

Human Rights Council - 26th session
(10th June – 27th June 2014)

Panel on Preventing and Eliminating Child, Early and Forced Marriage

23 June 2014

Statement by Ireland

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

Child, early and forced marriage constitutes a violation or abuse of human rights in and of itself, and has adverse consequences on the enjoyment of an array of human rights. It has a devastating multiplier effect as girls and women who are trapped in coerced marriages are further deprived of their right to education and their right to health. Ireland welcomes the OHCHR report and, specifically, the report's reference to the fact that early and frequent pregnancies are common in child marriages and that they are closely linked to high maternal and infant morbidity and mortality rates.

All individuals should have the right to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children and to have the information and means to do so. Early marriage usually results in early childbearing, and as such, it deprives girls and women of this right, and exacerbates the already serious consequences of adolescent pregnancy.

Ireland welcomes the report's acknowledgement that poverty and insecurity are root causes of child, early and forced marriage and for highlighting that these marriages are strongly associated with girls who have received little or no formal education. Ireland has strongly advocated for the high visibility of gender in the Post 2015 Development Framework and supported a number of targets to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. These targets include ensuring equal access to quality education and elimination of gender disparities at all levels of education and training; and the immediate elimination of all harmful practices, including child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilations. We have also called for an end to honour crimes to be included under this target, as they are closely linked to forced marriage.

We would like the panel to elaborate on how they envisage this important aspect being incorporated into the post 2015 agenda going forward.