

## Human Rights Defenders Advocacy Programme (HRDAP)

Geneva – 8 to 21 June 2014

### 1) Programme description

Human rights defenders play a vital role in pushing for sustainable human rights improvements. A free and vibrant civil society is essential to assist States to respect, protect and fulfil all human rights for all and to hold them to account when they fail to do so.

ISHR conducts regular training courses on the use of the main human rights mechanisms, including the Human Rights Council, the special procedures, the UN treaty bodies and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). The **Human Rights Defenders Advocacy Programme, Geneva, (HRDAP)** equips human rights defenders with the knowledge and skills to strategically integrate the system into their existing work at the national level. The programme also provides an opportunity for participants to directly engage in lobbying and advocacy activities at the UN level with the aim to effect change on the ground back home.

This programme consists of the following elements:

- a) A short online learning component, which takes place prior to face-to-face training sessions, and supports participants in consolidating existing knowledge and developing advocacy objectives;
- b) Intensive training in Geneva, with the largest group likely to be hosted in June to coincide with the 26<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council, focusing on ways to effectively use international human rights mechanisms and to influence outcomes;
- c) Specific advocacy at Human Rights Council sessions and other relevant meetings, with regular feedback and peer education to learn from the experiences, including expert inputs from leading human rights advocates

This programme is directed at experienced human rights defenders in NGOs/NHRIs with existing advocacy experience at the national level and some prior knowledge of the international human rights system.

Key advocacy opportunities expected for the 26<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council (June 2014) include:

- Report and renewal of the mandate of the UN Working Group on business and human rights, providing a key opportunity to strengthen recognition of the challenges faced by human rights defenders working on corporate accountability.
- Reports by key special procedures mandates (UN experts) in the area of human rights defenders, including freedom of expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and association as well as appointments of key new experts.
- Discussion of human rights situations and reports by experts on Eritrea, Cote d'Ivoire, Belarus and Iran, as well as expected renewal of these mandates.
- Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Syria.
- Resolutions on violence against women, and the elimination of discrimination, as well as the report to the Human Rights Council of the Working Group on discrimination against women in law and practice.
- It is also possible that the Human Rights Council will consider a follow-up resolution on discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

### 2) Objectives

The objectives of the course fall into the following three broad categories:

- a) Supporting human rights defenders:
  - Develop human rights defenders' advocacy skills and expertise.

- Enhance the ability of human rights defenders to engage strategically with the Human Rights Council, as well as to develop diplomatic and civil society networks;
  - Improve the quality of NGO participation in the Human Rights Council, with a view to exert a greater influence on human rights foreign policy;
  - Share tools and knowledge, which human rights defenders can use to ensure their voice is central in international human rights decision-making.
  - Develop advocacy strategies for specific issues, and to ensure follow-up and action on the Human Rights Council's resolutions;
  - Increase human rights defenders' understanding of the short, mid and longer-term opportunities provided by human rights mechanisms in Geneva.
  - Explore and compare the benefits of engagement with the Human Rights Council, the special procedures, the OHCHR, the UPR and treaty bodies, and examine how advocates can use them to bolster their work at the national level.
  - Develop strategies and lobbying techniques to increase the potential of human rights defenders' national and regional advocacy work.
- b) Positively influence the substantive outcomes of international human rights mechanisms, including Human Rights Council resolutions and the work of UN thematic and country specific human rights experts (the special procedures).
- c) Creation of a peer group of human rights defenders working on diverse range of issues, including the identification of best practice in advocating for human rights change, and exchange of lessons and experiences in conducting international advocacy.

### 3) Participants profile

For the June 2014 training course, ISHR will consider applicants working on at least one of the focus topics of the 26<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council highlighted above, or one of ISHR's strategic priorities. Final decisions regarding participants will be based upon the following criteria:

- Match between applicants' area of work and expertise with ISHR strategic framework priorities and opportunities provided by a the 26<sup>th</sup> Human Rights Council;
- Applicants' knowledge of human rights and their experience and willingness to engage with the UN human rights system and integrate it effectively into domestic level advocacy, as well as their experience of carrying out advocacy at the national and/or regional level;
- Applicants' function related to advocacy within their organisation;
- Applicants' willingness to contribute to peer education in a diverse group of participants;
- Applicants' demonstrated commitment to principles of human rights, including the principles of universality and non-discrimination;
- Communication, language and organisational skills.

**The predominant course language is English.**

In identifying and selecting participants, ISHR works closely with leading human rights organisations in each of the specific respective focus areas.

### 4) Course requirements

Prior to attending the training and advocacy mission in Geneva, participants are expected to

- Complete a short online learning component consisting of guided reading in preparation of the course;
- Develop and submit a set of personal advocacy objectives based on existing organisational priorities.

### 5) Application process

Each applicant must submit:

- A recent CV/resume (max 2 pages);
- A completed application form available at <http://bit.ly/1eRhhDG>;

- 2 letters of recommendation, including one from the sending organisation (to be emailed according to information in the application form).

## **6) Cost and timeline**

The tuition fee is 2500 CHF, and average cost of travel, accommodation and per-diem is approximately 4000 CHF for the two-week period. Participants who are unable to meet those costs are invited to request a full or partial scholarship.

ISHR is seeking additional funding to may be in a position to provide a number of full and partial scholarships. Scholarships will be attributed at ISHR's discretion.

*We therefore encourage all participants to seek other sources of funding, as the availability of own funds may be one of the determining factors in deciding on the number and composition of the group of participants.*

Applications will be considered on a rolling basis starting immediately. Participants will be advised by early April on whether or not they have been selected, and the availability of full/partial scholarships.

Please direct any questions relating to the programme or on the application process to [hrdap2014@ishr.ch](mailto:hrdap2014@ishr.ch).