

The launch in New York of **The Guiding Principles for Human Rights Field Officers Working in Conflict and Post-Conflict Environments** was held at the Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations on Wednesday 27 May 2009. The Ambassador of Ireland, H.E., Mr. Paul Kavanagh hosted a panel discussion, moderated by Professor Michael O’Flaherty, with the participation of a number of Permanent Representatives, senior UN officials as well as other delegates, officials and representatives from civil society.

The Guiding Principles for Human Rights Field Officers (HRFOs) present in a single volume a professional and ethical framework for human rights field work. They were developed by an international team led by Professor O’Flaherty, a member of the United Nations Human Rights Committee.

These Principles provide the first statement of a comprehensive set of professional standards specific to the work of HRFOs. They address the work of all HRFOs who are deployed by intergovernmental organisations in conflict and post-conflict environments. They contain the Statement of Ethical Commitments of Human Rights Professionals which is also a standalone document which has relevance for all human rights practitioners.

The Principles constitute a major part of the output of the international research project ‘Consolidating the Profession: the Human Rights Field Officer’ which is funded by Irish Aid with additional support from the University of Nottingham. Further information can be found at www.humanrightspersonals.org.

Concluding the panel discussion, Ambassador Kavanagh said *“Ireland has been proud to be associated with this innovative project which is funded in major part by our Government's programme of overseas development assistance, Irish Aid. It represents a substantial contribution to, not a prescription for, the work of Human Rights Field Officers everywhere. We are here in the business of helping to translate universal Human Rights norms into practice, by equipping Field Officers better to do their work effectively and with objectivity and fairness. We hope that the Guidelines will be taken up by States, organizations and practitioners and perhaps elaborated further in time.”*

Further information on the Guiding Principles can be found at www.hrfoguidingprinciples.org.