

Human Rights Council – 31st session (29 February – 24 March)

Interactive Dialogue with Special Rapporteur on Myanmar

Statement by Ireland

14 March 2016

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

Mr President

We thank the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar for her report and presentation today.

We are pleased to note a number of positive developments in Myanmar. First, we welcome the cooperation of the Government of Myanmar with the Special Rapporteur as well as the well-organised and peaceful nature of the elections in November 2015, which marked an important milestone for Myanmar's democratic transition. We further commend the commitments and efforts by the Government to ensure a smooth and peaceful transition process to date.

However we are concerned over a number of shortcomings in the conduct of genuine free and fair elections, and encourage reforms towards a transparent electoral process which is inclusive of religious and ethnic minorities.

We welcome the ongoing peace process, including the signing of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement in October 2015 with several armed groups. We urge the Government to continue to engage with non-signatory ethnic armed groups in order to accelerate national reconciliation. We echo the calls of the Special Rapporteur for greater participation of women in the peace process, including in delegations and leadership roles.

We express our continuing concern at the ongoing human rights violations in Myanmar, in particular the persecution of the members of the Rohingya community and persons belonging to religious and ethnic minorities. We urge the Government to immediately address discriminatory practices against minorities, to protect them from violent attack, and to promote tolerance and peaceful coexistence in all sectors of society. We reiterate the Special Rapporteur's calls for the immediate cessation of arbitrary arrests of those exercising their rights to freedoms of assembly, association and expression.

Finally, we further encourage the Government of Myanmar to fully cooperate with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and other UN actors, and to work towards the fulfilment of its international human rights obligations and commitments.

Ireland seeks the views of the Special Rapporteur on the following:

The ongoing democratic transformation is unlocking significant economic growth and development, but not everyone in Myanmar is benefiting. What can be done by the international community to ensure that the plight of internally displaced people and the Muslim minority is not forgotten?

Thank you