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- Chair:* Mr. Marschik (Austria)
- later:* Ms. Monica (Vice-Chair). (Bangladesh)
- later:* Mr. Marschik (Chair). (Austria)

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Agenda item 66: Report of the Human Rights Council

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

1. **Mr. Bálek** (President of the Human Rights Council), introducing the report of the Human Rights Council (A/78/53 and A/78/53/Add.1), said that the Council had adopted 154 resolutions, decisions and President's statements over the reporting period, 76 per cent of them without a vote. The thematic areas considered by the Council had included centrality of care and support from a human rights perspective, the role of digital, media and information literacy in the promotion and enjoyment of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, and the promotion of human rights education and the right to education. Advancements had been made in the right to development, and the issue of climate change had been prominent in the Council's work. In January 2023, the Council had held its fifth intersessional meeting on human rights and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and had adopted a follow-up resolution in April 2023.

2. As part of its ongoing response to urgent issues around the world, the Council had convened a special session addressing the deteriorating situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran in November 2022 and a special session concerning the human rights impact of the ongoing conflict in the Sudan in May 2023. Moreover, during its fifty-third regular session, the Council had held an urgent debate on the alarming rise in premeditated and public acts of religious hatred, as manifested by the recurrent desecration of the Qur'an in some European and other countries. The Council had also considered a number of other situations throughout the year and had extended 18 mandates of investigative mechanisms and country-specific special procedures.

3. New resolutions had been adopted in which the Council requested the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to support Haiti, Colombia and Honduras through capacity-building and technical assistance. A resolution had also been adopted on the establishment of an OHCHR regional office for the Caribbean Community, hosted by the Bahamas, to undertake technical assistance and capacity-building activities.

4. There had been broad participation by the Council's stakeholders throughout the year. The Voluntary Technical Assistance Trust Fund to Support the Participation of Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States in the Work of the Human Rights Council had supported a total of 41 beneficiaries from 34 different countries, including six without permanent missions in Geneva, in participating in the Council's regular sessions. In addition, the Least Developed Countries and

Small Island Developing States Trust Fund Fellowship Programme had been relaunched in September 2023.

5. The Council had continued its efforts to be more accessible to persons with disabilities and to promote their full participation in its work. There had also been increased participation of children and youth in the Council. Furthermore, civil society had continued to play a crucial role in bringing a wide range of voices to the Council by delivering over 2,400 oral statements and holding 227 side events. Such participation was particularly empowering for the victims who shared their personal experiences with the Council. The Council had kept civil society high on its agenda by adopting a resolution on reprisals without a vote and a resolution on civil society space and had renewed the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders. Regrettably, throughout the year, he, as President of the Human Rights Council, had received allegations of intimidation, threats and reprisals against individuals who had sought to cooperate or had cooperated with the Council and its mechanisms. Accordingly, he had raised the allegations with the countries concerned and had followed up on developments. The space for civil society involvement in the Council must remain truly safe, open and inclusive. States must therefore take the necessary measures to prevent acts of intimidation and reprisal against non-governmental organizations cooperating with the Council.

6. **Ms. Lasseur** (Kingdom of the Netherlands) said that the regular sessions of the Human Rights Council had become much longer and, as a result, the workload had become challenging, especially for small delegations. As the Council needed to remain inclusive and fit for purpose, she asked how its effectiveness could be ensured by re-thinking the working methods in an inclusive and participative way.

7. **Mr. Zavala Porras** (Costa Rica) said that civic space played an essential role in the proper functioning of the United Nations human rights architecture and in achieving progress in all areas of work. With that in mind, he asked what best practices applied by the Human Rights Council in relation to the participation of civil society could also be considered in the work of the General Assembly.

8. **Ms. Fontana** (Switzerland) said that, over the years, the Human Rights Council had developed a comprehensive toolkit to respond to violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law. All countries must cooperate with the Council and its mechanisms. In that regard, she asked the President for recommendations on how to strengthen the links

between Geneva and New York in order to achieve shared solutions and better connections between the various pillars, and on how to counter the increasingly systematic use of the arguments of sovereignty and non-interference to protect against any examination of alleged human rights violations in a country. Lastly, she wished to hear the President's view on how to help rebuild trust between States at the Council.

9. **Ms. Pullela** (Australia) said that addressing human rights situations or, as some called it, "naming and shaming", was not about politicization but about upholding the mandate of the Human Rights Council. No country had a perfect human rights record, including Australia, but no country was above fair scrutiny of its human rights obligations. Scrutiny and accountability were essential to achieving a peaceful, stable and prosperous world in which every person was able to enjoy their human rights. Recognizing that the Council was facing an ever-increasing workload, Australia would continue to support outcomes that enhanced its core mandate of protecting human rights and preventing and addressing human rights violations. Moreover, it would continue to stress the need for diversity of voices at Council sessions, including those of Indigenous peoples, national human rights institutions, persons with disabilities, civil society and human rights defenders, and for stronger processes to ensure that Council members upheld the highest human rights standards.

10. **Mr. Escobar** (Argentina) said that, in recent years, there had been a setback in human rights situations worldwide, marked by a number of alarming trends in various regions, including an increase in violence and discrimination against vulnerable groups, situations arising from conflicts and violence against ethnic minorities, refugees, migrants, women and girls. In that context, he asked what actions could be taken within the Human Rights Council to address those issues in the medium and short term.

11. **Mr. Burbergs** (Latvia), speaking on behalf of the Nordic and Baltic countries (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden), said that the effective and independent implementation of mandates required adequate financing. It was therefore the common goal of the Nordic and Baltic countries to ensure proper funding for the Human Rights Council. The Council's members and those running to be elected should aspire to improve human rights situations both in their own countries and globally, as they had a particular role to serve as an example. Countries that used the Council to defend their own policies while invading peaceful nations should not have a place at the table. All States must cooperate with the United Nations human

rights mechanisms. In that connection, he asked how the Council tackled the issue of accountability.

12. **Mr. Ayad** (Iraq) said that, despite great efforts, previous Presidents had been unable to achieve a common vision for the work of the Human Rights Council. He therefore asked the President for his view on reviewing the legal status of the Council and whether he agreed with keeping the Council as a body affiliated with the General Assembly. He also asked whether there had been any discussions with the President of the General Assembly regarding the provision of assistance and advice to the Office of the President of the Council on that issue.

