

United Nations Human Rights Council: 23rd Session
Joint Oral statement Item 6 – General Debate
10 June 2013, UPR Info

Thank you.

The following statement is made on behalf of 77 NGOs.

Mr. President,

Civil society is deeply concerned by the current attacks on the format of the Working Group report. In this regard, we note with satisfaction the comments made by States earlier this morning on this issue. This document, the Working Group report, bears great importance as it represents the official record of the review process in Geneva on which implementation of recommendations will be based. We therefore deeply regret that during the UPR 16th session two recommendations were taken out of the body of a draft report and added as footnotes because they were considered as "not relevant" by the State under review. This was an action never seen before in the UPR and runs the risk of setting a dangerous precedent.

The format of the Report of the Working Group should be the same for all countries in order to guarantee equal treatment. According to Resolution 5/1, the Report is a "summary of the proceedings" and should be drafted in an objective manner. Its content should reflect the discussion held in the room and should not be subjected to negotiations by countries, as stated in Presidential statement A/HRC/PRST/8/1 from 9 April 2008.

Both accepted and noted recommendations should be included in the report, irrespective of the country making them and the issue raised. All States have the right to suggest any recommendation. Similarly, any State under Review is entitled not to accept recommendations. However, under no circumstances should States have the possibility to remove recommendations from the list, not even on the grounds that recommendations are considered as being "not relevant".

Comments from States under Review on the reasons why they do not accept recommendations should be incorporated in the addendum. The chapeau or headers of the categories of recommendations in Section two of the Working Group report should be streamlined and clearly defined as: recommendations which enjoy the support, recommendations which are noted and recommendations pending until the HRC adoption.

We therefore call on you, Mr. President, to issue a Presidential statement to immediately end any attempts to tamper with the Working Group Report and clarify its format as soon as possible.

Thank you.

List of signatories:

Accion Solidaria on HIV/Aids
AFD International
All India Christian Council
Anti-Slavery International
Ariel Foundation International
Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)
Association pour l'Intégration et le Développement Durable au Burundi-AIDB
Bahá'í International Community
Bahrain Centre for Human Rights
Belarus Helsinki Committee
Canadian HIV /AIDS Legal Network
Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies
Centre for Civil Liberties, Ukraine
Child Rights Connect (formerly the NGO Group for the CRC)
Child Rights International Network (CRIN)
CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation
CIVILIS Human Rights
COC Netherlands
CODAP
Colombian Commission of Jurists
Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative
Conectas Direitos Humanos
Defence for Children International
DIVERLEX Diversidad e Igualdad a Través de la Ley (Acting World Trans Secretary of ILGA)
EACH European Association for Children in Hospital
East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project
Edmund Rice International
Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights
FIACAT
FIDH - Fédération internationale pour les droits de l'homme
Fondation Alkarama
Franciscans International
Geneva for Human Rights
Georgian Young Lawyers Association
German Forum Human Rights
Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children
Helsinki Citizens' Assembly – Vanadzor, Armenia
Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina
Human Rights House Foundation
Human Rights House Sarajevo
Human Rights Network Uganda (HURINET-U)
IFOR

IIMA (Istituto Internazionale Maria Ausiliatrice)
International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA)
Institute for Reporter's Freedom and Safety
Institute for Social Justice - Pakistan
International Commission of Jurists
International Council of Women
International Partnership for Human Rights
International Platform against Impunity
International Service for Human Rights
Irish Council for Civil Liberties
Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights
KISA – Action for Equality, Support, Antiracism
Marist International Solidarity Foundation (FMSI)
Norwegian Helsinki Committee
Open Society Justice Initiative, part of the Open Society Institute
PEN International
Promo LEX Association, Moldova
Reporters Without Borders
Save the Children
Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights
Sexual Rights Initiative
Shirkat Gah - Women's Resource Centre Pakistan
Sinergia, Venezuelan Association of Civil Society Organizations
Stefanus Alliance
Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights)
UNITED for Intercultural Action, Netherlands
UPR Info
VIDES International
West Africa Human Rights Defenders Network
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
World Association for the School as an Instrument of peace
World Evangelical Alliance (WEA)
World Organisation Against Torture
World Vision International
World YWCA