



38th Regular Session of the UN Human Rights Council

Item 2 and 10: General debate

Oral Statement Delivered by R. Iniyan Ilango

**on behalf of Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA),
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Rights House Foundation, Human Rights Watch, International Commission of Jurists, International
Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU), and International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)**

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Thank you, Mr. President. While we appreciate the importance of technical cooperation, we wish to stress that a debate on technical cooperation will be incomplete if it does not address non-cooperation and country situations that have worsened despite technical cooperation. We are alarmed by efforts to restrict discussion on such situations by some states under Agenda Item 10, including for instance by (the Bolivarian Republic of) Venezuela earlier today.

While we recognise that all delegations including NGOs are required to speak on the topic under discussion, we are deeply concerned when NGOs making relevant statements are interrupted and not given a chance to explain the relevance of their statement, and in some cases are even prevented from finishing the statement. This has happened even when an NGO is speaking specifically on concerns addressed by UN reports listed for discussion in the relevant debate. Statements on Cambodia in the March session of the Council is a recent example.

The concept of international cooperation should never be invoked to shut down any criticism of human rights situations in individual countries. Cooperation cannot succeed without accountability. To be effective, debates on technical assistance and capacity building must be open to frank discussion of the true gravity, character and extent of on-going violations in the country in question, as well as the impact or lack of impact of any assistance already undertaken.

Thank You