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SPEAKER'S CONTRIBUTION

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Presentation summary

- After almost 20 years from the HRD Declaration we confront a tension regarding the broad definition of the subject of the protection the Declaration grants. Most governments are inclined to close the definition to exclude what is regarded 'problematic' HRD. Whilst the reality has showed us that a lax definition serves to ensure the protection of emerging HRD.
- In the other hand there has been a tendency from the part of civil society to avoid the conditionality embedded in the definition as well as in what is protected. This has created confusion between who is to be protected as well as against what. This poses different questions: Shall we ask the governments for special protection against common criminality? Shall we allow that activist that uses violent methods be awarded protection as HRD?
- As we have advanced in the understanding of protection, we have recognized that WHRD, communities formed by HRD and children HRD require different levels of protection. But as you specialize responses we have developed methodologies that are not adequate for state sponsored protection programs. We also have come to a point where both governments and HR organizations fell that they can't answer to the challenge.
- In that sense traditional civil society methods of protection have proven not only useless but also they have become dangerous for HRD and in some case even destructive. In order to maintain our responsibility to protect and do no harm, as civil society, we are confronted with issues regarding different dilemmas: individual HRD needs versus community/organization/people; security approaches versus holistic protection; visibility versus ethical responsibility, etc.
- In the other hand the inability/impossibility of many governments to go past police like protection to ensure the 'real' protection that will not only stop possible armed attacks but also stop defamation and criminalization has created a tension between what should be done by the government and what is in the realm of HRD protection mechanisms.
- ***At the end, should we re-define, re-conceptualize or just clarify what being a HRD entails and therefore limit the scope of who and how we protect both at the civil society level as well as in the government policies.***

Claudia V. Samayoa is also a member of the Convergencia por los Derechos Humanos (Human Rights Convergence) and of the Iniciativa Mesoamericana de Defensoras de Derechos Humanos (Mesoamerican Initiative of Women Human Rights Defenders).