**Belize – UPR 17**

**Statement by Ireland**

Ireland welcomes the delegation of Belize and thanks it for its presentation, national report and engagement in the UPR process.

Ireland commends the progress made by Belize in the promotion and protection of human rights, as outlined in its national report. In particular, Ireland welcomes the positive steps taken by Belize in relation to women’s rights, including the National Gender-Based Violence Plan of Action 2010-2013, the Belize Gender Info monitoring system, the 2011 revision of the Domestic Violence Protocol for Police Officers, and the development of various publications since Belize’s last UPR.

Ireland is concerned by continued reports of violence against women and ongoing challenges including providing adequate shelter facilities for victims, and ensuring investigation of domestic violence crimes. In this respect, Ireland recommends that Belize investigate all cases of violence against women, punish the perpetrators and ensure that victims receive the necessary support and compensation.

Ireland is concerned by reports of violence against LGBT persons, which may often remain unreported because of a lack of trust in police and judicial agents. Ireland urges Belize to take measures to prevent acts of violence against LGBT persons. In cases where such acts occur, Ireland calls on Belize to facilitate the reporting of allegations, and to ensure that they are investigated, that the perpetrators are prosecuted, and the victims are compensated.

Ireland appreciates measures taken to combat trafficking in persons, including awareness-raising campaigns and assistance to victims; but notes with serious concern that Belize remains a country of departure, transit and arrival of trafficked persons. Ireland recommendsthat Belize strengthen measures against trafficking in persons by effectively implementing the Trafficking in Persons Prohibition Act, and investigating, prosecuting and punishing those responsible, as well as ensuring respect for victims’ right to asylum.