

ORAL STATEMENT – FOR DELIVERY (1.5 MIN)

12 March 2024

**55<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council  
Item 3**

**Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders – “We are not just the future”: challenges faced by child and youth human rights defenders  
([A/HRC/55/50](#))**

Mr. President, Madam Special Rapporteur,

GANHRI welcomes the report of the Special Rapporteur on the challenges faced by child and youth human rights defenders. These young voices are leading the charge for a more peaceful, just and equitable world, demanding action on numerous contemporary human rights challenges.

We commend the incredible resilience and determination they show in their struggle to defend the rights of others, often at a great personal risk.

We share the Special Rapporteur’s concern about the legal and societal barriers preventing the participation of young people in civic space, and the various forms of reprisals they can face as a result of their human rights work. GANHRI welcomes the mention of the role that many national human rights institutions play in providing and facilitating access to complaint mechanisms to child and youth defenders in the report.

We urge all States to take concrete steps to address the specific challenges faced by child and youth human rights defenders, in line with the recommendations of the report. This includes the adoption of laws and policies addressing their specific protection needs and allowing the better integration of child and youth defenders in all decision-making processes.

GANHRI, its members and regional networks will continue to support the mandate of the Special Rapporteur, and work with all its partners to ensure that the rights of all those who defend our rights are effectively protected.

To this end, Madam Special Rapporteur, what are some the priority areas where NHRIs can most effectively focus their efforts to create a safe and enabling environment for child and youth human rights defenders?

I thank you, Mr. President.