

UN Human Rights Council
Nineteenth session, 27 February - 23 March 2012

Item 6:
Consideration of UPR reports

IRELAND

Madame President,

Age Action Ireland which is a member of the Help Age International network, along with the coalition partners Disability Federation Ireland, the Make Room Campaign Alliance, Mental Health Reform and Women's Human Rights Alliance, welcome the spirit in which the Universal Periodic Review process has been conducted. In particular, Ireland's commitments on ensuring that economic measures being taken by government are not disproportional in their impact, specifically on vulnerable groups such as older people.¹

It is also commendable that Ireland is committed to signing the Option Protocol to the International Convention on Economic Social and Cultural Rights and we hope this will soon result in its ratification, so as to make these rights accessible to all in Ireland.²

Madame President,

We also note that the continuing economic crisis that grips Ireland is pushing more citizens into financial hardship and poverty in particular women and children. We welcome that Ireland has partially accepted the recommendation to incorporate into law the rights to health and housing.³ However, the austerity measures being taken by government carry consequences for access to crucial services. It is thus regrettable that Ireland is not willing to fully recognise economic social and cultural rights into law.⁴

Reviews of Ireland's mental health system have repeatedly noted that the urgent need for reform. Despite decades of policy commitments, Ireland still does not have a modern and high quality system. Concerns include low availability of alternatives to medication, poorly resourced community-based supports, a complete absence of a gender dimension and a lack of civil rights in inpatient care. In this context, we particularly welcome Ireland's support of the recommendation that renews the mental health legislation, bringing its provisions in line with the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.⁵

¹ A/HRC/19/9, recommendation 106.35 (Netherlands).

² A/HRC/19/9/Add 1, paragraph 107.4.7.4.

³ A/HRC/19/9, recommendation 107.4 (Portugal).

⁴ A/HRC/19/9/Add 1, paragraph 107.4.

⁵ A/HRC/19/9, recommendation 106.4 (Spain).

Finally, Madame President, we urge detailed timeframes for implementing the commitments made by Government today. We ask that they be set in a manner which is transparent and participatory and we hope that civil society and the government can work side by side in enhancing human rights realization in Ireland.

Thank you, Madame President