13. **Mr. Kondratev** (Russian Federation) said that there had been no positive developments in the work of the Human Rights Council. The Council had never been able to make any significant contribution to improving the human rights situation in the world or in individual countries. Such a situation was unacceptable and, in order to rectify it, States had to engage in genuinely constructive dialogue and demonstrate good political will and a true desire to provide assistance to those who really needed it.

14. It was regrettable that, under pressure from Western countries, the Council had adopted a number of overtly political resolutions, including the controversial initiative on the human rights situation in the Russian Federation launched by 26 European Union member States. The text of the resolution was based on Western insinuations about the "persecution" in his country of representatives of civil society, activists and human rights defenders. The "concerns" listed in the draft document did not reflect the real state of affairs and could in no way serve as a basis for the functioning of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Russian Federation, whom the Russian Federation did not recognize and with whom it refused to cooperate in all forms envisaged by the Council. That instrument was yet another lever for exerting pressure on Russia in the human rights field.

15. **Ms. Andújar** (Dominican Republic) said that it was evident that more work needed to be done to foster dialogue and mutual understanding within the Human Rights Council. The presentation of reports by the mandate holders to both the Council and the Committee, the report of the Human Rights Council to the Committee and the report of the Third Committee to the Council contributed greatly to bringing New York and Geneva closer together, thereby achieving coherence, mainstreaming and synergy in the work of the United Nations in the field of human rights. She asked in which areas of competence the Council had been most

effective and where it had been ineffective, and how the Committee could ensure better coordination with the Council in order to make its work more effective, focused and impactful.

16. **Mr. Johnson** (United States of America) said that the values enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights were currently under great strain, with the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine threatening the lives, liberty and security of countless innocent civilians and the senseless conflict in the Sudan causing the deaths of thousands of civilians and the displacement of over 5 million people. Rights were under threat in Burma, Cuba, South Sudan, Syria, Venezuela and Yemen, and the crimes against humanity, genocide and other human rights abuses and violations perpetrated by the People's Republic of China against its own citizens were well documented. Moreover, the conditions for members of racial and ethnic minority groups, women and girls, persons with disabilities and LGBTQ+ persons around the world remained precarious. Nevertheless, the Human Rights Council had risen to meet many of those challenges.

17. **Ms. Monica** (Bangladesh) said that her country welcomed the continued attention of the Human Rights Council to the situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims and acknowledged the Council's work on such thematic issues as housing, food, environment, health care, including mental health care, women and children, climate change, prevention of genocide, racism, religious intolerance and incitement of violence. It also welcomed the progress made on the right to development. She asked how the work of both the Council and the Committee could be harmonized, particularly in the context of the proliferation of resolutions and mandates, many of which often seemed repetitive.

18. **Ms. Asaju** (Nigeria) said that the Human Rights Council had played a critical role in upholding rights and values in the current challenging period. Human rights issues could not be approached in isolation while ignoring the complex intricate relations between human rights, development, democracy and international cooperation. The Council must find practical measures to protect and promote economic, social and cultural rights as well as civil and political rights in a comprehensive and balanced manner. She asked how the Council could hold countries to account by using the universal periodic review process for country-specific human rights concerns.

19. **Mr. Manzare** (United Kingdom) said that it had been another very busy year for the Human Rights Council, which further underscored the need to find ways to reduce the workload. The United Kingdom

appreciated the President's focus on that aim and the efforts of Bolivia and Luxembourg to find more efficient ways of working. The non-paper submitted by those delegations had put forward very important ideas for which the United Kingdom had expressed its general support. His country remained open to innovative approaches to bring the Council's work back in line with what was manageable for all delegations and had been pleased to support the statement by Panama on the last day of the fifty-fourth regular session of the Council highlighting the burden that the current workload placed on the smallest missions. In that context, he asked what the President considered to be the biggest challenge to introducing efficiencies.

20. **Ms. Mudrenko** (Ukraine) said that the fifty-fourth regular session of the Human Rights Council had been marked by a return to a more balanced and less polarized approach to both country-specific and thematic concerns. Given the tremendous human rights challenges facing the international community, it was of the utmost importance that the Council was actively engaged in multilateral efforts to defend, promote and protect human rights globally, prevent their abuse and enhance the international community's response to emerging threats. Accordingly, the Council had responded strongly to the Russian aggression against Ukraine with an urgent debate, a special session, significant resolutions and, most importantly, the establishment of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine. The grave violations and abuses of human rights and fundamental freedoms committed by the Russian military in Ukraine should not be ignored.

21. **Ms. DeGregory** (Bahamas) said that her country noted with satisfaction the outcome of the universal periodic review of the Bahamas and would continue to implement the recommendations from the review. The universal periodic review was a valuable mechanism for promoting accountability, transparency and human rights for the benefit of sustainable, resilient societies based on the rule of law. In addition, the Bahamas welcomed the establishment of a regional OHCHR office for the Caribbean Community, which would play a crucial role in promoting and protecting human rights in the region. Her country looked forward to working closely with the office to support the protection of human rights in the Bahamas and in the wider region.

22. **Ms. Arab Bafrani** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that millions of Palestinians in Gaza faced death on a daily basis. The decades of occupation by the Israeli apartheid regime were a result of the non-recognition of the right of Palestinians to self-determination. Iran condemned any attack on multilateralism and attempts to ignore the purposes and principles set out in the

Charter of the United Nations through the application of unilateral coercive measures. Iran welcomed the adoption of the resolution on countering religious hatred constituting incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, which was aimed at addressing the deeply concerning rise in acts of religious hatred, as manifested by the repeated desecration of the Qur'an in some European countries.

23. Iran reaffirmed its principled position rejecting country-specific mandates and disassociated itself from the reports of the Human Rights Council on the politicized and biased mandates on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including those submitted by the so-called international independent fact-finding mission and the relevant Special Rapporteur, which undermined dialogue, cooperation and the credibility of the Council. In the light of the current politicization of human rights, she asked how to disarm those countries that used human rights as an illegal weapon and instrument against sovereign States.

24. **Ms. Banaken Elel** (Cameroon) welcomed the President's initiative of sharing summaries by the President of the General Assembly after each regular session of the Human Rights Council, which helped to strengthen dialogue and cooperation between New York and Geneva. The summaries at the fifty-third and fifty-fourth regular sessions of the Council had been particularly useful. Greater exchange of information would improve capacity and the use of resources within the United Nations system and the outcome of States' work. Further steps needed to be taken to strengthen coordination between Geneva and New York and to rationalize the work of the two bodies.

