

Item 6

General debate

Geneva for Human Rights

Thank you, Madam President.

This statement is made on behalf of Geneva for Human Rights and is supported by UPR Info.

Madam President,

From the 22nd of May to the 4th of June the Working Group of the UPR held its 13th session. This session bore great importance as it laid down the foundations for the second cycle.

As the High Commissioner stated on numerous occasions, the UPR process is not a “PR exercise”. Civil society and other actors engaging in the process want to see changes on the ground. To achieve this, it is important to look into the actions taken by governments to implement the recommendations they received in 2008. The second cycle of the UPR is the opportunity for States under Review to provide information on implementation, but it is also the opportunity for “recommending States” to assess whether those recommendations were implemented or not and if they require additional measures. In this regard, session 13 failed to address the 2008 recommendations in a satisfactory manner. While few recommending States have welcomed progress made, most did not look into the recommendations they had made at the first session. Recommending States have two ways to follow-up the recommendations they made. They can either make them again if no action was taken or they can ask the countries under review to take additional measures if the actions taken were not satisfactory. Only 16% of 2008 recommendations were followed-up by similar or additional recommendations at the 13th session. Should we then assume that 84% of the 2008 recommendations were fully implemented? This seems doubtful knowing that the average percentage of recommendations fully implemented at the mid-term is usually around 10%.

Madam President, consistent follow-up is the only way to make the UPR meaningful. Recommending States have a duty to look into the recommendations they made at the first cycle and inquire into their implementation. Lack of follow-up would result in lack of accountability and would transform the UPR into a rhetoric exercise where States come to Geneva every 5 years to simply discuss human rights and receive only new recommendations without any reference to previous reviews.

I thank you.