

**28th session of the Universal Periodic Review
(6-17 November 2017)**

Review of Benin

Statement of Ireland

10 November 2017

Thank you, Mr. Vice President

Ireland welcomes the delegation of Benin and thanks it for its presentation of its third national report.

We welcome Benin's efforts to advance human rights domestically, including the adoption in April 2017 of a law on the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities.

We commend Benin for its abolition of the death penalty in practice, further to the ratification of the second optional protocol to the ICCPR. However, we share the concerns of the Human Rights Committee at the situation of death row inmates whose sentences have not been commuted. We **recommend** that Benin reflect the abolition of the death penalty in its legislative framework, and commute existing death sentences to prison sentences. Equally, we urge Benin to ensure that torture is criminalised under national law in line with the provisions of the Convention Against Torture.

Ireland acknowledges Benin's constitutional provisions guaranteeing freedom of expression and freedom of the media, and the adoption of the Information and Communication Code in 2015. However, we are concerned at reports of restrictions and suspensions of independent media outlets by the national media regulator. We note that some media offences remain punishable by prison sentences, and in other cases by heavy fines. We therefore **recommend** that Benin ensure that all national legislation complies with international standards on freedom of expression and media freedom, and take steps to prevent arbitrary suspension of media outlets.

Thank you