

**Permanent Mission of India**  
**Geneva**

**Agenda Item3 : Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on**  
**Human Rights Defenders Mrs. Margaret Sekaggya**

**Intervention by India**

**Mr. President ,**

We thank the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders Madam Sekaggya for her report on the work of her mandate since 2008. We acknowledge with appreciation the efforts put forward by the Special Rapporteur in discharging her mandate effectively. We take note of the elements proposed by her which are necessary for defenders to be able to operate in a safe and enabling environment.

The SR underscored the importance of communications by way of urgent appeals as one of the tools that facilitated her to engage in dialogue with the Member States and also an effective method in raising awareness and visibility about the challenges and risks the defenders face. We commend the SR for bringing to the attention of Member States various problems faced by human rights defenders in their respective countries in a timely manner.

**Mr. President,**

We concur with SR's recommendation that conducive national legal, administrative and institutional frameworks, access to justice and an end to impunity for violations against defenders, a strong and independent national human rights institution, are some of the elements that are crucial in building an enabling environment to guarantee protection of human rights of all in particular the human rights defenders.

It is our considered view that all law-abiding citizens are human rights defenders and all citizens of India are equal before law and enjoy equal protection of law as guaranteed in our Constitution. As a State Party to principal Covenants on Human Rights, and of particularly all

other major human rights instruments, India is committed to promotion and protection of human rights of its citizens. In that perspective, we agree with the SR's observations that human rights defenders play a key role in safeguarding democracy and ensuring that it remains open, pluralistic and participatory and in line with the principles of rule of law and good governance.

We also concur with the emphasis accorded by SR to human rights education and training to law enforcement authorities for effective implementation of the laws, thus paving the way for effective protection of human rights defenders.

We agree with SR's assessment that only a strong independent legal and institutional frame can guarantee effective realisation of the rights enshrined in the national legislative framework.

In this regard, we are inspired and continue to be guided by the exemplary and impartial role of the Indian judiciary that has played a pivotal role in protecting the human rights defenders in India. Human rights courts have been especially set up for speedy trial of cases pertaining to human rights violations.

We share the concerns expressed by the SR about violence against the defenders, particularly the women defenders, and believe that immediate investigations should be held to ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice.

**Mr. President,**

There are reports of human rights defenders in some instance being used by motivated groups and individuals for selective politicized ends, which can cause disrepute to the HR defenders. There are also growing reports about such groups are also presenting individuals harbouring strong ideological extremism as human rights defenders. We would like to hear from the Special Rapporteur whether there is any need to come up with guidelines for human rights defenders, which they can benefit from while embarking on a human rights cause.