

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL – 56th SESSION

Organizational Meeting

03 June 2024

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, since 2021. The 2 IDs on Myanmar will move ahead as scheduled, without the participation of the concerned country.

The first regular session of the year is scheduled to last for four weeks from **18 June to 12 July 2024**. In this session, no lunchtime meetings will be held.

The mission of Uruguay in its capacity as the regional coordinator of the GRULAC that the members of the group have decided to nominate the permanent representative of Honduras, H.E Ambassador Marcella Arias as Vice-President of the Human Rights Council for GRULAC during the year 2024.

During its 56th session, the Council will hold 5-panel debates:

- **Annual full-day discussion on the human rights of women:** *Panel 1: Economic violence against women and girls; and Panel 2: Human rights economy and women's rights.* Presented by Canada and Chile (28 June).
- **Quadrennial panel discussion on promoting human rights through sport and the Olympic ideal.** *Under the theme: Promoting inclusiveness in and through sports.* Presented by Greece, on behalf of the main sponsors (1 July, 10 am).
- **Annual panel discussion on the adverse impacts of climate change on human rights.** *Under the theme: Ensuring livelihood resilience in the context of the risk of loss and damage relating to the adverse effects of climate change.* Presented by Viet Nam, on behalf of the Core Group on Climate Change namely Bangladesh, Philippines, and Viet Nam (1 July, 3 pm).
- **Annual thematic panel discussion on technical cooperation and capacity-building.** *Under the theme: Enhancing technical cooperation and capacity-building in the implementation of universal periodic review recommendations.* Presented by Thailand on behalf of the Core Group comprising Honduras, Indonesia, Brazil, Morocco, Turkey, Norway, Qatar, Singapore, and Thailand (9 July).

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 not be General Debates during the 56th session.

3 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, **20 June 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, 02 July 2024.
- **NGOs:** the list of speakers for all debates will open online on Tuesday, 11 June 2024 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

- **Canada (on behalf of the core group):** *draft resolution* on **freedom of religion and expression**, aiming to bring attention to new emerging challenges.
- **Belgium:**
 - **with an interregional group of countries:** *draft resolution* on **online gender-based and sexual violence**. The purpose is to prepare a study on gender and sexual-based online violence to better understand this problem, to share good practices in combating it around the world, and to propose recommendations on the way of countering such online violence;
 - **with the International Coalition Against the Death Penalty:** *parallel event* commemorating the **35th anniversary** of the second optional protocol of the ICCPR (24 June);
 - fully support the contribution that civil society organizations make to the HRC. Civil society organizations as well as small Delegations have suffered from the removal of hybrid options for participating in the HRC.
- **High-level panel on the occasion of the Day of Women and Diplomacy.** This will be organized and convened by the Presidency of the HRC in cooperation with our focal point, the Ambassador of Bolivia, the focal point on gender parity and tackling sexual harassment. The event will also be co-convened with UN Women and an important list of senior and distinguished panelists who will be participating in that event (24 June).
- **Viet Nam (on behalf of the Core Group on human rights and climate change, comprising Bangladesh, the Philippines and Viet Nam):** *draft resolution* on the theme of **just transition and human rights in the context of climate change**. It emphasizes the importance of just equitable, inclusive and sustainable transitions, in meeting sustainable development and climate goals and commitments. This approach aims to leave no one behind, create decent work and quality jobs, reduce inequalities and poverty and uphold the human rights workers and affected communities.
- **Mexico (with Chile):** *draft resolution* on the **elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and girls, focusing on gender discrimination and gender inequality for women and girls in poverty**. This will highlight to what extent poverty has hampered progress in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment.
- **Gambia (on behalf of the African Group):**
 - *draft resolution* to the **mandate for the expert mechanism to advance racial justice and equality in law enforcement**. This mechanism has been instrumental in addressing systemic racial disparities