25. Cameroon was concerned by the proliferation of special procedures mandated by the Council to engage with the Committee. She therefore asked what steps delegations should take to address that situation. While Cameroon welcomed the adoption of the resolutions on economic, social and cultural rights and the resolution transmitting the draft convention on the right to development to the General Assembly, it regretted that a vote had been called. Her country therefore encouraged the Council to work harder to come up with a consensus approach to its resolutions and to treat economic, social and cultural rights equally with other rights. She asked how the Council's working methods could be improved to that end.

26. **Mr. Bin Jadid** (Saudi Arabia) said that systemic and grave violations of international human rights law were being perpetrated every day in the Gaza Strip. In that context, he asked how the international community could support the Human Rights Council in a more

effective manner to stop such violations and to prevent them from happening again.

27. **Mr. González Behmaras** (Cuba) said that the United States insisted on politicizing the issue of human rights in relation to developing countries by mentioning a list of countries about which they supposedly had concerns. If the United States, which had no mandate to judge Cuba or any other country in terms of human rights matters, had any concern for human rights, it should first solve the problem of structural and systemic racism against Afro-descendant Latino immigrant populations in its own territory, stop the arbitrary detentions that still took place at the Guantanamo naval base and resolve the serious issue of public insecurity, which caused some 30,000 deaths a year. Despite the millions of dollars spent by the United States to politicize human rights issues, Cuba had been elected to the Human Rights Council for the sixth time.

28. **Ms. Zhang Sisi** (China) said that the working atmosphere of the Human Rights Council should be improved. No country should use human rights issues to interfere in the internal affairs of another country or as a geopolitical tool for exerting pressure. Diversity should be respected when considering the human rights paths chosen by countries. The Council should promote both sets of human rights in a balanced manner, strengthen technical assistance and capacity-building, improve the efficiency of its work, which should be conducted according to the principle of ownership by Member States, and safeguard the integrity of the resolutions on the basis of which the Council had been established.

29. China firmly opposed the abuse of the Committee by the United States to make groundless accusations against it. The people of Xinjiang enjoyed prosperity and stability and lived in harmony with one another. All lies related to Xinjiang were unacceptable. While the United States was eager to point fingers at developing countries, including China, it turned a blind eye to its own problems. The United States should immediately stop using human rights issues as a pretext for interfering in other countries' internal affairs and instead make a real contribution to the protection of human rights.

30. **Mr. Altarsha** (Syrian Arab Republic) asked the President whether he believed that country-specific mechanisms and reports were effective without the engagement of the countries concerned.

31. **Ms. Samai** (Algeria) asked for the President's view on the best ways to improve the work of the Human Rights Council in order to uphold the principles of impartiality, non-selectivity and objectivity and to

completely avoid double standards when it came to human rights issues.

32. **Ms. Nishihara** (Chile) said that, during its membership of the Human Rights Council, her country had continuously sought to promote such priority issues as human rights, the environment and the principle of non-discrimination, with special emphasis on the promotion and protection of the human rights of women, girls and the LGBTIQ+ community, as well as other emerging issues, including the development of respect for human rights by business, the relationship between democracy and human rights, and neurorights. Other countries that could be allies on those issues should work together towards those goals. She asked what measures taken by the Council had proven to be most effective in ensuring that human rights were duly protected and guaranteed at the global level.

33. **Ms. González López** (El Salvador) said that, while her country was not currently a member of the Human Rights Council, it had always been strongly committed to the objectives and work of the organization. For that reason, El Salvador had sponsored a significant number of the resolutions presented at the regular sessions of the Council in 2023. In addition, as part of the group promoting the resolution on youth and human rights, El Salvador had participated in the first biennial panel discussion on youth and human rights.

34. As it was committed to creating a culture of respect for and promotion and protection of human rights for all, El Salvador had presented its candidature for membership of the Council for the period 2027–2029. Her country supported the adoption of biennial and triennial resolutions as it made the work of the Council more effective and had a favourable impact on the work of the General Assembly and the Committee in particular.

35. **Mr. Bálek** (President of the Human Rights Council) said that many small delegations had complained that they had already reached their limit in terms of workload. While he was aware of that, he could do very little besides deliver on his role as President, as it was the members of the Human Rights Council that set the agenda for the Council's work. Member States should therefore keep in mind that there were limits to what could be done, think twice before introducing new initiatives and coordinate at the national level with regard to the work in Geneva and New York. Moreover, it was important that the agenda was embraced by all Member States. On the other hand, it was only logical that the agenda was heavy, as the Council was considered to be the organization that could help to address the significant challenges currently facing the world.

36. Members of civil society were an integral part of the Council's work and made a positive contribution by offering different perspectives to the deliberations in the Council. It was therefore important to preserve and even enlarge the space for civil society. He was not in a position to say how civil society members and non-governmental organizations should be treated in New York, but inspiration could be taken from the good examples in Geneva. There were opportunities throughout the year, such as informal briefings and other encounters, where various issues could be discussed with civil society members and non-governmental organizations.

37. It was up to Member States to discuss how to enhance the interaction between Geneva and New York. A retreat was being organized in Prague in November 2023 to enable Member States to have an informal, out-of-the-box discussion, without being bound by their national positions, about how to increase the efficiency of the United Nations system. It was not just about the link between Geneva and New York – given the tremendous challenges facing the world, the United Nations could neither ignore the tools that it already had at its disposal nor fail to use any opportunity where it could be more efficient and coordinated.

38. With regard to the funding of the Council and the human rights pillar, he relied on Member States to ensure that the Council was adequately funded so that it could fulfil all expectations and carry out the activities that had been agreed upon.

39. The Council had been created in such a way that accountability was inherent. All members were equal, and all had to be elected. Moreover, the fact that countries were still striving to be elected to the Council meant that the overall perception of it was positive. Despite the current circumstances, he viewed the current atmosphere in the Council in a positive light, as States were still willing to discuss and solve issues and to seek common ground. Moreover, States were demonstrating a great deal of responsibility.

40. While it was not the role of the President to prioritize certain issues over others, he sincerely believed that all issues could be addressed. The seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the thirtieth anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action provided an opportunity for Member States to think outside the box about how to seize the opportunity to address the current and future challenges.

41. The universal periodic review was a good example of the work of the Council in which all Member States participated and where the Council could support countries in delivering on their own priorities. The fact

that the General Assembly was finalizing the fourth review cycle meant that all Member States had passed their fourth peer review.

42. The review and future of the Council would have to be discussed during the retreat in Prague, during which he hoped that Member States would include the Council in an open and honest debate.

