



Statement by Mr. Noel Treacy, T.D.,

Minister of State of Ireland

At the Human Rights Council High Level Segment

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Mr. President,

Firstly let me warmly congratulate you on your appointment as President of the Council. As Secretary-General Annan said, the Council is indeed lucky to have such an eminent and experienced person at the helm for its first year.

I am delighted to be here on this historic occasion and to have the opportunity to set out an Irish perspective on the Human Rights Council.

We have been presented with a great opportunity to improve the human rights machinery of the United Nations. We must seize that opportunity. In doing so we must collectively reflect carefully on how the Council can best achieve its full potential.

It must make itself relevant by confronting the very real and practical problems the world faces today in ensuring genuine respect for human rights. We hope that through this Council there will be a decisive shift to the effective implementation of the human rights standards crafted by its predecessor.

The compelling need for an effective international forum to advance the promotion and protection of human rights is self-evident. Countless individuals and communities throughout the world still live in situations in which they are denied their fundamental rights. Some 300 000 children are actively involved in armed conflict. Last year, between 600 000 and 800 000 people were trafficked across international borders. The number of people infected by HIV/AIDS worldwide has reached about 40 million.

There is no need for me to continue enumerating the many ways in which people's rights are violated. We are all conscious of the huge scale of the problem. We are also all conscious that no country has a perfect human rights record. The challenge is to determine how best we can work in concert to improve the protection of human rights both in our own countries and globally.

Ireland firmly believes that a renewed commitment to effective multilateralism is the best means to achieve that end. Over the past sixty years, the international institutions of the United Nations have grown and strengthened in step with human progress.