



# IRELAND

Statement by

Mr. Eamon Gilmore, T.D.

Tánaiste (Deputy Prime Minister) and

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade

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*Check against delivery*

**Mr. President,**

**Syria**

Every day, the peoples of the world – whom we are privileged to represent here at the General Assembly of the United Nations – look on in helpless horror at the slaughter in Syria.

They can see gassed children lined out, dead, on their television screens. They can access online the facts about the 100,000 Syrians who have been killed; the four million who have been displaced; and the two million or more who have been driven into refugee camps in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan.

The peoples who have sent us, government leaders and diplomats, to speak for them in this great hall, are asking, 'Why can we not stop this slaughter and this suffering?'

They see this conflict in real time. It is not taking place in a remote part of the planet. Its brutality is made more visible by modern technology.

The utterly callous attack in Ghouta on 21 August marked a new low in the endless litany of horrors.

From the very outset, Ireland has consistently argued that the United Nations and the Security Council must be central to any efforts to resolve this crisis and ensure that international law and basic human rights are upheld.

And while it has taken much longer than we would all have wished, I welcome the decisive action the Security Council has now taken on Syria.

The Resolution marks a watershed in the international community's engagement on the crisis. It offers renewed hope and confidence that the UN is capable of discharging its responsibilities and meeting the aspirations and expectations of the peoples of the world.

The Security Council Resolution builds on the vital breakthrough achieved by the United States and Russia in agreeing a framework for the complete elimination of Syria's chemical weapons. Full compliance by the Syrian regime with its obligations is imperative.

Ireland has already pledged €200,000 in funding to support the vital role of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, assisted by the UN, in implementing these arrangements.

Crucially, the Security Council has called for the early convening of an international conference to address all aspects of the conflict. The inescapable reality is that the crisis can only be resolved politically, not militarily. I am greatly encouraged by the indications that the Geneva II Conference could be held within a matter of weeks.

Peace can only come through all Syrians engaging in a genuinely inclusive process aimed at agreeing a new political dispensation in their country.

The Security Council has expressed its conviction that there must also be accountability for what has occurred in Syria. The International Criminal Court exists precisely for this purpose. We owe it to the Syrian people to ensure that those responsible for the war crimes committed against them are brought to justice.

There is an urgent need also to remove impediments to the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Violence against civilians must cease. All parties must facilitate unimpeded access to people in need throughout Syria and guarantee the safety and security of humanitarian personnel, who perform their duties at enormous personal risk.

The humanitarian efforts being made by Syria's neighbours, including Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon, are remarkable and deserve far more support from the international community. We should not underestimate the strain being imposed on these countries and the risks being posed to refugee populations. Ireland has contributed \$15 million to the humanitarian operation and we stand ready to do more within our means.

### **Middle East**

Elsewhere in the Middle East, we also see the prospect of progress.

In Ireland, we know what it takes to make peace after a protracted conflict. I want to acknowledge the work being done in the current direct talks between Israeli and Palestinian negotiators, which all who wish for peace must welcome.

I want to commend in particular the determination and engagement of US Secretary of State John Kerry, who has done so much to bring this about, and the leadership of President Abbas and Prime Minister Netanyahu, who have had to accept difficult choices to begin the process of negotiation.

We all know, and they know, that many more difficult choices lie before them if they are to succeed and to secure a comprehensive peace settlement. They deserve all our support.

### **Iran**

We are also encouraged by the stated determination of the new Iranian government to address the concerns of the international community and build confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear programme. We look forward to Iran's serious engagement in meaningful negotiations leading to full compliance with all of its international obligations and hope that this will also contribute to the creation of a positive dynamic in the Middle East region.

## **Peacekeeping**

Ireland currently participates in seven UN peacekeeping missions, including each of the three missions in the Middle East. In response to a request from the Secretary General, we are deploying Irish personnel to reinforce UNDOF, the UN Disengagement Observer Force on the Golan Heights. We are doing so to help ensure that UNDOF can continue to implement its mandate, at a difficult time. Ireland's deployment to this challenging mission is a signal of our deep commitment to the UN's peacekeeping role. The Irish people are rightly proud of these soldiers and the record of our Defence Forces, members of our police service and Irish civilians deployed in the cause of peace.

## **Terrorism**

I join other speakers in condemning the recent attack in the Kenyan capital Nairobi, which left dozens of innocent people dead and almost two hundred injured. It is a chilling reminder that well-organised and ruthless international terrorist groups and networks are constantly searching for new locations and targets for atrocities. My profound sympathy and that of the people of Ireland goes out to the victims of this attack and their families. We must both be vigilant against terror and resolute in refusing to compromise our values in the face of such threats.

