



**29th Regular Session of the UN Human Rights Council
Item 10: Technical assistance and capacity building**

**Oral Statement Delivered by R. Iniyan Ilango
On behalf of the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)**

Wednesday, 01 July 2015

Thank you Mr. President, FORUM-ASIA recognises the valuable role played by OHCHR country offices and UN experts in providing technical assistance and advice to Asian countries.

We express concern over Cambodia's efforts to enact the draft Law on Associations and Non-Governmental Organizations (LANGO) and draft Law on Unions of Enterprises. The LANGO if enacted, will severely restrict the rights to freedoms of association and expression.¹ It, inter alia, requires all associations and NGOs to register under an onerous regulatory regime, while its ambiguous provisions can be interpreted broadly to deny registration, suspend or even dissolve organisations without procedural guidelines.² The UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Assembly and Association has expressed concern over the non-inclusion of civil society in the drafting of the law and has offered to provide expert advice to the government on the matter.³ We strongly urge the government to immediately withdraw the draft LANGO and the Trade Union Law and seek the advice and assistance of the Special Rapporteurs on Freedom of Assembly and Association, and on the situation of human rights in Cambodia, as well as the OHCHR country office in Cambodia when considering any legislation on civil society organisations. We further note with concern the recent postponement of the first country visit to Cambodia by the new Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia we hope that this visit can be undertaken at the earliest.

Mr. President, we remain concerned by the human rights situation in Burma/Myanmar which has particularly worsened in 2015. Students arrested during peaceful protests in March still remain incarcerated, while the health conditions of many detainees are deteriorating.⁴ At least 163 political prisoners remain in jail with 442 human rights defenders awaiting trial.⁵ Meanwhile, the Population Control Healthcare Bill, the first of a controversial package of four Bills aimed at protection of race and religion, was recently passed. A group of UN Special Rapporteurs have expressed concern that these laws will worsen discrimination against women and minorities, and called on the government to discard the said laws while reiterating their offer to provide technical advice and assistance on legislation affecting human rights.⁶ We strongly urge the government of Burma/Myanmar to heed this call at the earliest. Furthermore, we call upon the government to immediately accelerate all efforts towards the opening of an OHCHR country office with full mandate at the earliest, which will allow Burma/Myanmar to seek technical assistance in mitigating the dire human rights situation in the country. Thank you Mr. President

1 LICADHO, [New draft Law reaffirms culture of control](#), 11 June 2015

2 Joint open letter, [Cambodia: Withdraw draft Law on Associations and Non-Governmental Organizations](#), 22 June 2015.

3 OHCHR, [Cambodian civil society excluded from NGO bill drafting process, UN rights expert warns](#), 22 May 2015.

4 AAPP, [AAPP calls for adequate healthcare for political prisoners in Burma](#), 11 June 2015.

5 AAPP, [Chronology May 2015](#), 5 June 2015.

6 OHCHR, [Myanmar: UN rights experts express alarm at adoption of first of four 'protection of race and religion' bills](#), 27 May 2015.