

## 27<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council

### GENERAL DEBATE ON ITEM 6: UPR PROCESS

*Speaker: Marta Kolasinska – Check against delivery*

Mr President,

As a general comment on the UPR process, ISHR wishes to highlight the importance that States make, accept, implement and follow-up recommendations related to the protection of human rights defenders.

The protection of defenders and of their participative space is primordial if States are to resolve other UPR recommendations in a sustainable manner. [ISHR agrees with the previous Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, that The UPR can contribute to an enabling environment for human rights defenders](#), give defenders visibility and contribute to their protection.

By way of example: in its first UPR, Cote d'Ivoire received recommendations on defenders and began drafting a law for their protection. States followed up during the second review, demanding the bill be passed. It has.

To complement the UPR process, Cote d'Ivoire should now ensure the law's effective implementation, whilst recommending States ought to monitor and encourage this, as they did at Mexico's last review.

Meanwhile, Honduras will also demonstrate the potential of the UPR process if it responds to first cycle recommendations, and passes a fully consulted law on the protection of defenders before its next review.

To take advantage of the UPR process, States must make such recommendations where they are necessary. For example, recommendations on defenders in the Maldives and Spain would be a timely response to developments since their first reviews.

The UPR process gives States an opportunity to accept recommendations and demonstrate serious intent to protect civil society. We hope Jamaica and Laos, for example, will accept human rights defender related recommendations next time around.

A crucial element of the UPR process is follow-up between cycles: reviewing States should monitor implementation bilaterally and at future reviews. Whilst recommendations must respond to local realities, ISHR has identified three priority recommendations:

1. Ensure strong public statements recognising the important role of defenders.
2. Enact and implement specific legislation and policies to protect their work.
3. Ensure all alleged attacks and threats against defenders are fully and promptly investigated, ensuring accountability and remedy.

ISHR calls upon States to use the UPR process as a tool to monitor the situation facing human rights defenders, and make recommendations to improve their situation. We ask that States accept and carry out these recommendations. And we urge all parties to monitor and encourage their implementation. Thank you.