



Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative



Habitat
International
Coalition

**17th Regular Session of the UN Human Rights Council
Item 6: Universal Periodic Review (UPR) - General Debate**

**Oral Statement Delivered by Ms. Pooja Patel on Behalf of
Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA), Asian Centre for Human Rights,
Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative and Habitat International Coalition**

Thursday, 9 June 2011

Thank you, Mr. President. FORUM-ASIA makes this statement jointly with the Asian Centre for Human Rights, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative and Habitat International Coalition, members of the Working Group on Human Rights in India and the UN (WGHR)¹.

Mr. President, we would like to update the Council on preparations taking place in India in light of the 2nd cycle of the UPR due in June 2012. In April this year, a high-level national workshop was held in New Delhi, in which the government, the National Human Rights Commission, NGOs and independent experts for the first time collectively discussed the implementation of the 18 recommendations made to India during its first review in 2008 as well as preparation for its second review next year.

We regret that for India's first UPR in 2008, the government did not adequately engage with civil society. Consultation was minimal, hurriedly organised and not participatory.² Consequently, we are of the view that India's national report suffered in its substance and relevance.

In this context, we welcome the commitment expressed by the Ministry of External Affairs at the aforementioned workshop to make the upcoming UPR process wide-ranging and genuinely inclusive by engaging with all relevant stakeholders throughout the country, including in the preparation of the national report. Additionally, we appreciate the Ministry's commitment to consider posting the draft national report on its website and invite comments from stakeholders. These initiatives on the part of the government would enable a more comprehensive review of India's human rights situation. In turn, WGHR and other national stakeholders are committed and look forward to meaningful and constructive dialogue with the government leading up to India's second review.

Mr. President, we urge the government to ensure that recommendations from the first review are effectively implemented. WGHR has conducted a mid-term assessment of the status of implementation of the UPR recommendations to India. While some progress has been made, much more remains to be done at the national policy and legislative levels. As such, we draw the attention of the Council to our written statement submitted to this 17th regular session regarding the implementing status of some of India's key UPR recommendations (A/HRC/17/NGO/50).

Finally, Mr. President, FORUM-ASIA and WGHR emphasize that the Indian government must move on from engaging merely in descriptions of formal legal compliance with international human rights instruments, and view the UPR as a national process. We further urge the government to regard the upcoming second review as an opportunity to constructively address real challenges and obstacles on the ground to meet the needs of the victims of human rights violations. Thank you, Mr. President.

1 WGHR is a national coalition of 14 organizations and independent experts from India, <http://www.wghr.org>

2 People's Forum for the UPR, Press Release, "India UPR Review a Charade: Civil Society Coalition Deplores Half-Truths and Lies by Indian Government", 11 April 2008