



Statement by
the Republic of Slovenia
at the
40th Session of the UN Human Rights Council
**Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur
on human rights defenders**

Geneva, 28 February 2019

Mr President,

We thank the Special Rapporteurs for their presentation today. We welcome the theme of the report of the Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders reflecting the meaningful role of women human rights defenders as well as the obstacles and risks they are exposed to on a daily basis.

One cannot ignore significant challenges that specific groups of women human rights defenders are facing in many regions of the world. As agents of change challenging traditional and gender stereotyped roles in society they are often perceived negatively. It is clear that they are more at risks of suffering from certain forms of discrimination, threats, mistreatments, criminalization and consequently even gender-based violence. Moreover, in today's world many of them are often subjected to online harassment and consequently unable to defend their reputation and privacy from libel and hate speech. Their family members equally suffer consequences by being stigmatized.

Mr. Special Rapporteur,

We strongly believe that the main responsibility to protect human rights defenders, to develop specific mechanisms/measures and to prevent ongoing impunity for alleged human rights violations lies with state institutions. Should national legislation be ignored by the state authorities, what international standards apply in situations like that? What international legal framework can protect women human rights defenders from possible mistreatments, violence, arrests and even criminalization by both state and non-state actors?

Finally, in your report, you also refer to the situation of specific groups of women human rights defenders. Could you elaborate more on the idea of protection mechanisms for women human rights defenders working in different areas and contexts? Can you share with us best practices?

Thank you.