



International Service for Human Rights

Oral statement Item 2

5 March 2009

Mr President,

Madam High Commissioner,

The International Service for Human Rights welcomes your first annual report to the Human Rights Council.

We strongly endorse your view that the Human Rights Council, the General Assembly and your Office have independent mandates that must be respected. At the same time cooperation and complementarity between these bodies should continually be strengthened.

In this regard, we believe that your voice as an advocate for upholding the highest international human rights standards, provide a voice to the most vulnerable and marginalised, strengthen the human rights system and all of its mechanisms, and advance the human rights agenda throughout the United Nations system is critical. We encourage you to provide, as you have suggested in your report, proposals and recommendations to the Council for where it can play its role in promoting and protecting human rights for all. We trust that the Council's members will give serious consideration to your expert advice and views on pressing human rights issues that it should address.

We welcome the suggestions you have made for how the Council could improve its functioning, including in relation to the holding of panel discussions, the need to address urgent and chronic human rights issues and situations, and follow up to the recommendations of the special procedures.

In particular, we believe that your recommendations for how to improve the UPR through more concrete and measurable recommendations should not await the second cycle. We hope that you will continue to advocate for the strengthening of the UPR process. Your Office, including through its country and regional offices and presence of human rights advisers, can play a key

role at the national level by pro-actively encouraging comprehensive and meaningful national consultations with the full involvement of civil society in preparation for the UPR. We hope that your Office's activities to support and raise awareness of the UPR process at the national or regional level will include the participation of human rights defenders and civil society. We are interested in your proposal to include independent expertise in the UPR process during the second cycle, in particular to allow for an independent evaluation of the level of implementation of UPR recommendations.

Finally, we would like to commend you for your leadership in delivering the video message to the high level parallel event at the General Assembly on human rights and sexual orientation and gender identity. It is was an important reaffirmation of the universality of human rights and the need to ensure that no person suffers human rights violations because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

We look forward to continuing our substantive relationship with your Office and to contribute to make its crucial work known to the global human rights defenders community.

Thank you, Mr President