43. **The Chair** invited the Committee to engage in a general discussion on the item.

44. **Ms. Zhang Sisi** (China) said that the international community had a shared responsibility to ensure that peace and development benefited every country and to realize human rights for all. All parties should use the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the thirtieth anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action as an opportunity to make concerted efforts to promote and protect human rights. There was no one-size-fits-all model for the protection of human rights, as countries differed greatly in terms of their historical and cultural traditions, national conditions and aspirations. The right of each country to follow the path of human rights development that was best suited to its own national conditions must therefore be respected.

45. Human rights were indivisible and mutually reinforcing and should be accorded equal importance and promoted in a balanced manner while upholding international justice and fairness. No country could appoint itself as a judge of human rights issues, and human rights should not be used as a pretext for interfering in internal affairs or curbing the development of other countries. Moreover, human rights exchanges and cooperation should be carried out on the basis of equality and mutual respect and the politicization of human rights issues should be opposed. Accordingly, the Human Rights Council should serve as a platform for constructive dialogue and cooperation, rather than as a battleground for political manoeuvring and confrontation. Only by upholding the principles of impartiality, objectivity, non-selectivity and non-politicization could the United Nations human rights system function well and continue to inject positive energy into global human rights efforts.

46. China always put its people first and followed a human rights development path suited to its own national conditions. Consequently, its human rights achievements had won global recognition. Xinjiang and Tibet enjoyed social stability, economic growth, cultural prosperity and religious harmony and the human rights situation on the ground was at its best. The situation in Hong Kong had undergone a major shift from chaos to order and prosperity, with local people enjoying a wide

range of rights and freedoms under the law. Some Western countries continued to bring up Xinjiang, Tibet and Hong Kong in an attempt to attack and discredit China and to undermine its development, which her country strongly opposed. Bias-free people from all over the world could visit China to see the truth at first hand. China had been re-elected to the Council for the period 2024–2026 – its sixth term – which demonstrated the international community’s recognition of the country’s human rights achievements and active participation in international human rights cooperation. China would continue to promote shared values, practise true multilateralism, actively participate in the work of the Council, engage in constructive dialogue and cooperation with all parties, oppose the erroneous practice of politicizing human rights issues and applying double standards and contribute wisdom and strength to the healthy progress of the international human rights cause.

47. **Ms. Mngomezulu** (South Africa) said that, as all human rights were universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, they should be treated in a fair and equal manner and with the same emphasis at all material times. Since the advent of democracy in South Africa, her Government had consistently demonstrated its unyielding commitment to those principles. Moreover, it was committed to ensuring that human rights could be realized for all people and to working with all Member States to that end. The Human Rights Council was an appropriate multilateral forum for advancing human rights. However, the “politics of division and distraction”, as termed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, was exacerbated by the current toxic geopolitical context, which impeded the Council’s ability to effectively fulfil its mandate. Accordingly, Member States must recommit to the vision of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and ensure that the rights enshrined therein became a lived reality for all.

48. South Africa was encouraged by the Council’s adoption of various resolutions aimed at addressing the imbalance between the two rubrics of rights and giving equal emphasis to the advancement of economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development. The Council’s renewal of the mandates of the Special Rapporteurs on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, on the situation of human rights defenders, on the rights of persons with disabilities, on the right to education and on extreme poverty and human rights, among others, represented a vote of confidence in the Council and its mechanisms. Furthermore, the commencement of the fourth cycle of the universal periodic review

demonstrated the international community's recognition of the importance of that process for strengthening States' efforts to advance human rights on the ground through peer reviews and the sharing of best practices.

49. **Mr. Kondratev** (Russian Federation) said that his country had never shied away from discussing the most pressing human rights issues, including in the framework of cooperation with the special procedures and treaty bodies of the Human Rights Council. It was regrettable, however, that the West continued to endeavour to dominate the human rights dimension of the work of the United Nations with the goal of transforming the Council into a private club designed to establish certain rules of the game for the rest of the world, circumventing international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

50. In the same vein, the United States, the United Kingdom, the European Union and their allies had launched an unscrupulous anti-Russian campaign during the elections to the Council for the period 2024–2026. It was absolutely unacceptable that unprecedented pressure, including blatant economic blackmail, had been exerted on Member States by the West, which had not only covertly spread propaganda among delegations, but for the first time had used the platform of the Security Council to campaign against Russia. Nevertheless, the Russian Federation would continue its active work in the Council as an observer, aimed primarily at establishing constructive inter-State cooperation in human rights and strengthening the international human rights regime on the basis of the principles of non-selectivity, objectivity and equality and with a view to eradicating the practice of double standards. Everything possible must be done to prevent the Council from becoming a punitive body that served the interests of one group of States and fulfilled their political orders to punish “undesirable” Governments for their independent domestic and foreign policies.

51. **Ms. Banaken Elel** (Cameroon) said that, while the Human Rights Council played a critical role in safeguarding human rights at the international level, for its resolutions to produce tangible results on the ground those resolutions needed to be accepted and assimilated by all countries. National and cultural contexts must therefore be taken into consideration in human rights discourse and practice. The distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of societies or social groups, as well as lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs were particularly crucial in that regard. It was with those elements from the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity that human rights should always be approached. Consequently, specific sets of values should never be imposed on

people in the name of human rights if they were incompatible with their own values. There were many unifying issues that could make a substantial and lasting difference to the lives of millions of people worldwide, including migrants, persons of African descent and the African diaspora. The General Assembly should pay special attention to resolutions related to such issues and to the situation in certain countries, which articulated the mutual reinforcement between all human rights and strengthened States' commitment to promoting the equality and complementarity of all such rights.

52. Cameroon firmly believed in the importance of economic, social and cultural rights and in the added value they brought to the enjoyment of all human rights. However, as it was difficult to enjoy a right if there was no underlying infrastructure to enable that enjoyment, large-scale investments were needed in the areas of health care, communication, transport and education, among others. Her delegation welcomed the adoption of the resolution on promoting and protecting economic, social and cultural rights within the context of addressing inequalities, which marked a major turning point in the promotion and protection of such rights. States should redouble their efforts to create conditions conducive to the enjoyment and realization of all human rights, including through the mobilization of resources, while underlining the need to respect, protect and realize economic, social and cultural rights in the context of the fight against inequalities between countries. Her delegation also welcomed the adoption of the draft convention on the right to development and looked forward to the start of negotiations on the draft. All States should play an active part in that important process so as to remain on the right side of history.

