

## **DFAT NGO Standing Committee on Human Rights**

10.30am 8 April 2016

Iveagh House

### **Minutes**

**In attendance:** Les Allamby (NIHRC), Karol Balfé (*Christian Aid Ireland*), Professor Rosemary Byrne (TCD), Martin Collins (*Pavee Point*), Fiona Crowley (*Amnesty International Ireland*), Layla de Cogan Chin (*Department of Justice and Equality*), Kevin Conmy (*Europe Division, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade [DFAT]*), Anastasia Crickley (*Independent-NUIM*), Fiona Crowley (*Amnesty International*), Lisa Doherty (*Development Cooperation Division, DFAT*), Aoife Duffy (*NUIG*), Alison Enright (*Legal Division, DFAT*), Eoin Flavin (*Human Rights Unit, DFAT*), Graham Finlay (*UCD*), Dr James Gallen (*DCU*), Mags Gaynor (*Development Cooperation Division, DFAT*), Dympna Hayes (*Development Cooperation Division, DFAT*), Nick Henderson (*Transparency International Ireland*), John Hurley (*Department of Justice and Equality*), David Joyce (*Irish Congress of Trade Unions*), Suzanne Keating (*Dóchas*), Mary Lawlor (*Front Line Defenders*), Emily Logan (*IHREC*), Catherine Lynch (*Independent-UCD*), Brendan McNamara (*Bahá'í Ireland*), Niall Morris (*Development Cooperation Division, DFAT*), Professor Siobhán Mullally (*UCC*), Lianne Murphy (*Age Action*), Tracy Murphy (*Human Rights Unit, DFAT*), Deaglán Ó Briain (*Department of Justice and Equality*), Seán O'Connell (*Human Rights Unit, DFAT*), Stephen O'Hare (*ICCL*), Eoin O'Leary (*Europe Division, DFAT*), Chinedu Onyejelem (*Metro Eireann*), Caroline Phelan (*Human Rights Unit, DFAT*), Edel Quinn (*Children's Rights Alliance*), Dr John Reynolds (*NUIM*), Kirsten Roberts (*Independent*), Marissa Ryan (*Oxfam*), Brian Sheehan (*GLEN*), Amy Sheils (*Human Rights Unit, DFAT*), Caroline Spring (*Department of Justice and Equality*), David Turner (*Church in Chains*), Liath Vaughan (*Department of Justice and Equality*), Colin Wrafter (*Human Rights Unit, DFAT*)

**Mr Colin Wrafter (Human Rights Unit, DFAT)** congratulated Ms Suzanne Keating on her appointment as CEO of Dóchas. On behalf of the Human Rights Unit, Mr Wrafter thanked outgoing Human Rights Officer, Mr Seán O'Connell, for his contribution to the work of the Unit.

- 1. The Agenda was adopted.**
- 2. The minutes of the meeting of 11 December 2015 were adopted.**
- 3. UN High-Level Plenary meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants (September 19, 2016)**

**Ms Dympna Hayes (Development Cooperation Division, DFAT)** briefed the Committee on the UN High-Level Plenary meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants. Ireland and Jordan have been appointed as co-facilitators for the meeting. Since March, the Ambassadors have held a number of informal consultations with member states which to date have focussed on the modalities for the event.

It is hoped that an agreement will be in place on these modalities soon, following which the Ambassadors will lead inter-governmental negotiations on an outcome document.

There is likely to be a plenary session at the meeting and six high-level roundtables are expected to take place with participation of civil society. It is likely that the roundtables will include the following topics: root causes; protection issues for the most vulnerable groups; resilience of host countries; and the 2030 agenda, which recognised that managed migration benefits recipient and donor countries. It is anticipated that a one day multi-stakeholder consultation event with civil society will be held by the end of July.

**Professor Siobhán Mullally (UCC)** acknowledged the work of the Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations in New York and Ambassador Donoghue, and stated her hopes that Ireland would play a leadership role at the meeting in September. **Professor Mullally** enquired about the modalities for Member States to input into the thematic issues.

