



## **Item 6 – UPR outcome, Ireland - 23 September 2016**

### **Oral statement by Edmund Rice International**

Mr President

Education is a fundamental human right and essential for the exercise of all other human rights. It promotes individual freedom and empowerment and yields important development benefits.

Research over the past two decades has linked early school leaving in Ireland with a range of negative future outcomes for children. Despite a range of interventions to address school non-completion, approximately 14% of students continue to leave school without completing their education every year. According to the National Economic and Social Forum “early school leaving is among the most serious economic and social problems the state must address.”

Young people who have spent time in state care, juvenile justice or hospital system due to mental or physical health issues also have limited educational opportunities.

Collaboration between professional systems is essential to ensure that positive outcomes can be achieved.

The capacity of the current child and adolescent mental health system to cater for the needs of children is also a source of serious concern. Recent figures indicate that 14% of children wait more than 12 months to access the services provided by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, more than 2,500 children and adolescents are on waiting lists for mental health services and Ireland spends around €3.5 million each year on care places abroad.

We recommend that Ireland consider a holistic legal response to marginalized young people, by considering raising the minimum school leaving age, providing entry levels into trades through apprenticeship schemes and offering alternatives to its present ‘one size fits all’ model for education.

We further recommend that Ireland undertake a national review of the mental health needs of young people and provide greater support for those services attempting to meet those needs.

Thank you Mr President