53. **Ms. Nishihara** (Chile) said that her country made significant efforts to demonstrate its commitment to the work of the special procedures and mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights by sponsoring a large number of resolutions renewing the mandates of the special procedures in the Human Rights Council. In addition, Chile frequently submitted material for the preparation of its thematic reports as it was necessary to actively collaborate with the special procedures. Despite significant limitations, Chile had responded to more than 50 requests from special procedures, OHCHR and the Secretary-General in 2023 alone. Other countries were invited to join in that cooperative effort. At the same time, having extended an open invitation to the special procedures to visit the country, Chile had received two visits in 2023 and expected to receive three more during 2024. Multilateralism and the defence of human rights required States to have the courage to submit to international oversight and to be open to listen

and take action in the face of the gaps and challenges that were detected. Such openness enabled the sharing of good practices developed in the global South.

54. There was no doubt that the proliferation of mandates and the overlapping of the competences of the special procedures was a matter of concern. For that reason, debates must continue in both New York and Geneva on the importance of systematizing those efforts, avoiding the duplication of functions and encouraging more effective coordination. That was especially relevant considering the limited availability of financial resources. Furthermore, as the Council was the source of a large number of recommendations whose implementation was fundamental, it was necessary to reflect on how to establish better follow-up mechanisms. For example, the strengthening of the work of the special procedures could be evaluated by assessing possible mechanisms for monitoring and following up on recommendations.

55. States must engage in human rights dialogue, especially on country-specific initiatives, mandates and resolutions. To that end, States that were under the most international scrutiny must be open to frank and good-faith dialogue and countries promoting those initiatives must focus not on stigmatization but on contributing to improving the human rights situation. No country, including Chile, was immune to international criticism. All States had issues to address and that obliged them to be truly open to dialogue, constructive collaboration and improving the human rights situation worldwide, which was absolutely possible.

56. **Ms. Mudrenko** (Ukraine) said that it was regrettable that, despite the full-scale invasion of her country by the Russian Federation and the adoption of numerous General Assembly resolutions addressing the situation, there had been efforts during the current year's regular sessions of the Human Rights Council to allow representatives of the occupation authorities in Crimea to speak on behalf of the Russian Federation, which constituted a violation of General Assembly resolution [68/262](#). The consistent efforts by the Russian Federation to push through the participation of representatives of the occupation authorities in Crimea in the Council's proceedings were aimed solely at legitimizing its illegal attempted annexation of Crimea and exploiting the Council as a diplomatic tool in its ongoing aggression against Ukraine. Her country would not accept any attempt to conceal the inability to effectively address that problem under the guise of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. Over a year previously, Member States in New York and Geneva had acted with decisiveness and unity in their commitment to human rights protection by voting to suspend Russia from the Council. Furthermore, on 10 October 2023, members of

the General Assembly had again shown their unequivocal devotion to the Council's mandate and to promoting universal respect for and safeguarding human rights and fundamental freedoms by voting to reject the attempt by Russia to win back its seat.

57. The system of special procedures was a unique independent monitoring mechanism within the Council and an integral part of the United Nations human rights machinery. The human rights bodies and mechanisms were essential for advancing and upholding human rights worldwide and their pivotal role in monitoring, investigating and advocating for human rights made them an indispensable pillar of the international human rights system and an embodiment of the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Moreover, special procedures could be instrumental in preventing human rights violations and fostering accountability as their work helped to identify systemic issues and patterns of abuse, enabling the international community to take resolute and informed action to prevent and respond to gross and systematic violations and ensuring justice and accountability. The Council and the General Assembly should continue to work in tandem to address the gross human rights violations perpetrated by the aggressor State in Ukraine. Such violations must be stopped, those responsible must be held fully accountable and the victims must receive remedy and redress.

58. **Mr. González Behmaras** (Cuba) said that human rights must be addressed on the basis of the principles of universality, objectivity and non-discrimination. Selectivity, double standards, punitive approaches and politicization generated confrontation and mistrust and did not improve the human rights situation on the ground. The Human Rights Council must be spared from such negative practices, which continued to spread and had already led to the demise of the Commission on Human Rights. It was unacceptable that the situations in some countries of the global South were selectively highlighted when several of them were subject to unilateral coercive measures, which had a significant impact on human rights. Meanwhile a complicit silence was maintained on the violations committed in or by wealthy countries.

59. The United States, the false champion of human rights, wanted to give lessons to others that no one had asked for and for which it had no morals whatsoever. That was the same country that was responsible for some of the most abhorrent and well-documented human rights violations. Moreover, it was a complicit facilitator of crimes against the Palestinian people, including the war crimes and crimes against humanity currently being committed against the civilian

population in Gaza. The arrogance intrinsic to its false exceptionalism prevented the United States from understanding that the international community no longer believed that it was committed to human rights.

60. Politicization and selectivity delegitimized the human rights machinery, which was why the universal periodic review – the only mechanism that allowed for the comprehensive analysis of human rights situations in all countries on an equal footing – was so relevant. Its modalities must be preserved as they were a guarantee of non-discrimination.

61. The special procedure mandate holders needed to comply with the Code of Conduct and carry out their work on the basis of objective and verified information. The Council was, and should continue to be, a subsidiary body of the General Assembly and its strengthening should be pursued in strict accordance with the institution-building package. The Council should be allowed to conduct its work and Cuba did not support efforts to link it more closely to the Security Council, or to have the Security Council assume responsibilities outside of its mandate. Human rights should not be “securitized” under the pretext of implementing so-called “prevention work”, which would encourage the use of human rights issues for political purposes. The Council could and should better fulfil its role, which included avoiding double standards or being held hostage to spurious interests. Moreover, it could and should do more to promote a democratic and equitable international order, denounce the impact of unilateral coercive measures on human rights and promote such rights as the right to development, peace and international solidarity.

62. Human rights were a common cause that should neither be tarnished nor used for hegemonic purposes. They were founded on universal and shared values, which were not exclusive to any one country. No country was exempt from human rights challenges and, accordingly, no country should portray itself as a model of human rights or try to impose its vision on others. There was no need for false champions whose own track record on the matter demonstrated an absence of moral authority.

63. As an elected member of the Council for the period 2024–2026, Cuba would continue working towards cooperation, dialogue and mutual respect while opposing manipulation, selectivity and double standards. Moreover, it would continue its efforts to promote and protect all human rights, despite the negative impact on those rights of the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the Government of the United States for over six decades, which Cuba would continue to denounce. Nothing would stop Cuba from perfecting

its economic and social development model with the aim of building a sovereign, independent, socialist, democratic, prosperous and sustainable nation and an increasingly just society, whether the Government of the United States liked it or not.