**Ms Hayes** stated that Member States' positions will likely be determined in light of the UN Secretary General's report and recommendations. She noted that once the report is published the two co-facilitators will meet Member States and get their feedback. Ireland's approach to the situation is that we need a longer term solution to the root causes which must include countries of origin as well as destination.

**Ms Marissa Ryan (Oxfam)** stated that Irish civil society organisations would like to play a role in the process. Ms Ryan also enquired about the parallel event that President Obama will host. **Ms Hayes** highlighted that the event that President Obama is hosting will take place a day after the UN High-Level Plenary meeting and noted that it is largely a pledging event.

**Ms Mary Lawlor (Front Line Defenders)** stated that the role of western countries needs to be considered. **Ms Hayes** stated that the UN High Level Plenary Meeting is an opportunity for such discussions with the broader UN membership of 193 countries.

**Ms Karol Balfe (Christian Aid Ireland)** questioned whether the expected outcome will be binding. **Ms Hayes** stated that as negotiations commence this will become clearer. She noted that most outcomes at the United Nations are politically binding as opposed to legally binding. **Ms Balfe** also asked for more details on the location of the proposed multi-stakeholder consultation. **Ms Hayes** noted that the consultation is likely to take

place in New York. However this has to be confirmed and she will inform civil society of any updates.

**Dr John Reynolds (NUIM)** enquired about the private sector involvement in this UN process and whether it is beneficial. **Ms Hayes** highlighted that given the ambitious commitments agreed upon in the Sustainable Development Goals, it has been recognised that Official Development Aid (ODA) by itself will not come close to delivering these goals and hence the importance of domestic resource mobilisation and the private sector. **Ms Hayes** noted that it is difficult to address issues such as building resilience, creating jobs without including the private sector in discussions.

#### **4. EU-Turkey Agreement on migration**

**Mr Eoin O'Leary (Director General, Europe Division, DFAT)** spoke about the EU-Turkey Agreement on migration. (A copy of his speaking notes is attached).

**Professor Siobhán Mullally (UCC)** thanked **Mr O'Leary** for his presentation and asked for further information in relation to the right to appeal and collective groups. **Professor Mullally** noted that there is still a question mark over the compliance of the EU-Turkey Agreement on migration with international law and whether Turkey can be designated as safe country. She highlighted concerns that the Agreement erodes the core right to seek exile from persecution and risk. **Professor Mullally** asked about developments in relation to humanitarian visas, expansion of family reunification and whether Ireland could pursue these initiatives unilaterally. **Professor Mullally** recalled the statement by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Thorbjørn Jagland, reminding Heads of States of their obligations.

**Mr O'Leary** stated that he would convey these elements back to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade. He recalled the asymmetric nature of the current situation and the effect this is having within EU Member States. He noted that the EU is working towards the creation of a structured asylum process.

He highlighted that this is by no means a simple process within the EU, noting unilateral measures by Member States such as border erections and differing travel controls. In relation to Turkey, **Mr O'Leary** recalled that the EU and its Member States have

committed three billion euro to a Refugee Support Facility in Turkey. Ireland's national contribution would be over 22 million euro, phased over the four years 2016 to 2019. Further funding is to be considered by the EU in due course. **Mr O'Leary** also acknowledged the generosity of the Turkish government and people to Syrian refugees, almost three million of whom are currently living in Turkey.

**Ms Mary Lawlor (Front Line Defenders)** stated that Ireland's response is not proportionate to the scale of the problem, noting that Ireland had only increased the number to 4,000 asylum seekers because of public opinion. **Ms Lawlor** stated that the EU is trying to find a negative, rather than a positive solution, and that the situation merits a better response from the EU.

**Ms Karol Balfe (Christian Aid Ireland)** emphasised her hope that the EU-Turkey Agreement is not the blueprint for the UN High-Level Plenary meeting and stressed the need for more solidarity.

