

## HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL - 49th SESSION

### Organizational Meeting

14 February 2022

The meeting was chaired by H.E. Mr. Federico Villegas, President of the Human Rights Council.

The Council agreed to postpone the consideration of the **UPR on Myanmar** to the 50<sup>th</sup> session in June 2022. The 3 IDs on Myanmar will move ahead as scheduled, without the participation of the country concerned. China and Russian Federation took the floor insisting on the right of a country concerned to be present and participate in the discussion. The President of the Council inquired whether that was a formal objection, which would require a formal voting. Since that was not the case, the Council took note of the statements by the two Member States.

This year, for the first time, the March session will last for five weeks from **28 February to 1 April 2022**. This is due to the lunch time meeting restrictions and the creation of new mandates by the Council.

During its 49<sup>th</sup> session, the Council will hold 8 panel debates:

- **Annual high-level panel discussion on human rights mainstreaming**, under the theme *"The contribution of universal participation to the mainstreaming of human rights throughout the United Nations system on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Voluntary Technical Assistance Trust Fund to Support the Participation of LDCs and SIDS in the Work of the Human Rights Council"*. 28 February 2022, 4 to 6 p.m. The high-level panel will be opened by the President of the General Assembly, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Director-General of the WHO, and the Secretary-General of the International Organization of la Francophonie.
- **Meeting on enhancing technical cooperation and capacity-building in promoting and protecting the human rights of persons in vulnerable and marginalized situations in recovery efforts during and after the COVID-19 pandemic**. 7 March 2022, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Introduced by China.
- **Annual full-day meeting on the rights of the child (a full-day meaning)**, under the theme *"The rights of the child and family reunification"*. 9 March 2022, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 4 to 6 p.m. Introduced by the EU together with GRULAC countries.
- **Panel discussion on ensuring equitable, affordable, timely and universal access for all countries to vaccines in response to the COVID-19 pandemic**. 10 March 2022, 9 to 11 a.m. Introduced by Azerbaijan on behalf of the main sponsors.
- **Annual interactive debate on the rights of persons with disabilities**, under the theme *"Statistics and data collection under article 31 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities"*. 14 March 2022, 4 to 6 p.m. Introduced by New Zealand on behalf of New Zealand and Mexico.
- **Panel discussion on the importance of robust public policies and services for the protection of economic, social and cultural rights in contributing to the COVID-19 pandemic recovery**. 22 March 2022, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Introduced by Portugal.
- **Debate in commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**, under the theme *"Voices for action against racism"*. 28 March 2022, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Introduced by Côte d'Ivoire.

### Overview of the Programme of Work:

The 49<sup>th</sup> session will be **opened** by the President of the General Assembly, Secretary-General, the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the President of the Swiss confederation as host country, followed by the High-Level Segment

#### **Deadlines:**

- **States:** the online system for inscription in the list of speakers for all General Debates, Interactive Dialogues and Panel Discussions will open on **Tuesday, 22 February at 2 pm** and will close **24**

(HLS). 113 dignitaries have inscribed to date to participate in the HLS. Speaking time is 7min. During the session, the Council will hold 7 panel discussions and one thematic meeting, 22 Interactive Dialogues with Special Procedures mandate holders and investigative mechanisms, 11 Interactive Dialogues with the High Commissioner, 3 Enhanced Interactive Dialogues, and one High-level dialogue. The Council will also adopt outcomes of the UPR.

**Eleven Special Procedures mandate holders and Expert Mechanisms** are to be appointed by the Council.

**hours before the meeting.** Inscription and withdrawal after the deadline is possible by email: [ohchr-hrclistofspeakers@un.org](mailto:ohchr-hrclistofspeakers@un.org)

- Inscription for the list of speakers for the Adoption of UPR Outcomes will open on **Monday, 7 March at 9 am** and will close on Thursday, **10 March at 6 pm**. No inscription will be possible after this deadline.
- The deadline for the submission of draft proposals is Wednesday, **23 March at 1 pm**.
- **NGOs**: the list of speakers for all debates will open online on **Thursday, 24 February at 2 pm**.
- List of speakers for Panel Discussions: states should rank panels in the order of their priorities when inscribing in the list of speakers.

