

## HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL – 55th SESSION

### Organizational Meeting

12 February 2023

The meeting was chaired by the President of the Council of Human Rights, Ambassador Omar Zniber.

The representation of Myanmar in the HRC remains unchanged. The 2 IDs on Myanmar will move ahead as scheduled, without the participation of the country concerned.

The first regular session of the year is scheduled to last for six weeks from **26 February to 05 April 2024**. The longest session of the year. In this session, no lunchtime meetings will be held.

During its 55th session, the Council will hold 6 panel debates (all times CET, UCT + 2):

- **Annual high-level panel discussion on human rights mainstreaming.** Under the theme: Harnessing multilateral efforts to embed, amplify, and realize the rights of persons with disabilities, with a focus on full and effective participation and inclusion in society.
- **Panel discussion on countering religious hatred constituting incitement to discrimination, hostility, or violence.** Introduced by Pakistan (on behalf of OIC).
- **Panel discussion on challenges and good practices to realize the right to social security and to provide quality public services.** Introduced by Portugal.
- **Annual interactive debate on the rights of persons with disabilities.** Under the theme: Good practices of support systems enabling community inclusion of persons with disabilities. Introduced by Mexico (on behalf of Mexico and New Zealand), Monday 11 March at 4 p.m.
- **Annual full-day meeting on the rights of the child.** Under the theme: Rights of the Child and Inclusive Social Protection; and the theme: Child Rights Mainstreaming in the United Nations. Introduced by the EU.
- **Commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.**

### Overview of the Programme of Work

The session will **be opened** by the President of the Human Rights Council, the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland as host country, followed by the High-Level Segment (HLS). 103 dignitaries have inscribed to date to participate in the HLS. Speaking time is 7min.

The Council will hold 37 Interactive Dialogues with the Special Rapporteur and other mechanisms, 3 Enhanced Interactive Dialogues on the report of HC and experts, and 1 Enhanced Interactive Dialogue with the HC. There will be 9 General Debates during the 55th session.

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

#### **Deadlines:**

- States: the online system for inscription in the list of speakers for all Interactive Dialogues and Panel Discussions will open on Monday, **19 February 2024. Video messages will be accepted until 24 hours before the start of the meeting.**
- The list of speakers will close approximately 15 minutes after the beginning of each debate.
- The deadline for the submission of draft proposals is Thursday, 14 March 2024.
- NGOs: the list of speakers for all debates will open online on Tuesday, 20 February 2023 at 2:00 p.m.
- List of speakers for **Panel Discussions:** states will be asked to rank panels in order of priority when inscribing on the list of speakers. Slots will be allocated by the system taking these priorities into account.

## Information Sharing on Initiatives

- **Pakistan** (*on behalf of the OIC*): draft resolution on combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of and discrimination, incitement of violence and violence against persons based on religion or belief; draft resolution on the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian territories, including east Jerusalem and the obligation to ensure accountability and justice (Agenda Item 2); 3 draft resolutions on the right of Palestinian People to self-determination, Israeli installment in the OPT, including East Jerusalem and the occupied Syrian Golan, and human rights in the Occupied Syrian Golan (Agenda Item 7).
- **Costa Rica**: draft resolution to renew the mandate of SR on the environment. Side event on human rights and social inclusion (19 March, 3 p.m.). Shared concerns on the lack of funds for the participation of small delegations.
- **Honduras**: 27 February conference on population and development.
- **Republic of Korea**: (*on behalf of EU and other countries*) high-level side event on DPRK (19 March, 10 a.m.)
- **Armenia**: draft resolution on genocide convention.
- **Egypt**: (*on behalf of cross-regional core group*) draft resolution on **the right to work**.
- **Cuba**: 3 draft resolutions on **the right to food, hunger, and extreme poverty**.
- **Finland**: draft resolution on the right of housing. (*on behalf of the cross-regional core group*) draft resolution **on discrimination**. High-level side event on human rights defenders in protecting democracy and civic space (26 February, 1p.m).
- **Zimbabwe**: high-level side event on people's sovereignty over natural resources within the context of decolonization in Western Sahara (27 February, 2:30 p.m.).
- **Ukraine**: continue to draw international attention to Russia's aggression on Ukraine. Focus on the protection of the rights of prisoners of war and civilians in the Russian detentions, establishing accountability. Draft resolution on this.
- **Germany** (*on behalf of Germany, Mexico, Liechtenstein, Austria*): draft resolution on the renewal of the SR on the right to privacy.
- **Georgia**: draft resolution on the human rights situation in the Georgia-occupied regions.
- **The UK** (*on behalf of the UK, USA, and Albania*): draft resolution to extend the mandate in South Sudan. (*on behalf of the core group on Syria*) draft resolution on critical human rights and humanitarian situations in Syria, renewing the mandate of COI in Syria.
- **Denmark**: thematic draft resolution on the prevention of torture. 2024 is the 40th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention. (with Chile, Morocco, Fiji, Indonesia, Ghana) high-level side event on States' experience in implementing the Convention on Torture (27 February, 3:30 p.m.).
- **The Gambia** (*on behalf of the core group*): draft resolution on **promoting and strengthening a culture of peace** (Agenda Item 3). Culture of peace, as a fundamental pillar for sustainable human rights for all.
- **Austria** (*on behalf of Slovenia and Mexico*): draft resolution on minority people.
- **New Zealand** (*with Mexico*): draft resolution on **persons with disabilities**. Focus on the inclusion of people.
- **Switzerland**:
  - draft declaration on a safe and clean environment, a side event on this matter (5 March, 2:30 p.m.);
  - interactive dialogue with the SR on peaceful assembly;
  - (*with Cosa Rica, Samoa, and other members*) side event on deep cyber minding and human rights implication (28 March, at lunch break).
- **EU**: 5 draft resolutions on the deteriorating human rights situation in **Belarus, DPRK, and Myanmar, on Freedom of Religion and Belief, and the Rights of the Child** (*with GRULAC*), focusing on social protection.
- **China**: underlined the main international crisis and the role of the Council in this regard. Mutual respect, tolerance, and learning. Dialogue and cooperation. Building consensus. Strong political will. Holistic approach. Support the high-level meeting **on persons with disabilities**. Joint statement on AI in promoting children's rights. Side event on the theme of **empowering women with disabilities**.