**Professor Rosemary Byrne (TCD)** requested that the refugees issue be integrated in the agenda of the DFAT NGO Standing Committee. **Professor Byrne** questioned whether the Government has considered the risk of its involvement in the EU Turkey Agreement noting the implications on international development agencies pulling out of areas and the uncertainty regarding the legality of the Agreement in international law.

In relation to actions by EU Member States, **Mr O'Leary** noted that Slovakia has taken a case to the European Court of Justice on the mandatory mechanism to relocate refugees across the EU. Hungary has signalled its intention to hold a referendum on the same issue.

**Mr O'Leary** informed that the European Commission has put forward a document with various options for the reform of the Dublin Regulation.

**Ms Fiona Crowley (Amnesty International)** stated that the EU-Turkey Agreement on migration is not just unsustainable but also unfair and immoral. **Ms Crowley** recalled the unworkable conditions its missions on the Greek Islands are observing and stated that Turkey is not a safe country of return.

**Ms Catherine Lynch (Independent)** asked whether there is a pragmatic way of prioritising the disbursement of the EU budget allocation and whether there has been any analysis on whether deterrent measures are actually efficient.

**Ms Marissa Ryan (Oxfam)** informed that its operation in Lesbos was suspended on 24 March 2016. Ms Ryan stressed the need for more positive solutions and for Ireland to take in more than 4,000 refugees. She called for Ireland to broaden the Syrian Humanitarian Admission Programme to other nationalities. **Ms Ryan** raised concerns about Ireland joining discussions with Frontex even though it is not a member.

**Mr O’Leary** pointed out that not all of those seeking asylum in Greece and Italy were from states covered by the relocation scheme, which is restricted to countries whose nationals have a 75% success rate in seeking asylum across the European Union. He instanced Pakistan as one such state. In response, **Dr John Reynolds (NUIM)** stressed that refugee status is dependent on the conditions of each applicant and that the state of origin was not in his view a ground for refusal.

**Mr David Joyce (ICTU)** informed that Business Europe and ETUC have issued a joint statement on the refugee crisis.

In closing, **Mr O’Leary** reaffirmed that the valuable contributions by the members of the Standing Committee would be conveyed to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

#### **5. UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of Parties (COP) 21<sup>st</sup> annual meeting**

**Ms Mags Gaynor, (Development Cooperation Division, DFAT)** discussed the outcome of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of Parties (COP) 21<sup>st</sup> annual meeting.

**Ms Gaynor** stated that the adoption of a legally binding agreement on climate change in December 2015 was an important moment. She emphasised the significance of achieving agreement on emissions reductions targets. Agreement was reached on other important issues such as adaptation, technology transfer and financing. Ireland advocated for the

inclusion of human rights language. Ms Gaynor stated that she was encouraged by the inclusion of human rights in the preamble given the strong resistance by some UN Member States to the inclusion of any reference to human rights. Ms Gaynor noted that the Agreement was positively received overall and that this year will see discussions in the EU about member states commitments.

**Professor Siobhán Mullally (UCC)** enquired about the approach to gender in the negotiations. **Ms Gaynor** stated that civil society organisations were very well organised and that the Mary Robinson Foundation had a strong strategy to ensure women's capacity was reflected in the text. In relation to process, **Ms Gaynor** noted that the French Presidency was good at information sharing and transparency from a civil society perspective.

#### **6. 15<sup>th</sup> DFAT NGO Forum on Human Rights (February 19, 2016)**

**Mr Colin Wrafter (Human Rights Unit, DFAT)** recalled the impressive line-up of speakers and the high quality of interventions at the 15<sup>th</sup> DFAT NGO Forum on Human Rights. **Mr Wrafter** noted that the quality of the final session was somewhat disappointing. **Mr Eoin Flavin (Human Rights Unit, DFAT)** gave details of the feedback received. **Ms Emily Logan (IHREC)** complimented the quality of panels in particular the first panel with representatives from Geneva. **Ms Fiona Crowley (Amnesty International)** stated her colleagues in Geneva had noted that it was unprecedented for a former UN Human Rights Council member to conduct an assessment of its own performance in a public forum.