### Information Sharing on Initiatives

- **Austria** (*on behalf of Mexico, Slovenia, Austria*): will present its traditional resolution on people belonging to minorities; with this year's focus on minorities in conflict situations.
- **Pakistan** (*on behalf of OIC*):
  - traditional resolution on combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, **based on religion or belief**;
  - draft resolution on human rights situation in the **OPT**, including East Jerusalem, and the obligation to ensure accountability and justice, which will be considered under agenda item 2; considered under Item 7;
  - resolution on the right of the **Palestinian people to self-determination**;
  - resolution on the **Israeli settlements** in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem and the occupied Syrian Golan;
  - resolution on human rights in the **occupied Syrian Golan**.
- **Cuba**: resolutions on **foreign debt, right to food** and **cultural rights**.
- **Azerbaijan** (*in its capacity of the chair of the NAM*):
  - draft resolution on the negative impact of the **unilateral coercive measures** on the enjoyment of human rights;
  - draft resolution on commemoration of the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UN declaration of **right of development**.
- **Egypt** (*on behalf of Greece, Indonesia, Mexico, Romania, Egypt*): periodic resolution on the **right to work**.
- **Iceland** (*on behalf of Republic of Moldova, North Macedonia, United Kingdom, Iceland*): resolution on the situation of human rights in the **Islamic Republic of Iran**, extension of mandate of the Special Rapporteur.
- **China** (*on behalf of Bolivia, Egypt, Pakistan, China*): resolution on promoting and protecting **economic, social, and cultural rights and addressing inequalities**.
- **Cyprus** (*on behalf of Argentina, Ethiopia, Greece, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Mali, Poland, Switzerland, Cyprus*): resolution on **cultural rights** and the protection of cultural heritage, to be considered under item 3.
- **Uruguay** (*on behalf of GRULAC and EU*): traditional resolution on the **rights of the child**. This year the resolution will focus on the theme of the rights of the child and family reunification.
- **Norway**: resolution on **human rights defenders**, with this year's text focusing on human rights defenders in conflict and post-conflict situations.
- **Germany** (*on behalf of Brazil, Finland, Namibia, Germany*): resolution on **adequate housing** as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context.
- **Georgia**: annual resolution on cooperation with **Georgia**, to be considered under agenda item 10.

- **United Kingdom:**
  - *(on behalf of the Core Group on Syria: France, Germany, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, Netherlands, Qatar, Turkey, USA, United Kingdom):* resolution on the human rights in the **Syrian Arab Republic**, renewal of mandate of the **Commission of Inquiry of Syria**;
  - *(on behalf of the Core Group on South Sudan: Albania, Norway, USA, United Kingdom):* resolution to extend the mandate of the **Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan**. The Core Group regretted it was not possible for the Council to agree on a single resolution in 2021, but expressed commitment to working with the African Group, its coordinator and with South Sudan to make every possible effort to return to consensus this year.
- **Mexico:**
  - *(on behalf of New Zealand, Mexico):* resolution on **persons with disabilities in sport**;
  - resolution to renew the mandate of the Special Rapporteur promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while **countering terrorism**.
- **Lithuania:** announced a side event **“Belarus, next steps towards accountability”**, together with Human Rights House Foundation and other co-sponsors (23 February).
- **Ecuador** *(on behalf of Azerbaijan, Ecuador):* ensuring **equitable, affordable, timely and universal access for all countries to vaccines** in response to COVID-19 pandemic; will conduct follow-up consultations with NAM members.
- **Armenia:** draft resolution on prevention and punishment of the **crime of genocide**. A photo exhibition celebrating the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of **Armenia’s membership to the UN** (opening 28 February, 5 pm., E building, 1<sup>st</sup> floor).
- **European Union:**
  - resolution on the situation of human rights in **Belarus** and renewal the mandate of the High Commissioner to continue with the examination of the presidential election-related human rights violations in order to facilitate holding those responsible fully accountable and bringing justice;
  - resolution on **DPRK**, renewal of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur;
  - resolution on **Myanmar**, extension of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur;
  - resolution on **freedom of religion or belief**, renewal of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur;
  - high-level side event on **climate change** together with OHCHR, Republic of the Marshall Islands and other partners.
- **Côte d'Ivoire** *(on behalf of the African group):*
  - resolution on technical assistance and capacity-building for **Mali** in the field of human rights;
  - resolution on technical assistance and capacity-building for **South Sudan** in the field of the human rights.
- **Indonesia** *(on behalf of the Core Group):* resolution on **right to work**, with a focus on disability and the right to work.
- **Mauritius** *(on behalf of Barbados, Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Maldives, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Singapore, Switzerland, Turkey, Mauritius):* resolution on “strengthening the **Voluntary Technical Assistance Trust Fund**, to enhance the participation of **LDCs/SIDS** in the work of the HRC”.
- **Ukraine:** new resolution on the role of states in **countering negative impact of disinformation** on human rights. Traditional annual side event on the human rights situation in the **occupied Crimea**.
- **Morocco:** Side event on **torture prevention**, establishment of mechanisms for the prevention of torture, states of play, and perspectives (11 March, 14-15.30 pm.). Side event together with the Permanent Mission of Belgium, on how to accelerate universal **social protection, human rights and the global fund** (25 February, 4 pm).
- **Israel:** lunch time event **“a UN Action plan to combat antisemitism”**, together with the Permanent Mission of Sweden, and the World Jewish Congress (9 March).
- **Finland:** traditional joint statement with Mexico on International Women’s day, **women’s rights in post pandemic times** (8 March). High-level side event on **woman human rights defenders in conflict and post-**



