



Statement by Sweden in the interactive dialogue on Ireland

Delivered by Minister-Counsellor Josefin Simonsson Brodén

Geneva, May 11, 2016 (speaking time 1 min 20 sec)

Mr President,

Sweden wishes to welcome the delegation and express our thanks for the information related to our advance questions.

Sweden would like to give the following recommendations to Government of Ireland:

- 1) to take necessary steps to revise its legislation on abortion and provide for clear exceptions, in line with international human rights law and standards, so as to ensure the right to abortion in cases of rape and incest, as well as cases entailing serious risks to the health of the mother or fatal foetal abnormality,
- 2) to make sure all women and young girls have easy access to information on crisis pregnancy options by health-providers,
- 3) to take necessary steps to amend its legislation on freedom of expression and remove prohibition of blasphemy in line with ICCPR article 19 and Human Rights Committee's General Comment 34, and the Venice Commission's recommendation,
- 4) to ratify as soon as possible the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, without any reservation.

The Irish Constitution awards equal rights and protection to the pregnant woman and the foetus under Article 40.3.3. Abortion is criminalized and can lead to 14 years' imprisonment under Section 22 and 23 of the Protection of life during pregnancy act 2013. In the last two years, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights and the Human Rights Committee have recommended a constitutional and legislative change in order to bring the Irish legislation in line with minimum international human rights standards as regards the women's right to sexual and reproductive health and rights. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has recommended that a national dialogue be initiated on the right to reproductive health.

Ireland signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2007. The country has still not ratified the convention. An action plan for the ratification is under way but it envisages reservations including under Article 2 regarding the progressive realisation of economic, social and cultural rights.

Thank you, Mr. President