#### **7. UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) 60<sup>th</sup> Session (March 14 – 24, 2016)**

**Ms Tracy Murphy (Human Rights Unit, DFAT)** briefed the Committee on the 60<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW).

Ms Murphy noted that Ireland's national statement, which pays tribute to the human rights defender Berta Cáceres, is available on the DFAT website (<https://goo.gl/crFC4Q>). Ireland's delegation included representatives from DCD, the Human Rights Unit, the Irish Mission to the UN in New York, the Department of Justice and Equality, and a

representative from the NGO Ruhama. A civil society briefing was hosted at the Irish Mission for Ruhama, Men's Development Network and a member of the Great Britain & Ireland branch of Soroptimist International.

The priority theme this year was "Women's empowerment and its link to sustainable development" which was also the theme of the Agreed Conclusions. Though negotiations were difficult, ultimately an agreement was brokered using agreed language from CSW 58. The issue of Sexual Reproductive and Health Rights remained a very sensitive issue. Ireland negotiated on behalf of the European Union on the Botswana-led resolution on "Women, the girl child and HIV and AIDS". Ireland co-sponsored two side events, one with the European Women's Lobby and Iceland on prostitution and the role of men and youth in mobilising its abolition, and the other with the Ugandan NGO Raising Voices, entitled *Violence is Preventable: Policy, Principles and Practice*.

Ms Murphy also noted that Ireland was elected for the first time to serve as a member of the CSW from 2017 to 2021.

**Ms Anastasia Crickley (Independent, NUIM)** welcomed the Department's work with NGOs in this regard and membership of the CSW, while being conscious of the scepticism with which CSW is viewed. She noted the importance of Ireland looking to reform our thinking about CSW and its integration with other UN mechanisms for women, particularly in relation to the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

**Professor Siobhan Mullally (UCC)** also congratulated Ireland on membership of CSW, noting that despite some concerns it is an important UN body. She asked what Ireland's priority areas would be during membership.

**Ms Murphy** informed that Ireland has pledged to work to strengthen the voice and functioning of the Commission and to promote the participation of civil society in its work.

**Mr Niall Morris (Development Cooperation Division, DFAT)** noted the importance of synergies across various fora, and informed the Committee of a side event at CSW on ensuring that gender is at the heart of the World Humanitarian Summit.

**Ms Karol Balfe (Christian Aid Ireland)** congratulated Ireland on the CSW membership, adding that the Irish Gender Based Violence Consortium would be willing to play a role in developing priorities for membership.

**8. UN Committee on Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) - Ireland's review (February 13 – March 3, 2017)**

**Mr John Hurley (Department of Justice and Equality)** provided an update on the preparations for Ireland's review by the UN Committee on Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). **Mr Hurley** explained the simplified reporting procedure for CEDAW which has been introduced, noting that Ireland's reply is to be submitted by 12 September. The Department of Justice and Equality hopes to have a public consultation with civil society during the process. Ireland's review will take place in late February 2017.

**Mr Stephen O'Hare (ICCL)** welcomed the proposal for a consultation, while noting that it might be more effective to hold it at an earlier date. In response to Mr O'Hare's question as to whether there would be more than one meeting, **Mr Hurley** noted that given the time constraints, one event is planned.

**9. Ireland's National Plan on Business and Human Rights**

**Ms Amy Sheils (Human Rights Unit, DFAT)** updated the Committee on the development of Ireland's National Plan on Business and Human Rights. Ms Sheils thanked those who participated in the consultations and noted that all submissions are now published on the website. She advised that a draft of the National Plan was being prepared and meetings would be arranged with Government Departments to discuss progress.

**Mr Les Allamby (NIHRC)** informed the Committee that the NI Human Rights Commission holds a Business & Human Rights Forum. He stated that they were keen for business to engage, and this Forum provided an opportunity to do so.



## **10. 31<sup>st</sup> session of the Human Rights Council (February 29 – March 24, 2016)**

**Ms Amy Sheils (Human Rights Unit, DFAT)** updated the Committee on developments at the recent 31<sup>st</sup> Session of the UN Human Rights Council. Ms Sheils briefed the Committee on Ireland's participation at the Council, including the delivery of 19 statements to the Council. Statements are available on the DFAT website (<https://goo.gl/hLAkgO>).