**conflict situations** (8 March); a side event, together with the Special Rapporteur on persons with disabilities on **Artificial Intelligence and rights of persons with disabilities** (15 or 16 March).

### **Other matters:**

- **Draft resolutions:** at least one informal open-ended consultation should be held on each draft resolution or decision before the Council can take action on it.
- **Modalities:**
  - a 1.5meter distance must be adhered to inside the Palais des Nations. The 49<sup>th</sup> session will be held in Room XIX, Palais des Nations, Geneva and on online platform (Zoom). During the HLS **States** can give either in person or pre-recorded video statements. Dignitaries can be accompanied by max 2 persons. State delegations can participate in person, via pre-recorded video statements, or by Zoom. Access to room XIX limited to one representative per delegation. Point of order can be raised via Zoom by using the raise hand function.
  - **NGOs with ECOSOC status and NHRIs** would be invited to deliver their statements for the interactive dialogues, panel discussions and UPR adoptions in person from room XIX or through pre-recorded video messages. NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC and NHRIs could submit pre-recorded video statements for the general debates.
  - Given the impact of the Strategic Heritage Plan on the availability of rooms, **side events** cannot take place inside the Palais des Nations during the 49<sup>th</sup> session.
  - In case **NGOs decide to organize virtual events** in parallel to the 49<sup>th</sup> session, information on such events could be listed on the OHCHR civil society webpage along with a statement indicating that the events are not official Council events.
  - Delegations would be invited to hold **informal consultations** either in person in room XXI or using the WebEx platform made available by UNOG.
- **Accessibility:** a Task Force on enhancing accessibility has been established, and the focal point for accessibility in the Secretariat can be contacted. Statements to be uploaded in Word format, and delegations encouraged to ensure live captioning and sign interpretation during their panels.
- **Reprisals:** a climate of trust and safety is essential, where states provide protection. Constructive, safe, and respectful atmosphere is essential. Intimidation and reprisal can take many forms, and our common duty is to ensure reprisals will not happen in any circumstances.
- **Documentation:** out of 96 reports for the 49<sup>th</sup> session, 49 reports are already available in all UN languages, and 15 in some of the official languages.

***Denmark and Finland** commented that the in-person participation of NGOs in the General Debates should be enhanced, to which the President of the Council said they would continue doing all possible for the inclusive participation of all stakeholders.*

***United States** asked whether the modalities would be affected by the upcoming (eased) restrictions to be announced by the Swiss Federal Council on 17 February 2022, to which the HRC President said that would depend on the subsequent UNOG decision.*