**Universal Periodic Review working group – 19th session**

**Statement by Ireland on the review of the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

**29 April 2014**

Ireland welcomes the delegation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and thanks it for the presentation today. We note positive steps taken since the first review, including the establishment of the National Human Rights Commission.

We are gravely concerned at continued reports of appalling levels of sexual and gender-based violence, and that such human rights violations go largely unpunished. It is essential to tackle gender inequality, disempowerment and vulnerability of women and girls. We encourage the DRC to remain engaged in the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework and support the work of the UN Special Envoy for the Great Lakes. Ireland **recommends** that the DRC continue to work to ensure full implementation of UN Security Council resolutions 1325 and 2122 on women, peace and security, including by increasing the active and equal participation of women in peace-building initiatives and decision-making processes at all levels.

We are also particularly concerned by the extremely high rate of under-five mortality, aggravated by ongoing conflict in some parts of the country. Ireland **recommends** that the DRC ensure the effective implementation of the National Strategy on maternal and child mortality, including through addressing root causes of under-five mortality, such as poverty, under-nutrition, harmful practices, lack of access to safe drinking water, health care services and education.