In the statement under Item 4 (Human Rights Situations that require the Council's attention) Ireland raised concerns in relation to human rights situations in Nigeria, Iraq, Iran, Azerbaijan, Russia, Turkey, Belarus, Saudi Arabia, Israel and oPT. During the general debate under Item 10 (Technical assistance and capacity building), Ireland's statement condemned the killing of human rights defenders Berta Cáceres and Nelson Garcia, while acknowledging that Honduras has sought technical assistance from the OHCHR. Ireland's statement during Item 2 general debate commended the excellent work of the Colombia Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and expressed support for the renewal of its mandate beyond October 2016.

With regard to the resolutions adopted at the Council, Ms Sheils noted a number of positive outcomes in relation to country-specific issues. She described as particularly notable and welcome, the fact that the resolutions on South Sudan, DPRK and Myanmar were all adopted by consensus. She further noted that four resolutions on the situation in the occupied Palestinian Territory were adopted, with Ireland co-sponsoring three of these: on self-determination; the human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian Territory, and accountability for violations of international law.

Ireland acted as burden-sharer for the EU on the resolution focused on human rights defenders working on economic, social and cultural rights. She noted that in spite of numerous hostile amendments proposed, the resolution was subsequently adopted by vote.

Further updates were given by Ms Sheils in relation to side-events hosted during the Council. Ireland and Norway co-hosted a side-event on the human rights situation in Azerbaijan. She also noted a Front Line Defenders side-event organised with Brazil, Chile, Tunisia and the ISHR on strengthening the international protection of human rights

defenders; and an ICCL side-event on the 2nd Universal Periodic Review of Ireland, which was moderated by Ambassador Patricia O'Brien.

Ms Sheils informed that further to a decision by the Council, the 3rd cycle of the UPR will begin in April-May 2017. Ireland is due to be reviewed during the 39th session which takes place in April-May 2021.

In terms of joint statements at the Council, Ms Sheils informed that Ireland was a member of the core group which led on a joint statement on cultural rights and the protection of cultural heritage. Ireland also joined a Canadian-led statement on the human rights situation in Burundi and a US-led joint statement which set out concerns regarding the human rights situation in China. The letter was also supported by Australia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the UK.

Ms Sheils noted that increasing polarisation at the Council remains an issue, and this Session saw the tabling of higher levels of hostile amendments than ever before.

**Ms Mary Lawlor (Front Line Defenders)** thanked the mission for its work during the Council session and for their assistance with the FLD side-event. In relation to the human rights defenders resolution, she noted the global crackdown on human rights defenders in recent times. She commented positively on the resolution's theme of Economic, Social and Cultural rights and the reference to killings of human rights defenders. She spoke of the need for a more systematic mechanism whereby there would be condemnation by EU Member States of killings of human rights defenders.

**Dr John Reynolds (NUIM)** spoke of the recent appointment of Michael Lynk as Special Rapporteur on the occupied Palestinian Territory. He commented that Mr Lynk was an excellent appointment. He noted that Mr Lynk possessed an in-depth knowledge of the conflict, and described attacks on him as disgraceful. He stated that it was important for Ireland to support the Special Rapporteur and his work.

**Mr David Turner (Church in Chains)** referenced the recent Irish Times article on the joint-statement presented at the Human Rights Council on the human rights situation in China. He described it as a strong message that human rights concerns in China will be addressed. He noted that the issue was raised in the High Commissioner's statement at the Council, and that it was important to raise the issue based on the recent crackdown on

lawyers, activists, and also Christians.

**Ms Fiona Crowley (Amnesty International)** enquired as to whether further information could be given as regards the statement on the human rights situation in China.

**Mr Brian Sheehan (GLEN)** enquired as to developments with regards to issues of LGBTI rights and the definition of the family at the Council.

