**Questionnaire**

**Human rights treaty body system**

**Ireland’s response**

**January 2022**

Ireland strongly supports the UN General Assembly resolution 68/268 and its implementation for the purposes of strengthening and improving the human rights treaty body system. This landmark resolution has led to improvements in the functioning of the treaty body system, through efficiencies and refined methods of work. Ireland actively engaged with the process leading to the UN Secretary General’s 2020 report, and we look forward to doing so again as part of the 2022 review. Ireland believes it is essential to continue to build on resolution 68/268, with a view to further enhancing the effective functioning of the UN human rights treaty body system while maintaining its independence. We welcome also the Position Paper of the Treaty Body Chairpersons, and the recommendations contained therein, which if implemented, would further support this aim.

Ireland has long advocated for reform of the UN human rights treaty monitoring bodies, which examine and hold States to account under key human rights conventions. We welcome the progress made to date in this area, particularly the expanded use of the simplified reporting for several Treaty Body reviews. This has been helpful in facilitating reporting obligations and has ensured focused reporting, for example in our reports under the Convention on the rights of the child, the Committee on the elimination of discrimination against women, and the Convention against torture. A number of Committees have made it easier to opt in to simplified reporting through a Note Verbale, which is a welcome development. We encourage the application of a uniform simplified reporting procedure as the default procedure for all periodic reports and welcome all efforts to modernise and rationalise working methods and rules of procedure.

Furthermore, Ireland strongly supports the individual communications system, but we regret that the large backlog continues to cause long delays in cases being considered. We would therefore support a strengthening of the capacity and resources of the petitions unit to address this, in particular through modernising working methods, including investing in updating digital infrastructure.

In line with our commitment to multilateralism, Ireland continues, through engagement with multilateral fora, to encourage other States to participate in the UN human rights treaty system. Ireland recently submitted our initial report under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and we are currently in the final stages of preparing our 5th periodic report to the Human Rights Committee (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights), as well as our 3rd report under the Convention Against Torture. In order to continue to encourage States to comply with Treaty Body reporting deadlines, further efforts to coordinate a predictable and complementary calendar of reviews would be welcome. The reporting and review schedule has understandably been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic; consequently, some timelines have become unclear. Now is an opportune time to act and improve the calendar of review cycles. We would also welcome consideration to the particular constraints of Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries, and reflection on whether reduced reporting burden may assist such states with meeting reporting obligations.

Ireland continues to express concern about reprisals against civil society and human rights defenders who seek to cooperate with the UN treaty bodies. We must ensure robust support mechanisms to ensure the safety of civil society and human rights defenders before during and after their cooperation with UN Treaty Bodies. We strongly condemn all such threats, acts of intimidation and attacks, which undermine multilateralism and pose a challenge to the human rights treaty body system. We were outspoken in our support for civil society once again gaining access to UN Fora at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, and will continue to speak to the importance of civil society engagement with UN Treaty Bodies.