64. **Ms. Song** (Republic of Korea) said that, while celebrating the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the thirtieth anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, States must not lose sight of the challenges. Serious human rights violations were occurring around the world, and the rapid advancement of digital technologies and climate change were taking the world down an uncharted path and required collective action. The Human Rights Council should continue to monitor, document and examine serious human rights violations so as to better address them. In 2023, the Council had held a timely special session on the ongoing conflict in the Sudan and had extended the mandates of the special procedures and mechanisms dedicated to addressing grave human rights situations, such as in Afghanistan, Ukraine and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. It was the duty of all States to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems.

65. In order to respond to new challenges, the Council and its mechanisms should continue advocating and formulating human rights-based approaches to policy-making and governance, which would encourage them to address the root cause of human rights violations rather than only addressing violations as they occurred. The Republic of Korea welcomed the increasing use of such terminology in Council resolutions, including the resolution on new and emerging digital technologies and human rights. Furthermore, the Council should step up its efforts to empower all relevant stakeholders with a view to enhancing their capacity to contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights. That applied not only to rights holders but to duty bearers, who should be equipped with the knowledge, skills and capacity to uphold their human rights obligations and responsibilities. In addition, an inclusive governance framework should be put in place to ensure the effective and meaningful participation of all relevant stakeholders. The Council had continued to make strides towards that end, including by reaching agreement on focus areas and target sectors for the World Programme for Human Rights Education and holding an intersessional expert meeting on capacity-building for local governments. The Council should take further action, including by suggesting ways to enhance governance structures that encouraged stakeholder participation in decision-making processes.

66. **Ms. Monica** (Bangladesh) said that her country worked closely with the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms to advance its human rights agenda, which was founded on the principles of dialogue, engagement and cooperation. Bangladesh was currently preparing for the fourth cycle of the universal periodic review, scheduled for November 2023, and looked forward to a fruitful exchange of views with Member States on its human rights practices. Her country engaged in dialogue with the treaty bodies and special procedure mandate holders, had recently facilitated country visits of six special procedure mandate holders and had hosted, for the fifth time, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, whose access to Myanmar continued to be denied. Her delegation was pleased that the Rohingya issue was still high on the Council's agenda and welcomed the adoption by consensus of its resolution on the situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar. Bangladesh fully supported the mandates established by that resolution and remained committed to continuing its cooperation with them. The engagement of the mandate holders would hopefully lead to improved conditions in Myanmar and thus advance the safe, voluntary and dignified return of all displaced Rohingyas to their homeland. Myanmar should engage constructively with those mechanisms with a view to addressing the sociopolitical and legal deficiencies that placed the Rohingya Muslims in a vulnerable situation and to upholding their fundamental human rights.

67. Bangladesh fully supported the work of the Council and its mandate holders on the question of Palestine, including the work to advance Palestinians' right to self-determination. Furthermore, it commended the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 for highlighting the egregious human rights violations perpetrated by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In that regard, Bangladesh reaffirmed its strong condemnation of Israel for its continued occupation of Palestinian territory and its human rights violations, including those committed during the current military operations in Gaza, in contravention of international human rights and humanitarian laws. Her country called for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and the resumption of dialogue for the realization of the two-State solution.

68. As the homeland of 10 million expatriates living in different parts of the world, Bangladesh attached great importance to the promotion and protection of the human rights of migrant workers. The continued

pushback against the rights of migrants, often under the pretext of national security, remained a concern. Her country denounced all forms of discrimination and persecution of migrants and called upon the Council to continue its focus on the protection of migrants as rights holders, irrespective of their migration status. Equally, greater attention should be paid to the promotion and protection of the human rights of people facing displacement, both within and across borders.

69. Bangladesh appreciated the Council's continued work on human rights and climate change and welcomed the adoption of the resolution on that subject. Enhanced efforts were needed to address the human rights implications of climate change from an intergenerational perspective, including through effective international cooperation. Owing to its human rights-based approach to climate change, Bangladesh had joined the group of countries that had tabled a resolution in the General Assembly requesting an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice in respect of climate change. Her country welcomed the initiation of the proceedings by the Court and invited States to participate in it.

70. Bangladesh commended the Council for its work in the field of housing, food, environment, health care, advancement of the rights of women, children and those in vulnerable situations, and on issues relating to prevention of genocide, racism, religious intolerance and incitement of violence. Her country called for peaceful coexistence among diverse peoples through the promotion of a culture of peace. In addition, it was encouraged by the progress made in the Council on the right to development and looked forward to the upcoming negotiations in New York aimed at the adoption of a legally binding convention on the subject.

71. **Ms. Asaju** (Nigeria) said that, at a time when respect for human rights was being challenged to an unprecedented extent, priority must be given to the needs of persons in the most vulnerable situations, including women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities, internally displaced persons, refugees and migrants. Moreover, the Human Rights Council should continue to monitor and investigate serious human rights situations worldwide and further strengthen its efforts to prevent crises and build resilience so as to enhance the nexus between peace, development and human rights. Human rights situations must be addressed in a fair manner with due respect for the Charter of the United Nations, national sovereignty and the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States. The Council's selective focus on certain human rights issues and situations was counterproductive in terms of the global promotion and protection of human rights. The

work of the Council should be guided by the spirit of dialogue and cooperation. In that connection, it was important to ensure the implementation of the universal periodic review as an action-oriented cooperative mechanism based on objective and reliable information and interactive dialogue with the full involvement of the countries under review and conducted in an impartial, transparent, non-selective, constructive, non-confrontational and non-politicized manner, and with consideration given to countries' capacity-building needs.

72. Human rights issues could not be approached in isolation while ignoring the complex and intricate relations between human rights, development, democracy and international cooperation. The Council should therefore find practical measures to protect and promote economic, social and cultural rights as well as civil and political rights in a comprehensive and balanced manner. It was also necessary to preserve the rule of law, promote peace and prevent conflict in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal 16. Moreover, the inclusion of economic, civil and social rights in the work of the Council was essential for addressing new and emerging challenges, including the adoption of a human rights-based approach to climate action and ensuring that human rights applied equally online and offline.