**Mr Martin Collins (Pavee Point)** enquired as to the content of the joint statement on cultural heritage to which Ireland was a signatory.

**Mr Colin Wrafter** confirmed that Ireland had signed the statement on protection of cultural heritage and informed that the statement concerned the protection of cultural heritage in the context of intentional destruction in armed conflicts.

With regard to the issue of LGBTI rights, **Ms Sheils** informed that Ireland's national statement under Item 4 raised the issue of LGBTI rights in relation to the situation in Russia and certain African countries. **Ms Tracy Murphy (Human Rights Unit, DFAT)** then spoke of deadlock and pushback on LGBTI issues and definition of the family in the context of negotiations at the recent 60<sup>th</sup> Session of the Committee on the Status of Women (CSW).

**Professor Siobhan Mullally (UCC)** asked to confirm whether there was a resolution put forward on the current situation in Burundi, and if so whether it contained language relating to gender-based and sexual violence.

**Mr Brendan McNamara (Bahá'í Ireland)** commented that the approved extension of mandate for the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Iran was extremely important, and represented encouragement for people in Iran. With regards to polarisation within the work of the Council, he asked as to whether there had been any effort to counter this.

**Ms Sheils** replied that Ireland would continue to work with likeminded countries on priorities, and would advocate for the presence and protection of civil society representatives at the Council. With regard to Professor Mullally's query, **Ms Sheils** informed that there was a cross-regional statement on the human rights situation in Burundi which referred to sexual violence.

**Ms Anastasia Crickley (Independent)** stated that she was glad to note Ireland's continued support for civil society organisations. She expressed the hope that Ireland's work on civil society abroad would connect with work domestically in Ireland.

With regard to the statement on the human rights situation in China, **Mr Wrafter** noted the concern at the recent clampdown, and that the High Commissioner had raised the issue at the Human Rights Council. He also noted that a letter signed by EU Member States in Beijing earlier this year, had expressed similar concerns regarding the human rights situation in China.

**Mr Turner** referred to the contrast between the attention given to previous trade visits to Saudi Arabia where there was deemed to be too little focus on human rights, and this occasion, where there is a concern expressed over the trade implications of Ireland's human rights advocacy in relation to China.

**Ms Marissa Ryan (Oxfam)** spoke of how it is desirable to have a foreign policy based on human rights and not solely on trade considerations.

#### **11. Ireland's second review (May 11, 2016) under the Universal Periodic Review (UPR)**

**Ms Layla de Cogan Chin (Department of Justice and Equality)** updated the Committee on preparations for Ireland's Second-Cycle review under the Universal Periodic Review process. She noted that the national report had been submitted on 3 February this year, and that the relatively short limit had been a challenge in terms of reflecting achievements and issues. She noted also that the report would be placed on the Department of Justice and Equality website once published by the OHCHR.

She confirmed that Ireland's Review would be held on 11 May and would be live-streamed. She also confirmed that the Troika of countries had been selected, comprised of Slovenia, Ghana and the Republic of Korea.

She informed that all written submissions have been published online, and that the Inter-Departmental Committee on the UPR would be meeting the next week.

**Mr Stephen O'Hare (ICCL)** spoke positively of the engagement of DFAT and DJE in

the process. He noted the recent ICCL side-event held on 10 March in Geneva and described it as successful, thanking the mission for its assistance. As regards the UPR pre-sessions, he noted that they were well attended and that there was participation of a range of groups.

## **12. Ireland's ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)**

**Mr Deaglán Ó Briain (Department of Justice and Equality)** updated the Committee on the current status of the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). He noted that there remain legislative barriers to be overcome. He informed that the General Scheme of an Equality/Disability Miscellaneous Provisions Bill has been brought to Government and approved. It will be published for pre-legislative scrutiny soon – there are a number of technical issues to be resolved bilaterally with individual Departments. He stated that the target remains ratification before the end of 2016, subject to passing of relevant legislation.

He informed the Committee that the Bill will create the necessary legal framework in relation to deprivation of liberty in nursing homes and similar residential care facilities. He noted that the Department of Justice and Equality is consulting with the Department of Health on the issue.

