

Human Rights Defenders Advocacy Programme (HRDAP)

Geneva – 10 to 24 June 2015

1) Programme description

Human rights defenders play a vital role in pushing for sustainable human rights improvements. A free and vibrant civil society is essential to assist States to respect, protect and fulfil all human rights for all and to hold them to account when they fail to do so.

ISHR conducts regular training courses on the use of the main human rights mechanisms, including the Human Rights Council, the special procedures, the UN treaty bodies and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). The **Human Rights Defenders Advocacy Program, Geneva, (HRDAP)** equips human rights defenders with the knowledge and skills to integrate the system into their existing work at the national level in a strategic manner. The programme also provides an opportunity for participants to engage directly in lobbying and advocacy activities at the UN with the aim to effect change on the ground back home.

This program consists of the following elements:

- a) A short online learning component, which takes place prior to face-to-face training sessions, and supports participants in consolidating existing knowledge and developing advocacy objectives;
- b) Intensive training in Geneva, with the principal course hosted in June to coincide with the 29th session of the Human Rights Council and the 22nd Annual Meeting of UN Special Procedures, focusing on ways to use international human rights mechanisms effectively and to influence outcomes;
- c) Specific advocacy at Human Rights Council sessions and other relevant meetings, with regular feedback and peer education to learn from the experiences, including expert inputs from leading human rights advocates

This programme is directed at experienced human rights defenders in Non-Governmental Organisations or National Human Rights Institutions, who have existing advocacy experience at the national level and some prior knowledge of the international human rights system.

Key advocacy opportunities expected for the 29th session of the Human Rights Council (June 2015) include¹:

- Report of the Working Group on business and human rights, providing a key opportunity to engage with the members of the Working Group, as well as the report of the Forum on [Business and Human Rights](#). With the first session of the IGWG on the elaboration of an international treaty on business and human rights commencing after the Council, the session will also be a key forum in the lead up to the IGWG.
- Reports by key special procedures mandates (UN experts) in the area of human rights defenders, including freedom of expression (on encryption technology), freedom of peaceful assembly and association (on [extractive industries and freedom of assembly](#)).
- Discussion of human rights situations and reports by experts on Eritrea, Cote d'Ivoire, and Belarus, as well as an expected renewal of these mandates.
- Annual debate on women's rights, as well as potential resolutions in this area.
- Potential resolution on the issue of corruption and human rights.

¹ Please note that the Council's calendar and content is subject to change. An indicative calendar of the Council's activities can be found [here](#).

2) Objectives

The objectives of the course fall into the following three broad categories:

- a) Supporting human rights defenders:
 - Develop human rights defenders' advocacy skills and expertise.
 - Enhance the ability of human rights defenders to engage strategically with the Human Rights Council, as well as to develop diplomatic and civil society networks;
 - Improve the quality of NGO participation in the Human Rights Council, with a view to exert a greater influence on human rights foreign policy;
 - Share tools and knowledge, which human rights defenders can use to ensure their voice is central in international human rights decision-making.
 - Develop advocacy strategies for specific issues, and to ensure follow-up and action on the Human Rights Council's resolutions;
 - Increase human rights defenders' understanding of the short, mid and longer-term opportunities provided by human rights mechanisms in Geneva.
 - Explore and compare the benefits of engagement with the Human Rights Council, the special procedures, the OHCHR, the UPR and treaty bodies, and examine how advocates can use them to bolster their work at the national level.
 - Develop strategies and lobbying techniques to increase the potential of human rights defenders' national and regional advocacy work.
- b) Influencing the substantive outcomes of international human rights mechanisms in a positive manner, including Human Rights Council resolutions and the work of UN thematic and country specific human rights experts (the special procedures).
- c) Creating a peer group of human rights defenders working on a diverse range of issues, identifying best practice in advocating for human rights change, and exchanging lessons and experiences in conducting international advocacy.

3) Participants profile

For the June 2015 training course, ISHR will consider applicants working on at least one of the focus topics of the 29th session of the Human Rights Council highlighted above and/or one of ISHR's strategic priorities.² Final decisions regarding participants will be based upon the following criteria:

- Match between applicants' area of work and expertise with ISHR's strategic framework priorities and the opportunities provided by a the 29th Human Rights Council;
- Applicants' knowledge of human rights and their experience and willingness to engage with the UN human rights system and integrate it effectively into domestic level advocacy, as well as their experience of carrying out advocacy at the national and/or regional level;
- Applicants' advocacy responsibilities and role within their organisation;
- Applicants' willingness to contribute to peer education in a diverse group of participants;
- Applicants' demonstrated commitment to the principles of human rights, including the principles of universality and non-discrimination;
- Communication, language and organisational skills.

The course will be carried out in English. ISHR cannot provide translation.

In identifying and selecting participants, ISHR will work closely with leading human rights organisations in each of the specific respective focus areas and across the world.

² Women's rights, corporate accountability, LGBTI rights, transitions to democracy.

4) Course requirements

Prior to attending the training and advocacy programme in Geneva, participants are expected to

- Complete a short online learning component consisting of guided reading in preparation of the course;
- Develop and submit a set of personal advocacy objectives based on existing organisational priorities.

5) Application process

Each applicant must submit:

- A recent CV/resume (max 2 pages);
- A completed application form available at <http://goo.gl/forms/gblY5gOl2H>;
- 2 letters of recommendation, including one from their organisation (to be emailed according to information in the application form).

6) Cost and timeline

The tuition fee is 2500 Swiss Francs (CHF), and the average cost of travel, accommodation and per-diem is approximately 4000 CHF for the two-week period. Participants who are unable to meet those costs are invited to request a full or partial scholarship.

Full scholarships cover full costs of 6500 CHF, whilst partial scholarships cover either the 2500 CHF tuition fee or part of the participants' accommodation, food or travel costs.

ISHR is currently seeking additional funding and may be in a position to provide a number of full and partial scholarships. Scholarships will be attributed at ISHR's discretion.

We therefore encourage all participants to seek other sources of funding, as the ability of applicants to either fully or partially pay the aforementioned costs may be one of the determining factors in deciding on the number and composition of the group of participants.

Applications will be considered on a rolling basis starting immediately. Participants will be advised by mid April on whether or not they have been selected, and the availability of full/partial scholarships.

Please direct any questions relating to the program or on the application process to hrdap2015@ishr.ch. Applications for HRDAP 2015 will be accepted until Monday April 6, 2015.