**Questionnaire**

**Human rights treaty body system**

**Ireland’s response**

**April 2019**

Ireland fully supports the 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 significant improvements in the functioning of the treaty body system, through efficiencies and refined methods of work. We look forward to the publication of the UN Secretary General’s report and intend to engage in the process leading up to the 2020 review, so as to build on resolution 68/268 with a view to further enhancing the effective functioning of the UN human rights treaty body system.

We have long advocated for reform of the UN human rights treaty monitoring bodies, which examine and hold States to account under key human rights conventions including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; as well as conventions dealing with issues including torture, discrimination against women, racial discrimination, rights of the child, and rights of persons with disabilities.

In line with its commitment to multilateralism, Ireland continues, through its engagement with multilateral fora, to encourage other States to participate in the UN human rights treaty system and submit their reports to monitoring bodies in a timely fashion. Ireland recently submitted its combined 5th, 6th and 7th periodic report to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, while it is currently preparing its 5th periodic report to the Human Rights Committee (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights). Ireland also submitted its first common core document in 2014. The document is currently being updated and it is envisaged that it will be submitted to the OHCHR in the near future.

Ireland has encouraged other countries to establish and strengthen National Human Rights Institutions, which play a key role in improving compliance with human rights standards. The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission and its founding legislation have broken new ground in terms of the structural independence of the Commission from Government and the strength of its mandate. The Commission has been awarded an “A” status as a National Human Rights Institution by the International Coordinating Committee on National Human Rights, which recognises its full compliance with the Paris Principles.

We continue to express concern about reprisals against civil society and human rights defenders who seek to cooperate with the UN treaty bodies. We condemn all such threats, acts of intimidation and attacks, which undermine multilateralism and pose a challenge to the human rights treaty body system. In this regard, Ireland continues to support and commend the work of Special Rapporteurs and especially the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Mr Michel Forst, for drawing attention to violations and abuses directed at civil society and human rights defenders and for taking steps to facilitate their cooperation with the UN.