brutalisation of your people.

Distinguished panellists

The Commission found that the gravity, scale and nature of the violations in DPRK revealed a State “that does not have any parallel in the contemporary world” and which seeks to terrorise its citizens from within. To deal with this, the Commission recommended a combination of urgent accountability measures with “a reinforced human rights dialogue” and “the promotion of incremental change through more people-to-people contact”.

Could the panel share their views on how this type of people-to-people contact can best be instituted and facilitated?

A number of recommendations were also addressed to States with historic ties with the DPRK and/or in the region. For those states committed to seeing change in DPRK but which do not have such historic ties with DPRK and which are not in the region, what steps should we consider?

Thank you