

Human Rights Council – 26th Session
(10 – 27 June 2014)
Agenda Item 5: Human Rights Bodies and Mechanisms
23 June 2014
Statement by Ireland

Thank you Mr. President.

Ireland aligns itself with the Statement made on behalf of the European Union.

We thank the High Commissioner for her untiring work in the promotion and protection of human rights during her six years in office, particularly at a time of constrained resources.

We note with appreciation the various reports presented under item 5 at the 26th session of the Human Rights Council. Our statement today will focus on the human rights treaty body system, given the important developments which have taken place in this respect since the previous Council session.

The adoption of General Assembly resolution 68/268 in April this year marks an important milestone in a lengthy process initiated in Dublin in 2009 by the High Commissioner, to whom we are truly grateful for the vital role she has played in the strengthening of the treaty body system. Human rights treaty bodies are central to the international human rights system. By strengthening these bodies, the protection of human rights is undoubtedly also strengthened. We particularly welcome the unequivocal condemnation in GA resolution 68/268 of reprisals against those who contribute to the work of the human rights treaty bodies.

While much progress has been made, challenges remain. The outcome calls on States, the treaty bodies and the OHCHR to make many changes to how the system operates. Effective implementation of the resolution is key to realising its positive potential. It is imperative, for instance, that increased meeting time and efficiencies derived from reduced word limits translate into greater protection of human rights; that the treaty bodies do all that they can to prevent and react to cases of reprisals; and that the OHCHR provide trained staff to ensure the sustainability and smooth functioning of the system. Indeed, the outcome of the intergovernmental treaty body strengthening process, marked by the adoption of GA resolution 68/268, should be viewed as an opportunity for a new beginning rather than as the end.

I thank you, Mr. President.