



Statement of Ireland

45th session of the Human Rights Council

Interactive Dialogue with the Independent Expert on Somalia

Friday, 2 October 2020

Madame President,

Ireland aligns with the statement of the EU and thanks the Independent Expert for her report and presentation.

We meet today at a time of great significance for Somalia. The country is facing the triple threat of COVID-19, locusts and floods, while also at a juncture on significant political, security and economic issues. Ireland welcomes ongoing progress on cooperation between the Federal Government and the Member States, but is extremely concerned by some developments that threaten progress of recent years.

In particular, Ireland is alarmed by the recent introduction of the Intercourse Bill which includes provisions that have the potential to be extremely damaging to the rights of women and children in Somalia. This is of particular concern given that, as the report notes, ‘sexual and physical violence against women and girls is [already] widespread and committed with near-total impunity’. Accountability and justice for survivors of sexual and gender based violence should also be guaranteed.

We are also very concerned by the recent promulgation of the Media Law; aspects of which constitute a significant threat to media freedom. Especially in the context of upcoming elections, protecting the right to freedom of opinion and expression, both in law and in practice, is vital.

Ms Dyfan, what can the international community do to support efforts to ensure that prospective legislative changes on women’s and children’s rights adhere to Somalia’s international and regional obligations, including international human rights norms and standards?

Thank you.