Mr Ó Briain noted also that issues remained as regards aspects of mental health legislation, along with issues of voluntary patients in mental health institutions and also consent in relation to clinical trials. Mr Ó Briain concluded by stating that the target remains ratification by the end of the year.

**Mr Stephen O'Hare (ICCL)** welcomed the timeframe for ratification by the end of the year. He noted that the Convention allows for the progressive realisation of its obligations.

**Ms Fiona Crowley (Amnesty International)** stated that there may be concerns as regards the issue of deprivation of liberty. She enquired as to the Department from which to seek further information on this legislation, and as to the estimated timeframe for the relevant Bill. **Mr Ó Briain** replied that the Department of Health is leading on the issue

in consultation with the Department of Justice and Equality, and as regards the timeframe, he noted that issues are currently being resolved and that the Bill would be put forward soon.

**Professor Siobhan Mullally (UCC)** highlighted the fact that Ireland was only one of two EU Member States yet to ratify the Convention. She also enquired as to the timeframe for Ireland's ratification of the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

**Ms Emily Logan (IHREC)** referenced NUIG research on compliance by national institutions with Article 33 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. She noted that NUIG would recommend models for implementation within 6-8 weeks.

**Mr Ó Briain** explained that Ireland's view is that the Convention's doctrine of progressive realisation of rights relates to quality of services and level of funding etc., but cannot apply to elements of the domestic legal order that contradict the terms of an international instrument. Ratification cannot be completed until domestic legislation that is in conflict with obligations contained in the Convention is reformed.

### **13. World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul (May 23-24, 2016)**

**Ms Lisa Doherty (Development Cooperation Division, DFAT)** updated the Committee on preparations for the upcoming World Humanitarian Summit to be held in Istanbul on 23-24 May, 2016. She began by noting that this was the first ever event of this kind to be held, commenting that it was part of a process that builds on the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the SDGs.

In terms of the major issues to be addressed at the summit, she described the current mass forced displacement of upwards of sixty million people worldwide; the issue of climate change; and health crises such as Ebola and Zika outbreaks.

She noted that the humanitarian system is struggling to cope and this summit therefore offers an opportunity to discuss how to improve the system. The complexity of these challenges means that discussion would entail aspects regarding broader action in terms of issues related to development and peacekeeping.

Ms Doherty informed that invitations have been issued to Heads of State and other actors and a decision had yet to be taken on Ireland's delegation.

She noted that work is underway in terms of preparing commitments and that recommendations have been proposed following the Irish Humanitarian Summit held in Dublin last July. She informed that there would be a focus on gender and resilience in Ireland's contribution to the World Humanitarian Summit. In terms of proposed side-events, she referenced several which Ireland will be involved with, including one to be co-hosted with the World Food Programme on Zero Hunger; an event on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas; and another on gender-based violence in emergencies.

**Ms Karol Balfe (Christian Aid Ireland)** enquired as to whether the Summit would connect with the UN High-Level Plenary meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants in September.

**Ms Doherty** replied that the World Humanitarian Summit had been organised prior to the UN High-Level Plenary meeting, although there was some concern that the Summit would be dominated completely by the migration crisis. She noted that the UN Secretary General's report for the World Humanitarian Summit contains a focus on forced displacement and that the outcomes of the Humanitarian Summit in May would feed into the UN High-Level Plenary meeting in September.

#### **14. A.O.B**

**Ms Edel Quinn (Children's Rights Alliance)** commented on the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) review of Ireland, noting that it was a successful review and that engagement from Government Departments was positive. **Ms Emily Logan (IHREC)** commended the Children's Rights Alliance on their work as regards the CRC.

**Mr Deaglán Ó Briain (DJE)** thanked Mr Wrafter and spoke of his appreciation for his work in the Department. **Ms Mary Lawlor (FLD)** also thanked Mr Wrafter on behalf of the Standing Committee for his work as Director of the Human Rights Unit and his excellent engagement with the Committee.

**End.**