73. **Mr. Zavala Porras** (Costa Rica) said that the Human Rights Council played a central role in relation to the human rights pillar of the United Nations and in bringing a human rights approach to the work of the United Nations system as a whole. As a member of the Council for the period 2023–2025, Costa Rica had continued its active and constructive participation in the development of the Council's work while fulfilling its duty of upholding the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights. The current challenges made that duty more vital than ever, and the efforts of all parties were needed to address them. In that regard, it was of the utmost importance to strengthen synergies between the General Assembly, the Council and other bodies, both at the substantive level and in terms of efficiency and complementarities, so that national capacities, early warnings and other tools for the implementation, monitoring and follow-up of obligations could be improved. Costa Rica called for greater rapprochement and coherence among mandate holders and special procedures by strengthening their complementarities and their coordination with other United Nations offices inside and outside Geneva.

74. Costa Rica welcomed the adoption by consensus of Council resolution [52/23](#) on the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, which, together with general comment No. 26 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, was a step in the right

direction. As human rights, democracy and the rule of law were intrinsically linked, Costa Rica had promoted joint action on democracy at the fifty-third regular session of the Council, calling on the Council to increase its leadership in strengthening democracy and the rule of law throughout the world, also taking into account the Secretary-General's new vision of the rule of law, in particular the unwavering commitment to human rights and people-centred justice.

75. Costa Rica had recognized the inviolability of human life in 1882 by becoming the third country to abolish the death penalty, which could never be a tool to provide justice, neither for victims nor for offenders. It therefore supported the adoption of Council resolution [54/35](#) on the question of the death penalty and reaffirmed its willingness to work constructively with all Member States towards the progressive reduction of the use of the death penalty so as not to delay or prevent its abolition.

76. **Mr. Ayad** (Iraq) said that his country sought to develop the work of the Human Rights Council and supported its mechanisms. His delegation was concerned that some of the Council's resolutions, decisions and debates were deviating from the objectives and principles for which the Council had been established. The core groups should therefore facilitate the duty of the President to create draft resolutions that were acceptable to all Member States and that supported those objectives and principles. Owing to the large number of mandates, the Council had concluded its longest ever session in September 2023. Moreover, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights had instructed the Council to prepare a number of seminars and debates, which had placed an increased strain on the workload and budget of the Council, which lowered the efficiency of its work.

77. As the primary international organization dedicated to promoting and protecting human rights, the Council should foster a new vision that promoted its work. Moreover, the mandate holders should fulfil their mandates within the established limits. Iraq supported the President's efforts to fulfil his duties in line with his mandate. It also supported the initiatives taken to reduce the number of meetings in order to save money. Such measures had been discussed before, however. The Council must take into consideration the capabilities of small delegations. Moreover, it must not deviate from the objectives for which it had been established. Clear standards must be used to define human rights violations, and draft resolutions must take into account the universality and comprehensive nature of human rights.

78. Iraq had submitted its candidature for membership of the Council for the period 2026–2028 and looked forward to working with States, international organizations, civil society organizations and the human rights mechanisms in an effective and constructive manner in order to uphold the status of the Council.

79. **Ms. Mouchikhi** (Morocco) said that her country welcomed the central role played by the Human Rights Council in the United Nations system in promoting and protecting human rights. Morocco would continue to support the Council's mandate and cooperate fully with all special procedures. The seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the thirtieth anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action provided a valuable opportunity to raise awareness and reflect on achievements, best practices and shortcomings in the full realization of human rights for all, without discrimination of any kind. Morocco interacted extensively with all United Nations human rights mechanisms, giving priority to consultation and coordination within the groups to which it belonged, and to consensus-building in order to ensure that the decisions of those mechanisms were adopted by all Member States. Morocco had made considerable efforts to improve the functioning of the human rights treaty bodies, particularly with regard to the procedure and presentation of periodic reports. In that respect, in 2022 and 2023, Morocco had submitted its fifth national periodic report to the Economic Community of West African States, its sixth national periodic report to the Committee on Migrant Workers and its fourth national report ([A/HRC/WG.6/41/MAR/1](#)) under the universal periodic review. Following the review of its national report in November 2022, her delegation had accepted 86 per cent of the 306 recommendations made. In addition, Morocco played an active role in the Convention Against Torture Initiative, which, since its launch, had enabled 19 new States Parties to join the Committee against Torture.

80. As a member of 17 core groups, Morocco made a substantial contribution to the drafting, negotiation and promotion of numerous resolutions. To that end, it would contribute to the drafting of several resolutions on combating hate speech, enforced disappearances, transitional justice, the role of institutions, ombudsmen and mediators, and the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. Furthermore, in March 2022, Morocco had launched its first action plan on women, peace and security as part of the project to promote gender equality as the foundation of a fair, democratic and egalitarian society. Morocco had recently hosted the 2023 Annual Meetings of the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund, which underscored the

country's commitment to reforming the international financial and monetary system. In addition, as part of its efforts to achieve the universalization of human rights, Morocco would host a regional conference in November 2023 on the possibilities for ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in the Middle East and North Africa region.

81. **Mr. Tun** (Myanmar) said that the worsening human rights situation and unspeakable tragedy unfolding in Myanmar required greater attention from the Human Rights Council. Since the illegal military coup in 2021, the situation had reached its lowest point with the collapse of the rule of law. The illegal military junta's widespread and systematic campaign of brutal violence against civilians had threatened their fundamental human rights, including the right to life and personal security. Moreover, their democratic right to elect their own government had been blatantly disregarded, and their right to development and adequate living standards had been denied through the junta's incompetence and deep corruption and its destruction of the rule of law. It was extremely hard to promote respect for human rights under a military junta that was capable of nothing but brutality. However, in order to restore the rule of law and justice, the people of Myanmar were doing everything they could to end the failing illegal coup and establish a system of federal democratic governance with effective, inclusive and accountable institutions.

82. The Council played a crucial role in the ongoing efforts to bring peace and development to Myanmar. The illegal junta's widespread human rights violations had to be continuously monitored and verified. Evidence of serious international crimes, including crimes against humanity and war crimes, committed against the people of Myanmar was needed to hold those responsible to account and to achieve reconciliation in post-coup Myanmar. For that reason, the Council should continue to support the mandates of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, OHCHR and the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar.

83. Since February 2021, the Council had adopted seven resolutions on Myanmar, including two in 2023 – all without a vote, meaning that the calls in the resolutions enjoyed overwhelming support. However, it was not the number of resolutions that mattered, but the efforts to address the root causes of the ongoing human rights violations in Myanmar. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights had repeatedly called for the situation of Myanmar to be referred to the International Criminal Court and for new thinking on Myanmar in order to bring the unspeakable tragedy to an end. The culture of total impunity enjoyed by the

military junta must be ended, which, in turn, would stop the violence and restore democracy and rule of law in Myanmar.

