

## Human Rights Council 31st session (29 February-24 March 2016)

### General Debate under item 3

#### Statement by Ireland

11 March 2016

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

Mr President

Ireland thanks the Office of the High Commissioner, as well as the Secretary-General, for the various reports submitted under this agenda item. In light of time limitations, we will limit our remarks to a small number of these reports.

First, we welcome the good practices contained in the report of the high-level panel discussion on a human rights based approach to **good governance** in the public service. Ireland is committed to promoting transparency and information-sharing, which were identified as key elements in this regard. Our Open Government Partnership National Action Plan 2014-2016 is intended to foster government transparency and accountability and to increase citizen participation, with a view to improving public services and resource management.

We also welcome the report on the follow-up to investment in the **rights of the child**. The good practices outlined in that report in relation to investment in children will serve as valuable inspiration to States wishing to improve protection of the rights of the child, in fields including transparency, participation and accountability, non-discrimination and child rights impact assessments.

Mr President

We thank the High Commissioner for his report on the **protection of the family**, with a particular focus on its contribution to poverty eradication and achieving sustainable development. We recall the factual reality that in different cultural, political, and social systems, various forms of family exist. We are pleased that the reality of “diverse and changing forms of the family”, which has been consistently recognised in various UN fora in the past, is clearly recognised in the report.

We further welcome inclusion in the report of clear reflection of the imperatives of gender equality and effective protection and promotion of the rights of all family members without distinction or discrimination. Unlike HRC resolution 29/22 by which the report was requested, this report accordingly respects international human rights law, under which it is the members of the family to which human rights protections apply, rather than regarding the family unit itself as a rights-holder. This clear legal principle has many important practical consequences, particularly in cases where a family member or members may be abused by others.

Finally, Ireland notes the report of the Intergovernmental working group on transnational corporations and other business enterprises. However we remain of the view that implementation of the consensually adopted UN Guiding Principles on **Business and Human**

**Rights**, including through development of National Plans on Business and Human Rights, provides the crucial, practical step which all States should take to address this important issue.

Following a comprehensive and invaluable consultation process with Government Departments, business enterprises and civil society actors, Ireland has produced a Working Outline of a National Plan on Business and Human Rights and will bring this work to completion as soon as possible.

Thank you