- and ensuring justice in law enforcement practices globally. Its renewal is crucial to maintaining momentum and ensuring ongoing reforms and accountability;
- *draft resolution* on **menstrual hygiene management**. This initiative is essential for promoting the dignity and health of women and girls;
 - *draft resolution* on the **elimination of female genital mutilation**.
 - **Cuba**: *draft resolutions* on the **social forum** and **human rights and international solidarity**.
 - **Brazil (on behalf of the core group, Thailand, Portugal, and Colombia)**: *draft resolution on human rights in the context of HIV and AIDS*. The resolution focuses on drawing attention to the current challenges on the path to end AIDS. The resolution will address the need for funding as well as close coordination between countries, civil society organizations, international organizations and other stakeholders.
 - **Luxembourg**:
 - *draft resolution* on the **right of education**, with the aim of establishing an open ended working group mandated with drafting an optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child explicitly recognizing the rights to early childhood education, free primary education and free secondary education.
 - New Initiative: *draft resolution* with the **Dominican Republic and Sierra Leone and the cross regional core group: Armenia, Bulgaria, Colombia, Cyprus, Kazakhstan, Romania, the Gambia and Kyrgyzstan**, aims to mandate that the working group consult with children and by doing so we ensure that the voices of those most effective are heard and respected.
 - *Side event* to highlight the importance of **children's voices** (24 June, 2- 3 pm).
 - **Switzerland (on behalf of Costa Rica and Switzerland)**:
 - *new draft resolution* on **the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of peaceful protest**;
 - *draft resolution* on the **protocol on law enforcement and other useful technical tools and practices**.
 - **Pakistan (on behalf of OIC)**: raised concern about the grave human rights situation of the Rohingya Muslims from Bangladesh and other countries, *draft resolution* entitled: **Situation of Human Rights of Rohingya Muslims and Other Minorities in Myanmar**.
 - **Colombia**: *draft resolution* to **extend technical cooperation between Colombia and OHCHR, as well as to Colombian civil society**.
 - **Greece**: *side event* with OHCHRC and the Independent Expert of SOGI. It will provide an informal space to reflect on good practices identified in the report and develop strategies for civil society and like-minded states to advance these recommendations in law, policy and practice. (21 June, 1:30 pm)
 - **Hungary (on behalf of Botswana, Australia, Maldives, Mexico, Thailand and Hungary)**: *biannual resolution* entitled: **independence and impartiality of the judiciary, jurors and assessors and the independence of lawyers**.
 - **Equator**:
 - **with Peru**: *biannual resolution* on **human rights and the regulation of civilian acquisition, possession and use of firearms**;
 - *draft procedural decision* to request the necessary human and financial resources required to make headway in the process being spearheaded by the Intergovernmental Working.
 - **European Union**:
 - *draft resolution* on the **extension of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur in Eritrea**;
 - **with the United States**: *side event* on **protecting human rights defenders online** (20 June, 5 pm).
 - **Netherlands (on behalf of core group: Brazil, Canada, Fiji, Namibia and Sweden)**: *draft resolution* on **freedom of opinion and expression**, including the right to seek, receive and impart information exemplifies the indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights.
 - **Ukraine** particular focus will be on the protection of the **rights of prisoners of war**, unlawful deportation and enforceable transfer of Ukrainian children and violence against women and girls since their rights continue to be seriously affected by the ongoing Russian war against Ukraine.

- **Holy See:** *side event* with **Italy and Sovereign Order of Malta** (18 June, 1- 2 pm). The event entitled: at what price towards the **abolition of surrogacy** will explore the root causes of surrogacy, the harms it generates especially for women and children and the ways in which the international community might work together to end this exploitative practice.
- **Qatar:**
 - document related to our sports competition in cooperation with the project on changing concepts as well as the UN football club and teams that comprise players from different regional groups in Geneva (26 June);
 - organize another tournament in cooperation with a number of countries on the contribution of policies towards the promotion and protection of human rights and addressing the effects of technological change, migration, demographical change and climate change on the families and their welfare (25 June).
- **Italy:** *side event* on **building a roadmap towards disability inclusive agenda** (04 July, 2 pm). Keynote speakers: the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Italian Minister for Disabilities.
- **Philippines:**
 - support for the high level informal discussion to delve into the nexus between climate change, health and food insecurity to the prism of human rights. These are complex problems whose consequences invariably affect the most vulnerable in our societies. It is important this informs any pact for the future;
 - *panel discussion* to **commemorate the International Day of Seafarers** (25 June, 2 -3 pm);
 - *draft resolution* on the **promotion and protection of the human rights of seafarers**.
- **Bolivia:**
 - co-host the first commemoration of the **International Day of Women Diplomats** entitled breaking glass ceilings and recognizing the contribution of women diplomats to the UN system (24 June, 1-3 pm);
 - *side event* on the **enjoyment of ECOSOC rights** of various communities around the world, including the fight against food insecurity, nutrition and economic growth.
- **Costa Rica:**
 - **with Switzerland:** *draft resolution* on the **protection and promotion of human rights in the context of peaceful protests**;
 - *side event* on the need for a **new optional protocol to CEDAW** to address violence against women and girls across the world (19 June, 3 pm).
- **Kazakhstan:**
 - *joint statement* focusing on the issue of combating domestic violence. Family and domestic violence including child abuse, partner abuse and elder abuse is one of the most persistent and devastating problems in the world;
 - **with Luxembourg:** *draft resolution* on the **right to education**;
 - **with Belgium:** *draft resolution* on **online sexual and gender-based violence**.
- **Bahrain:** *side event* on **alternative penalties**, in order to make sure that offenses are not repeated and to rehabilitate the persons and reintegrate them into the society (24 June).
- **Iraq:** *joint communique* on a panel discussion on promoting human rights in sports, indicating the role of sports and promoting development and solidarity as important languages that contribute to basic principles of human rights and disseminating the spirit of the tolerance.
- **Republic of Korea:**
 - *side event* **on strengthening the capacity of the Human Rights Council** to deal with the human rights implications of new and emerging digital technologies (18 June, 2-3 pm);
 - **with the Co-Group on Local Government and Human Rights, namely Chile, Egypt, and Romania:** *side event* on **the role of local government realizing human rights for all** (04 July).

Other matters:

The 2-year program of work for 2024 to 2026 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 56th 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 55th regular session, by sending an email to: 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: 43 out of 72 reports for the 56th session, reports are already available in all UN languages.

Watch the full recording here: <https://webtv.un.org/en/asset/k1m/k1mezjib4i>