

Human Rights Council 34th session

Speaker: Michael Ineichen - Check against delivery

ITEM 3 – INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE W/ SR ON HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Signor Presidente, Messieurs les Rapporteurs,

ISHR welcomes your reports. We share your concern, Mr Forst, about the widespread and systematic crackdown on human rights defenders in many parts of the world, which threatens democracy and development.

We call on States with a genuine commitment to human rights, sustainable development and the rule of law to welcome the report and strongly support the renewal of your mandate.

You have rightly identified the particular risk faced by defenders working in the field of business and human rights, particularly those working on issues of conservation and on land and environment rights. The global nature of this trend is illustrated by the breadth of cases addressed in your communications:

For example, the cases in the communications report presented to this session ranges from the excessive use of force by law enforcement and private security companies in the context of protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline in the United States, to the abusive court cases and sentencing of Andy Hall in Thailand.

Your proposed report on the role of business in both attacking – but also potentially helping to protect – human rights defenders, is timely. **Can you share examples of the positive role business may have played in this regard, and efforts of States to incentivise such a role?**

Since the last mandate renewal, several States have adopted or moved towards specific national laws or policies to protect defenders, including Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, and Honduras. Further, in the interactive dialogue yesterday, many have welcomed your promise of further technical assistance to such national protection mechanisms. In that regard, we noted the proposed creation of a 'network of countries that have taken measures towards protecting human rights defenders'.¹ We would welcome the opportunity to work with you and supportive States to establish a Global Network of National Human Rights Defender Focal Points. They could promote implementation of the Declaration and other relevant standards at the national level and could promote cooperation and share lessons learned through the Global Network.

We also welcome your commitment to a strengthened focus on implementation and look forward to working with you to develop tools and a methodology to measure and monitor implementation of human rights defender-related resolutions and recommendations at the national level.

Finally, you've foreshadowed an interest in the situation of the defenders of the rights of migrants and refugees. We and our partners have noted worsening legal and other restrictions on these actors, including in Europe, the United States and Australia, and therefore welcome this attention. **How do you see a defenders' angle contributing to ongoing discussions on migrants' rights**, both within the Special Procedures and throughout the UN system?

Thank you.

¹ Para 47 of <http://undocs.org/A/HRC/34/52>.