

## [#UNGA71 | ISHR side events](#)

01.11.2016

***The 71st session of the UN General Assembly is keeping our New York office busy - last week ISHR hosted three side events.***



Monday's side event, entitled '[Empower environmental defenders, safeguard our future](#),' followed [last month's release of a report](#) by UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, Michel Forst, highlighting the situation of environmental human rights defenders, who are facing intensifying violence.

With the help of our co-sponsors, including the Permanent Missions of Botswana and Norway, ISHR brought together a range of speakers to discuss the Special Rapporteur's recommendations intended to reverse this worrying trend and to empower and protect environmental defenders. Panelists included Mr Donald Hernández of the Honduran Centre for the Promotion of Community Development (CEHPRODEC), who delivered a harrowing testimony about the killings of environmental defenders in Honduras, and ISHR's very own Michael Ineichen, who explained how businesses are coming to understand that engaging and protecting environmental defenders can benefit them too.

You can watch [@ISHR](#)'s event with [@ForstMichel](#) re the need to better protect environmental defenders here on UNTV <https://t.co/VHNuMAUWbw>

— Tom Clarke (@TomHRLC) [November 2, 2016](#)

Special Rapporteur Michel Forst also joined us on Tuesday for an informal breakfast discussion on the merits of a 'Model Law for the Recognition and Protection of Human Rights Defenders,' a publication ISHR launched earlier this year to serve as a comprehensive resource for States on how to implement the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders at the national level. During the event, which was co-hosted by the Permanent Mission of Guatemala, Mr Forst shared with participating Member States why he believed this initiative was important, and why it had received his endorsement.

Claudia Samayoa, the founder and coordinator of UDEFEGUA (Human Rights Defenders Protection Unit in Guatemala), spoke of the Model Law's potential nationally. States then discussed their own protection policies and reflected upon how the Model Law might serve as a tool in reviewing the policies' effectiveness.

Wednesday's side [event](#), which we co-hosted with the Permanent Missions of Costa Rica, Finland, Paraguay, and Switzerland as well as Amnesty International, explored the tools to encourage engagement and compliance with human rights treaty body recommendations on the ground.

Panelists, who included Felice Gaer of the Committee Against Torture, Jamil Dakwar of American Civil

Liberties Union, and Bruce Porter of the Canadian Social Rights Advocacy Centre and Ontario Human Rights Commission, agreed that States must do more than just report, identifying specific follow-up mechanisms that authorities on all levels need to engage with. Speakers also stressed the importance of involving civil society in the process. Elisabeth da Costa introduced the new OHCHR guide to effective States engagement with international human rights mechanisms, '[National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow-up](#),' noting that both political will and adequate resourcing are essential. The discussion encouraged participation from several State delegations, such as Belgium, Georgia, or Palestine, who shared their experiences of national follow up mechanisms and processes.

## Twitter highlights of the events

Pleased to be hosting with [#Botswana](#) mission, event to empower [#EnviroHRDs](#). They are entitled to same [#humanrights](#) as everyone else. [pic.twitter.com/fljxSNr8hq](https://pic.twitter.com/fljxSNr8hq)

— May-Elin Stener (@MayElinStener) [October 24, 2016](#)

[.@ForstMichel](#) wants to look at role of international financial institutions in protecting/respecting [#EnviroHRDs](#)

— ISHR (@ISHRglobal) [October 24, 2016](#)

Thanks to Amnesty & Int'l Service & 3 States for this thoughtful discussion of [#humanrights](#) treaty implementation [#UNTBImpact](#) [#UNGA](#) [#R2P](#) <https://t.co/kHsez0nQjI>

— Jacob Blaustein Inst (@JBI\_HumanRights) [October 27, 2016](#)

[#Paraguay](#) comparte experiencia SIMORE en las NN. UU. [#UNTBImpact](#) [@mreparaguay](#) [@MRE\\_DDHH](#) [@EvenegaLuis](#) [@PrensaMRE](#) [pic.twitter.com/8HfCICGDOD](https://pic.twitter.com/8HfCICGDOD)

— @ParaguayONUNY (@paraguayonuny) [October 26, 2016](#)

active participation of rights holders is critical to TB process & empowering to individuals: Bruce Porter [#UNTBImpact](#)

— ISHR (@ISHRglobal) [October 26, 2016](#)

CH shares coordination challenges of a federal State to compile State party reports at event on [#HumanRights](#) treaty bodies [#UNTBImpact](#) [#UNGA](#) [pic.twitter.com/AzUEz49ZyJ](https://pic.twitter.com/AzUEz49ZyJ)

— SwitzerlandUN (@swiss\_un) [October 26, 2016](#)