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## **Oral Statement**

### **Item 6:**

Universal Periodic Review - General Debate  
UN Human Rights Council  
51st session  
12 September – 7 October 2022

Mr President

After three cycles, the Universal Periodic Review is hugely valued by both States and civil society. It has contributed to tangible human rights progress, such as the abolition of the death penalty in Sierra Leone and Papua New Guinea, and alternatives to military service for conscientious objectors in the Republic of Korea.

Perspectives of civil society, in all its dimensions, on the formulation of implementation plans, as well as their activities in monitoring and reporting, play an essential role in the achievement of real progress on the ground. We urge states to develop and improve their national systems for monitoring and follow up, and to make them as transparent as possible, including by submitting mid-term assessments to the Council.

Mr President,

Our experience has shown us the importance of continuous capacity building about UPR engagement for civil society actors, especially young people who are learning about it for the first time. In this regard, we draw attention to our new guidance, developed jointly with UNESCO, to aid civil society in their UPR engagement, with a view to encouraging greater focus on freedom of expression, which is not only a fundamental right in itself, but also an enabling right for advocacy and campaigning on other rights. Freedom of expression is essential for effective civil society engagement with the UPR.

Mr President,

We call for the meaningful engagement of states in the 4<sup>th</sup> cycle, whether reviewing or under review, and for additional bilateral and multilateral support to states for the implementation of recommendations.

Thank you