**“Civil Society Space Report-Input”**

Civil society plays an important role both in the promotion and protection of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law, and in providing expertise and advocacy within the UN system.  It acknowledges that governments are more responsive and effective when citizens are free to organize and work together across borders.  We recognize the importance of states commitments to creating an enabling environment for civil society and encourage all states to work together to ensure free flow of information, long term support and resource, space for dialogue and collaboration.

Civil Society being an indispensable part of the United Nations, its actors must be able to do their work freely, independently, safe from fear, retaliation or intimidation. In order to operate effectively, civil society must have the space to speak out, to educate, to mobilise and to ensure that everyone can participate in the democratic processes of their country. The presence of a vibrant, strong and free civil society is essential in order to guarantee sustainable development and to provide incentives for social and democratic change. Civil society organisations and human rights defenders all over the world face considerable risks and restrictions, particularly when they promote democracy, human rights and social justice. Governments adopt policies, institute funding modalities and enact legislation that in many cases is not conducive to forwarding the interests of civil society organisations. There are even cases where civil society activists have been criminalised for their advocacy roles in sensitive areas, such as extractives, natural resources and human rights.

Civil society organizations are increasingly carried out in a climate of fear where people are subjected to harassment, censorship and inequitable legislation. Civil society played a significant role in helping people develop advocacy skills, shaping strategies, mobilizing claims, acting as a critical watchdog and informing people of their rights and duties. It is not enough for civil society to be left alone in securing and strengthening an enabling environment. A wide range of stakeholders, including the international community and donor countries, are required to act to ensure the role of civil society organisations as actors guaranteed and protected, and respect for human rights, democracy and secured sustainable development.

It is of utmost importance that all laws and regulations restricting civil society activity are amended to ensure the independence, participation and freedoms to which civil society actors are entitled and at the same time Govt. also involve in the design and implementation of development plans. Efforts should be directed at ensuring that indigenous groups, women’s organisations and other marginalised and disadvantaged groups are able to participate meaningfully in the decision-making processes. In accordance with the knowledge concern I can strongly urge that sustainable development and democracy cannot be achieved in the absence of a robust and independent civil society or respect for human rights and human dignity.

It has long been acknowledged that a strong and vibrant civil society is a key component of

sustainable and legitimate development. Without it, development plans have a rare chance to

achieve their objectives and people are more likely to suffer through inequitable growth and

policies that fail to address their needs. The Right to development and fundamental freedom

are interdependent and that if one right is curtailed, it has a negative impact on the others.

Civil Society Actors who voluntarily engage in forms of public participation and action around shared interests, purposes or values that are compatible with the goals of the UN , the maintenance of peace and security, the realization of development, and the promotion and respect of human rights. The UN’s work to improve our lives is rooted in respect for human rights, promote awareness of rights, assist communities in articulating concerns, shape strategies, influence policy and laws, and press for accountability. It collects and channel views of communities so that decision-making on public policies can be informed more fully. An active, pluralistic civil society is an essential ingredient of a vibrant democratic political system. Civil Society Organizations are the primary vehicles through which people organize themselves to promote shared objectives and values and to convey their interests. They serve as an essential conduit and mediator between individuals and their governments, and a vehicle through which citizens can hold their leaders to account and find a voice in the decisions that affect their lives. It also serves as an important service delivery mechanism, and often provides assistance to the most vulnerable and marginalized in society.

Despite the critical role it has to play, a number of states are introducing restrictive laws that undermine civil society's independence, restrict its access to funding, limit its activities and ability to organize, or impose onerous registration and reporting requirements on the sector. Such restrictive laws reject the principles of civic participation and the belief that citizens should be able to have a say in the decisions that affect them. Owing to the nature of their work, democracy and human rights organizations are often the principal targets of such restrictive laws.

The Working Group on Enabling and Protecting Civil Society holds more or less regular, intended to be informal and goal-oriented in nature, with a view to producing concrete deliverables. Participating members are asked to designate one or two persons to act as a focal point to participate in group meetings discussions, etc.