



37th Session of the HRC
Geneva, 1 March 2018
Item 3 – Special Rapporteur Human Rights Defenders
Speaker: Joseph Vedova

Oral statement submitted by
IIMA – Istituto Internazionale Maria Ausiliatrice
And co-signed by
**VIDES International – International Volunteerism Organization for Women, Education,
and Development**

Thank you, Mister President.

IIMA and VIDES International commend the Special Rapporteur's attention to the unique challenges facing defenders of people on the move, particularly those defenders who are themselves on the move. Considering the almost quarter of a billion people in migration, we agree with the Special Rapporteur's assessment that these defenders are more susceptible in the pursuance of their work.¹

More specifically though, we note that many of these defenders are **youth** whose compounded status makes them uniquely vulnerable.

To achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals and realize the dream of a better tomorrow, we must promote youth today and foster socially aware young defenders. States must invest in education, stimulate youth participation in decision-making processes, and champion youth entrepreneurship.

In pursuance with Human Rights Council resolution 32/14 and 35/14, IIMA, together with VIDES International, calls upon States to:

- **Safeguard and promote the agency of all human rights defenders, particularly young defenders.**
- **Appoint a Special Rapporteur for youth issues.**
- **Strengthen youth participation in decision-making processes, stimulating youth critical thinking and leadership.**
- **Address youth rights systematically through the UPR.**

Thank you, Mister President.

¹ 71st General Assembly resolution 2016, New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants