

Human Rights Council 28th session

ITEM 3 – INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE WITH SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS, MICHEL FORST

10 March 2015 – check against delivery – Michael Ineichen

Mr President, Mr Special Rapporteur,

ISHR welcomes the report of the Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders, and congratulate you for the extensive consultations with human rights defenders you've held.

We share your concern about increasing legislative restrictions on of human rights defenders, which we have observed in all regions of the world. Of particular concern in this regard are counter-terrorism measures used to criminalise defenders.

We wish to address four brief questions to you.

First, while we welcome the move by Brazil, Colombia, Cote d'Ivoire and Mexico to legislate towards a more enabling environment for defenders, implementation remains patchy. *What is your view on how those governments can go beyond lipservice and step up their efforts at implementing the Declaration on human rights defenders?*

Second, we appreciate your increasing focus on defenders seeking accountability and remedies for business related human rights abuses. *How do you see the role of non-state actors, including corporations, in contributing to the recognition and protection of defenders?*

Third we also welcome your suggestions of exploring new working methods and activities that will enhance the capacity of your mandate to act as an effective protection tool for human rights defenders where national protection measures fail or are inexistent. *For instance, in your communications report to the current session, 39 States from all regions are listed as not even responding to your communications. What further steps are you envisaging to take to increase the political cost of attacking and threatening human rights defenders?*

Finally, Mr Special Rapporteur, we are gravely concerned about the recent and ongoing detention of prominent women's rights activists in China, including Li Tingting, Wu Rongrong, Zheng Churan, Wang Man and Wei Tingting. *What does your mandate intend to do to ensure the swift release of these and other activists?*

Thank you.