

27th session of the Universal Periodic Review (1 – 12 May 2017)

**Review of Republic of South Africa
Statement by Ireland**

10 May 2017

Thank you Mr President

Ireland thanks the delegation of the Republic of South Africa for the comprehensive presentation of its national report and for their presence today, and recognises the steps taken by the Government of South Africa since the last review cycle.

Ireland is seriously concerned by the high prevalence of gender-based and sexual violence. We recognise the progress made in treatment of HIV in South Africa since the last review but remain concerned that adolescent women and girls remain at significantly higher risk of infection than their male peers. We recognise the interconnected nature of the challenges of gender-based violence and HIV in South Africa. We welcome the recent visit of UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women and Girls to South Africa and the subsequent recommendations.

Ireland **recommends** that South Africa works to eradicate harmful cultural or traditional practices against women and girls by conducting educational campaigns, encouraging reporting of cases and publically denouncing such practices; through urgently providing an adequate budget for the implementation of key measures of the Domestic Violence Act; and through strengthening the systematic and comprehensive collection of disaggregated data related to the incidence of gender-based and sexual violence and all forms of violence against women, including femicides and intimate partner violence, and to use this data to inform its policy responses and monitoring.

As noted by South Africa in its National Report, ‘South Africa has strong constitutional protections for human rights, yet the real test lies in implementation’. In order to support implementation of all UPR recommendations, Ireland **recommends** the establishment of a standing inter-ministerial committee to improve coordination in relation to human rights reporting, and follow up on implementation of recommendations.

Thank you.