

Presentation Sisters Interprovincial Justice Desk



At the invitation of the SDG Unit at the

Department of Environment, Climate and Communications

the

International Presentation Association



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Make this submission for inclusion in

Ireland's 2023 Voluntary National Review (VNR).

The International Presentation Association (IPA) is an association of religious sisters and Presentation People, founded in 1988 as a global advocacy association with a presence in 22 countries. We are one of the only faith-based members of Coalition 2030s, (International Development Pillar). We have been members of Coalition 2030 since its inception and we support and endorse their work on the preparation of Ireland's official Voluntary Review.

As a faith based NGO we have [ECOSOC status](#) at the United Nations and we use this consultative status to influence policies at the United Nations, reflecting our specific IPA commitment to: 'Respond to the cry of Earth and to people made poor by embracing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in a human rights framework, addressing the issues of women and children, care of Earth and indigenous peoples, as is relevant to our local regions.'

Most recently we have collaborated with other religious congregations to advocate for those in Ireland who are furthest behind using the UN Human Rights Mechanisms of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In our [submission](#) to the UPR of Ireland we outlined specific concerns and recommendations with respect to victims of domestic violence, primarily women and children. In this submission we outlined those SDG targets and indicators that are not being addressed and we would urge that the conclusions and recommendations of the [Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review of Ireland](#)¹ 2021 would be referenced in the upcoming official VNR of Ireland given that the conclusions primarily concern many of those who are furthest behind in Ireland and understanding that the VNR will be prepared and written with those furthest behind in the fore.

In a similar manner we collaborated with other religious congregations making [an input to the State Report of Ireland](#) in advance of the Review of Ireland by the Committee for the Rights of the Child with respect to Ireland's implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) where we specifically referenced children as victims of domestic and gender based violence as being among those furthest behind in Ireland. In [a separate input](#) we referenced children of people in prison as being a cohort of children that remain largely unseen and unsupported. We attended this UNCRC review in the Palais Wilson, Geneva², where we met Minister Roderic O' Gorman and we asked that he would forward the [concluding outcomes](#) of this important review for consideration by those charged with preparing the Irish State VNR.

In our public commitment to the implementation of the SDGs within a human rights based framework it is imperative that the conclusions of Ireland's review / involvement in recent UN Human Rights Mechanisms³ must be taken into account by the authors of our upcoming 2nd VNR, and this is in line with our IPA commitments.

A criticism levelled at the Minister (many times) at the recent UNCRC was that the lack of quality disaggregated data mitigates against the identification of those children furthest behind and therefore means that we are only therefore paying lip service to commitment to reach the furthest behind first. There is very little data on the numbers of children who are victims of human trafficking, domestic

¹ Published on December 14th

² January 24th & 25th 2023

³ Both the UNCRC and the UPR outcome statements.

violence or indeed those with family members in prison and then there is the added issue of the well-publicised inability of the regional Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to fully cater to the mental health needs of those furthest behind. We would hope that the State VNR would ask for a greater degree of usable, disaggregated data that would support the targets and indicators of all SDGs.

We would hope that when published the VNR would be debated in the Dáil to raise awareness of the SDGs. We also feel that the SDG Unit is a hardworking unit that might be better suited to the Department of An Taoiseach offering a greater prominence to the SDG agenda given that any efforts to achieve full SDG implementation will necessitate a much greater government engagement that will be matched with the necessary commensurate financing. Given our International Development interest, we commend the Irish Government on their ongoing commitment to peacebuilding with the longest unbroken peacekeeping record in the world as well as their commitment to refugees fleeing conflict we would however ask that Ireland reach our agreed Overseas Development Aid target of 0.7% of GNI well before 2030. At the most recent National Stakeholder forum we heard the voices of those who might be considered furthest behind and this should be reflected in the VNR in both the written report and at the UN when it is presented at the forthcoming HLPF 23. ATD Ireland have alerted the SDG Unit to their willingness to help in preparing a delegate to attend the UN which a lived experience of being left behind. We would support their work.

We would hope that Ireland can lead the call for more robust, honest and transparent reporting in the VNR process by leading by example. In the same manner we hope that the Irish Government would champion Civil Society Organisations and campaign for a greater degree of safe civil society space at home and abroad.

In our commitment to our mother earth we would also ask that perhaps 2023 is a good time to review the SDGs, (the half way point), with some focus on decoupling 'SDG #8 Decent Work and Economic Growth' understanding that consistent economic growth is often at the expense of our environment.

At the 77th UNGA in next September, Ireland and Qatar will co-facilitate and lead the consultations on the Political Declaration of the SDG Summit, this is a real opportunity for Ireland to drive home the SDGs as the only fully agreed agenda for the whole world. It should be also noted that Barry Andrews MEP has responsibility for delivering the EU VR⁴ at the forthcoming HLPF and with other respected SDG advocates such as Ambassador David Donohoe, Presidents Mary Robinson, Mary McAleese and Michael D Higgins Ireland must make this VNR count as an example of sincere government commitment to do more, faster to implement the SDGs both at home and abroad.



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⁴ EU Voluntary Review

