



**29<sup>th</sup> session of the  
Human Rights Council**

**Interactive Dialogue on Special Rapporteur on Right to Freedom of Expression  
And Special Rapporteur on Peaceful Assembly & Association  
17 June 2015  
Delivered by Juan G.Auz**

Thank you Mr. President. CIVICUS warmly welcomes the timely reports of both Special Rapporteurs. We commend the Special Rapporteurs for supporting an inclusive consultative process with a wide range of civil society actors to address the pressing concerns raised in their reports.

Mr Kiai's report on assembly and association rights in the context of natural resource exploitation represents an important opportunity to reiterate the imperative need to ensure robust civil society participation across various multilateral development initiatives including the creation of the Sustainable Development Goals and a stronger normative framework on business and human rights.

However, we remain deeply concerned by the serious violations of the fundamental rights committed by state and non-state actors to subvert greater accountability and transparency in the extractive industries sector. Legislative and other extra-judicial limitations on the work of civil society and human rights defenders gravely undermine the prospect of establishing and maintaining pluralistic and sustainable development processes.

Mr. President, in my country Ecuador, despite laudable constitutional protections, civil society continues to be subjected to a wide range of unwarranted legal restrictions and persecution. I was previously the Executive Director of Fundación Pachamama, an NGO that has defended the rights of indigenous peoples for over fifteen years. However, in 2013 the Ecuadorian Government under an Executive Decree arbitrarily dissolved my organization for supporting indigenous movements to defend their land.

Moreover, of critical concern are the growing levels of violence committed against land, indigenous and environmental activists in Ecuador. Worryingly, perpetrators of such acts have rarely been apprehended.

We therefore, strongly encourage all-relevant stakeholders, governments and corporations, including in Ecuador, to take concerted action to ensure the effective realization of the recommendations set forth in Mr Kiai's report.

Thank you