

TRANSCRIPT

Oral Statement at the 52nd Session of the Human Rights Council

Item: UPR Outcomes – United Kingdom of Great Britain & Northern Ireland

Date: 28 March, 2023

Delivered by: Mr. Christopher McCreery

Mr. President,

Edmund Rice International and partners welcomes the United Kingdom's commitment to support recommendation 43.145 and take concrete measures to ensure the fulfilment of the right to adequate housing for all to prevent homelessness. Housing is a basic Human Right but Northern Ireland is in the midst of a housing and homelessness crisis. On 31 December 2022, there were over 44,500 applicants on the Social Housing waiting list. Almost 24,500 households on the social housing waiting list have homelessness status. That's more than 3% of all households living in Northern Ireland today.

We are disappointed that recommendation 43.143 'to allocate more resources for poverty reduction and social welfare' is noted. Particularly as current statistics highlight the ongoing homelessness crisis. Families are the highest category of homelessness acceptances. In 2022 3,500 families were accepted as Homeless. Almost 7,000 children were accepted as homeless - 4133 of these children were aged between 0-8 years. According to government figures published on March 9th 2023, the number of households and children living in temporary accommodation continues to rise. In some cases people are waiting for more than 5 years to get a permanent home. Soaring energy, food, rent and mortgage costs are only exacerbating this already incredibly difficult situation

Finally, as someone with lived experience of rough sleeping and the traumatic impact of homelessness on my personal wellbeing, I believe that everyone needs and deserves a permanent home. We therefore encourage **the UK government to significantly increase the supply of safe, secure and affordable housing for all in Northern Ireland including the private rental sector; and work across government departments to focus on homelessness prevention rather than homelessness management.**

Thank you.