## **Mr. President**

### **MDGs**

Many factors contribute to human suffering. Violent conflict such as that in Syria is one – and the toll of casualties there is escalating daily. But there are many parts of the world where underdevelopment, malnutrition and disease exact an even greater toll.

Around the globe, 870 million people – almost 200 times the entire population of Ireland – are living in extreme poverty and hunger. Every single day, 18,000 children die needlessly from preventable causes in the poorest and least-developed regions of the world. 7,000 of these are children under the age of five who die because they are undernourished. One in every four children is stunted, most of them in the poorest countries. And every day, 800 women die because of complications during pregnancy and childbirth, for basic reasons that could have been prevented.

Reversing these trends and creating a better future for the countless millions of impoverished people on our planet is, perhaps, the greatest moral and practical challenge we face today.

We can, of course, draw inspiration and hope from our successes. And there have been successes. Thirteen years ago, at the United Nations, world leaders committed to taking tangible, measurable action to tackle global poverty. Huge progress has been made since

then under the Millennium Development Goals. Significant numbers of people have been lifted out of poverty. Millions of children are receiving primary education. Two billion people have access to improved water supply. And HIV/AIDS and other diseases and pandemics are being tackled.

Nevertheless, fresh global challenges, such as climate change, are beginning to undermine the progress made. Communities in developing countries which have contributed least to the causes of climate change are suffering most from its effects.

This is an injustice, clear and simple. It is a matter of fundamental human rights and equity. And it is critical for the future of all of our children, in a world which is reaching the limits of environmental sustainability, that this injustice be reversed.

I had the privilege of taking part in this week's Special Event on the Millennium Development Goals and co-chairing one of the Round Table sessions. Ireland is proud to have co-facilitated the Special Event with South Africa and to have achieved an outcome document which will guide negotiations over the next two years on completing the MDGs and crafting the post-2015 development agenda.

I believe that, when world leaders gather at the United Nations in 2015, we can and should be ready to adopt a new set of global goals aimed at achieving a sustainable, just and secure future for our world. I want to see a clear commitment to ending extreme poverty and hunger in a generation. I want to see specific commitments in relation to the empowerment of women and girls. And I want to see an integrated approach on climate change and a strong focus on climate-sensitive agriculture.

In our own aid programme, my Government has prioritised hunger and malnutrition, a theme that resonates with Ireland's own history. We have a very simple message about the vital importance of investment in nutrition for mothers and babies. We are leading supporters of the Scaling Up Nutrition movement. And we are committed to doubling our aid spending on nutrition by 2016.

Ireland today is emerging from several years of an economic crisis that, soon, will be behind us. After many tough decisions and a lot of hard work, we are about to safely exit an international bail-out and our economy is back on track. And I am proud to say that, despite the extremely difficult circumstances many Irish people find themselves in, we have sustained our commitment to the provision of development aid. I know that we are ready to play our part in a new global partnership, and that it is only through this body, the United Nations, that this can be achieved.

### **Human Rights**

It is a matter of great pride to my country that Ireland was, last year, elected for the first time to the Human Rights Council. I warmly thank the Member States for their support in the election and the confidence they have placed in us.

Ireland played a lead role in the adoption of two important resolutions by the Human Rights Council this week - one on preventable mortality of children under five; the other recognizing the important role played by civil society at the local, national, regional and international levels.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by this Assembly, states that recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. It also states that those human rights should be protected in law. Today, instead of offering protection, we increasingly see legal measures being adopted to discriminate against people on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity. I welcome the courageous leadership shown by the Secretary General when he promised last April to lead a global campaign for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender rights. Ireland pledges our full support to the efforts of the Secretary General, both here at the General Assembly and at the Human Rights Council.

### **Conclusion**

**Mr. President,**

Ireland is a small state which is deeply committed to the United Nations and to the principles enshrined in its Charter. We are proud to contribute to the important efforts of the United Nations in peacekeeping, in conflict resolution, in development aid and in humanitarian action.

There can be no doubt that the United Nations is the unique and indispensable forum where the peoples of the world share their collective concerns and determine to take action to make the world a better and a safer place.

The membership of this Organisation has conferred primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security on the Security Council. Accordingly, we look to the Council to show leadership in the response to international crisis. Membership of the Council is a privilege for any state, and Ireland has been honoured to serve on it on a number of occasions. But the permanent members of the Security Council have a special responsibility to work together in a way which enables the United Nations to live up to the commitments made in its Charter.

When the United Nations fails, or delays action, we are all the poorer for such setbacks. But when the UN works, we can achieve great things together. And these successes, such as the definition of a post-2015 development agenda, should serve as an inspiration and a springboard for the international community's responses to the other great challenges of our time.

Thank You.