Distinguished representatives of States, colleagues and fellow participants in the pre-session,

My name is Dilnoza Khudobakhshova. I am speaking on behalf of Notabene Public Foundation and the International Partnership for Human Rights (IPHR).

We welcome the consultations with civil society held as part of preparations for the fourth cycle of the Universal Periodic Review. However, we note the need to make this participation more transparent and meaningful.

I would like to speak about two issues: the effective implementation of non-discrimination guarantees and the protection of freedom of association.

1. Equality and non-discrimination

During the period under review, Tajikistan took important legislative steps to strengthen protection against discrimination such as the adoption of the Law "On Equality and the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination", and measures taken to ensure its implementation in practice.

At the same time, our monitoring shows that **a substantial gap remains between law and practice**.

Therefore, it is vital that we focus not only on legislative guarantees, but also on ensuring their **effective, accessible and measurable implementation in practice**.

2. Freedom of association and civic space

During the previous UPR cycle, Tajikistan supported recommendations aimed at creating an enabling environment for civil society and preventing unjustified restrictions on freedom of association.

Civil society organisations face unpredictable registration procedures, mandatory reporting requirements relating to foreign funding, and frequent inspections. Organisations working on human rights, governance, gender equality or minority rights are particularly exposed to additional tax and fire-safety inspections, legal pressure and the risk of forced closure. Official data for the first half of 2024 recorded 20 rejected registration applications and 856 notifications of foreign grants.

In March 2024, United Nations experts expressed concern after the Minister of Justice had announced that 700 NGOs had been liquidated over an 18-month period. The experts called on the authorities to reconsider the closure decisions and ensure an enabling environment for civil society.

Although we welcome the dialogue with civil society in 2025 on reform of legislation governing public associations and other nonprofit organisations, it is essential that any new legislative framework complies with Tajikistan's international obligations on freedom of association. In particular, it should exclude disproportionate requirements relating to reporting and foreign funding and overly broad grounds for the suspension or dissolution of organisations, while providing adequate safeguards for unregistered civic initiatives.

At the same time, experience in recent years shows that **constructive cooperation between State authorities and civil society is possible and delivers tangible results**. Civil society's participation in developing the National Human Rights Strategy and the Equality Law, as well as in monitoring and educational programmes, provides clear evidence of this.

Such mechanisms for engagement should be institutionalised and expanded.

We call on States to recommend that Tajikistan:

1. Ensure that the Law "On Equality and the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination" is fully implemented, including through accessible complaints mechanisms and effective remedies for victims; and collect and publish disaggregated data on complaints and remedies while safeguarding personal information.

2. Bring legislation and practice governing public associations and other nonprofit organisations into compliance with article 22 of the ICCPR, and ensure that civil society organisations, human rights defenders and activists can carry out their legitimate activities without undue restrictions, intimidation, pressure or reprisals.

3. Undertake an independent and effective review of decisions to dissolve civil society organisations that were taken without due process safeguards, and allow their registration to be restored where violations are found.

Thank you for your attention.