

Statement at 33rd session of the UN Human Rights Council

Item 6: UPR Outcomes – Ireland

Thank you Mr President.

We welcome Ireland's significant support for, and continued leadership on, protecting human rights defenders, expanding civil society space and preventing and ensuring accountability for reprisals at the international level. In this regard we acknowledge comments made by Hungary, Sierra Leone, Australia, Botswana and Finland, and the recommendation made by Armenia, during the interactive dialogue of Ireland's working group review.

We welcome Ireland's efforts to strengthen this Council, including through a joint statement on mechanisms to ensure the Council responds more rapidly and effectively to human rights emergencies and crises delivered at the conclusion of the Council's 32nd session.

However on a national level, we are concerned about the situation and challenges faced by defenders working on sexual and reproductive rights, in particular the stigmatization of those advocating for women's reproductive rights. We call on Ireland to ensure defenders are safe from stigmatization of any kind, including from non-State actors.

We refer to Ireland's Working Outline of its National Plan on Business and Human Rights, and commend its recognition of the vital role of civil society and defenders in assessing the impact of business activities on human rights. We also welcome the Outline's acknowledgment of the State's duty to ensure a safe and enabling environment for civil society organisations and defenders working in relation to business and human rights; and its assertion that corporations must respect civil society and defenders in their work, including by not interfering directly or indirectly with defenders in the exercise of their rights to freedom of expression, association, assembly or protest.

We call on Ireland to remain committed to this position in the development of its National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights, and to give it effect through concrete policies and measures.

Finally, we welcome Ireland's support for a model national law on the recognition and protection of human rights defenders – endorsed by 27 leading legal experts. In this respect, we urge Ireland to take steps to adapt and implement a national law for the protection of defenders.

Thank you.