

Universal Periodic Review of The Bahamas – Oral Intervention

Ireland welcomes the distinguished delegation of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas. Ireland commends the progress that has been made in the protection and promotion of human rights since the Bahamas' first Universal Periodic Review, in particular the ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Ireland's notes the distinguished delegation's reference to the retention of the death penalty in the Bahamas. Ireland urges the Bahamas to reconsider its position and to introduce a moratorium on the death penalty as a first step towards its ultimate abolition.

Statelessness

While Ireland welcomes the training on status determination undertaken by relevant officials in December 2012, Ireland notes concerns expressed by UNHCR that the Bahamas has no regulatory framework to implement its obligations under the 1951 Refugee Convention, treating asylum seekers and refugees on an ad hoc basis, with no access to judicial remedies. Ireland urges the Bahamas to adopt an appropriate framework consistent with its obligations under the Refugee Convention.

Ireland is also concerned about the lack of a system to protect the rights of stateless people in the Bahamas. In particular, UNHCR has noted that the threat of statelessness in the Bahamas primarily affects Bahamian -born Haitians. They often cannot obtain official documents confirming their Haitian nationality and thus face threats of detention or deportation and difficulty in accessing basic services and employment.

Ireland recommends that the Government of the Bahamas devise and implement an appropriate determination procedure to identify stateless persons within the Bahamas and to afford them adequate protection.

Ireland notes concerns expressed by CEDAW about deep rooted stereotypes and cultural norms that affect the advancement of women's rights in the Bahamas. While Ireland commends the Bahamas for introducing comprehensive legislation and training on domestic violence, Ireland notes the continued prevalence of violence against women. Ireland is particularly concerned that marital rape is not yet criminalised.

Recognising the fact that a bill has previously been introduced to amend relevant legislation but is no longer being debated, Ireland recommends that the passage of this bill be expedited as a priority. Ireland also encourages the Bahamas to adopt all legislative, educational and other necessary measures to combat stereotyping and cultural norms affecting the rights of women.