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## INDIA | CSW welcomes “significant” engagement on religious freedom in UPR

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CSW welcomed the wide-ranging engagement between India and a large number of states during its Universal Periodic Review (UPR) at the UN today, which included a significant focus on religious freedom issues. The interactive discussion included repeated recommendations that India put in place effective measures to deal with communal violence, ensure access to justice for disenfranchised minority groups, and repeal anti-conversion laws. CSW had made recommendations on these issues, among others, in its [submission](#) into the UPR process in November 2011.

CSW's South Asia Team Leader, David Griffiths, said, "India indicated its readiness to engage with the full gamut of recommendations made during this UPR process, and we look forward to seeing the fruits of this across numerous human rights areas. In terms of freedom of religion or belief, the agenda of Indian civil society groups working on this issue was reflected in numerous statements. There were clear calls to deal effectively with communal violence, abolish poorly-framed anti-conversion laws, and end the specific religious discrimination that exists against Christian and Muslim Dalits. It was unfortunate that India offered no substantive response to criticism of anti-conversion laws, and surprising that it took a defensive stance on its proposed bill to tackle communal and targeted violence, when this could be trumpeted as a pioneering example of best practice. However, we hope the UPR process will encourage further progress towards safeguarding religious freedom and access to justice for all in India."

### Notes to Editors:

1. CSW made a range of recommendations to India in its [stakeholder submission](#), including ending the specific religious discrimination against Dalit Christians and Muslims, repealing anti-conversion laws, and completing the process of passing a law dealing comprehensively with communal violence.