- **Bolivia:**
  - side event on difficulties and issues of peasants.
  - side event on family agriculture, gender equality, youth (16 March, 3 p.m.).
- **Iceland:** one resolution: (*on behalf of the Republic of Moldova, North Macedonia, and the UK*): the renewal of the mandate of the SR on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran; and (*on behalf of Germany*) extending the mandate of the FFM for another year, to allow full and complete investigation into the human rights violations in the Islamic Republic of Iran related to the protest on 16 September 2022.
- **Spain:** side event on women and multilateral forum (26 February, 2 p.m.).

### Other matters:

The 3-year program of work for 2023 to 2025 is being updated and will be posted on the Extranet. The voluntary yearly calendar for thematic resolutions is being updated and will be circulated prior to the start of the session.

**Draft resolutions:** at least one informal open-ended consultation should be held on each draft resolution and/or decision before the Council can take action on it. These consultations should be scheduled in a timely, transparent, and inclusive manner.

### **Modalities:**

- The 55th session will be held in Room XX, Palais des Nations, Geneva, and on online platform (Zoom). State delegations can participate in person, via pre-recorded video statements, or via Zoom. The capacity of Room XX is no longer restricted. Point of order can be raised via Zoom by using the raise hand function. The delegations can exercise their right of reply remotely in the same manner as during the 54th regular session, by sending an email to: [OHCHR-hrclistofspeakers@un.org](mailto:OHCHR-hrclistofspeakers@un.org)
- Liquidity constraints caused by an insufficient level of contributions since July 2023 and extended into 2024. The hiring freeze extended throughout 2024. Spending restrictions, reduction of conference services in the four duty stations. 50% less funds to hire external assistance. This means insufficient capacity to cover all requests for documentation and interpretation services. Conservational measures (to be approved by the Director-General): priority will be given to mandated meetings with strict adherence to meeting time and duration; no extensions of meeting duration in view of the limited funds available for the entire year; and restrictions on documentation processing times and volume.
- Special Procedures mandate holders, Investigative Mechanisms and Panelists unable to travel to Geneva are able to send pre-recorded video messages for their initial presentations and participate in interactive dialogues or panel discussions via Zoom.
- **NGOs with ECOSOC status and NHRIs with “A” status** have the possibility of delivering their statements in person from Room XX or via pre-recorded video statements. The list of speakers for NGOs for each of the General Debates will be set in line with the average number of NGOs that participated in each of the General Debates in the previous three March sessions.
- All oral statements should be electronically submitted to the interpreters at least 1h00 prior the estimated time of delivery, to ensure the quality of the interpretation. Submission of transcript is mandatory for all online statements.

**Accessibility:** a Task Force on enhancing accessibility has been established, and the focal point for accessibility in the Secretariat can be contacted. Oral statements are to be uploaded in Word format on the online system for lists of speakers, and delegations encouraged to ensure live captioning and sign interpretation during their panels.

**Reprisals:** a climate of trust and safety within the Council is essential, where states prevent and ensure adequate protection from any act of intimidation or reprisals. A constructive, safe, and respectful

atmosphere is essential. Intimidation and reprisals can take many forms, and our common duty is to ensure intimidation or reprisals will not happen in any circumstances.

**Documentation:** 51 out of 80 reports for the 55th session, reports are already available in all UN languages.

Watch the full recording here: <https://webtv.un.org/en/asset/k1d/k1d739fonb>