84. At the minimum, the resolution on Myanmar presented at the Committee should include elements of the two resolutions adopted at the Council in 2023 in order to accurately reflect the situation on the ground and to find a way to achieve a sustainable solution to the crisis in Myanmar. It was clear that bold measures were urgently needed by the United Nations bodies, namely the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Human Rights Council, the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice. The Human Rights Council should therefore take additional measures with new and innovative thinking to stop the widespread and systematic human rights violations by the illegal military junta. Similarly, the General Assembly and individual Member States should take necessary measures to complement the Council's work regarding Myanmar.

85. **Ms. Andújar** (Dominican Republic) said that, having been elected to the Human Rights Council for the period 2024–2026, her country would promote human rights education for all, defend the human rights of the most vulnerable, as well as those of women and youth, advocate assertive climate action to address climate change, promote the independence of OHCHR, work towards effective multilateralism as the appropriate tool for promoting and protecting human rights, strengthen the universal periodic review and protect people online by combating disinformation and fake news.

86. The international community had made a shared commitment to address the most pressing human rights challenges. However, much remained to be done, including to foster dialogue and mutual understanding. Member States must promote the rule of law, strengthen democratic institutions and ensure the meaningful participation of civil society and youth in decision-making. The universal periodic review provided an important platform for engaging with Member States in addressing their responsibilities to protect and promote human rights and the dignity of all. In that context, the Dominican Republic was preparing to present its fourth national report in 2024 under the universal period review mechanism. In 2023, her country had participated in constructive dialogue with the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The Dominican Republic was committed to promoting the mainstreaming of human rights in public policies and government planning and supporting the work carried out by the Inter-Agency Human Rights Commission through the follow-up and implementation of the national human rights plan for the period 2018–2024.

87. The Dominican Republic attached great importance to the special procedure mandates as an essential tool for introducing valuable knowledge to the discussions in the Council, which improved the quality of decisions and ensured that actions were informed and focused, thereby increasing their effectiveness. In that vein, her country had hosted a visit from the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons so as to strengthen cooperation in that area. In closing, she urged Member States to engage in cooperation and multilateralism to ensure that human rights were not just an ideal, but a lived reality for all.

88. **Mr. Pedroza** (Peru) said that the international community still had a long way to go to achieve the goal of ensuring that all human beings were free and equal in dignity and rights. Many people continued to live in extreme poverty, without access to opportunities or the basic capability to live in dignity; suffered the most severe consequences of climate change; faced humanitarian emergencies as a result of escalating conflicts and geopolitical tensions; and suffered discrimination, neglect and abandonment. That reality required Member States to place the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the centre of their efforts.

89. Peru reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, based on the principles of universality, interdependence and indivisibility. Furthermore, it fully supported the universal human rights system, of which the Human Rights Council was the main body. As the Council's work was essential to strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide, it should be more proactive and, based on a spirit of dialogue and cooperation, create an agenda that contributed, from a human rights approach, to improving the situation of people throughout the world, especially those in vulnerable situations.

90. Peru had long demonstrated its commitment to the Council, having led the transition process towards the establishment of the Council as the last chair of the former Commission on Human Rights, and having been a member of the Council for three previous terms. His country would continue to participate actively in the Council's discussions and cooperate with its mechanisms and special procedures. As a sign of its commitment, Peru had submitted its fourth report (A/HRC/WG.6/42/PER/1) under the universal periodic review during the fifty-third regular session of the Council. The assessment of the four periodic reviews had been highly positive as it had provided the opportunity to highlight the significant progress made at the national level in consolidating democracy. Likewise,

recommendations had been made that enhanced respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

91. Peru remained firmly committed to the institutional strengthening of the Council, which would enable it to promote with greater efficiency universal respect for and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. That commitment represented the natural extension of his country's vision and gave continuity to the work already done to protect and promote human rights, especially in relation to such vulnerable groups as women, children, adolescents, the elderly, persons with disabilities and Indigenous peoples. As States were responsible for ensuring that the Council was able to achieve its objectives and that all people could enjoy the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Peru called on all Member States to support, cooperate with and contribute to the Council's important work.

92. **Mr. Hassani** (Algeria) said that his country reaffirmed its steadfast commitment to protecting and upholding human rights and its respect for its international engagements under international human rights law, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. All countries must uphold and respect their human rights obligations. During its membership of the Human Rights Council, Algeria was committed to promoting international human rights and would work diligently alongside Member States to achieve the objectives for which the Council had been established. It was important to work professionally and to avoid the politicization of human rights issues, which should be addressed in a manner consistent with the principles of objectivity, independence and non-selectivity and in coordination with the States concerned, as that was the prerequisite for achieving the desired goals.

93. Algeria strongly condemned the gross violations of international human rights and humanitarian law perpetrated by the occupying forces in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, especially in the Gaza Strip. The Council and the international community must urgently intervene in order to protect the Palestinian people.

94. *Ms. Monica (Bangladesh), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

95. **Ms. Rizk** (Egypt) said that, having been heavily involved in the elaboration of General Assembly resolution 60/251 establishing the Human Rights Council and Council resolution 5/1 on the institution-building package, Egypt was committed to ensuring the effective implementation of the Council's mandate on the promotion and protection of human rights, guided by the principles of impartiality, objectivity, non-selectivity, constructive dialogue and cooperation. The universal

periodic review was the mechanism that was most suited to upholding the universality of human rights and the practical implementation of the aforementioned principles as it allowed for the human rights situations in Member States to be reviewed on an equal basis and in the context of dialogue and cooperation. However, it was unfortunate that the Council was moving away from the spirit of consensus and constructive engagement towards division and politicization, which threatened to undermine its work and jeopardize its capacity to contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights in a manner that reflected the priorities of Member States equally. Her delegation had observed a proliferation of politically motivated mandates and duplication in the Council's work, which placed a strain on the limited resources available for the mandates created by the Council and undermined the mandate holders' work. Member States should therefore better mainstream the work of the Council so that it could effectively uphold and implement its mandate. In addition, some mandates that had been created by developing countries or that served the priorities of such countries were not fully supported by OHCHR, which weakened the work of the mandate holders and limited their ability to fulfil their role.

96. Although both the former Commission on Human Rights and the Council had always had a standing agenda item on the situation of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, neither body had managed to hold Israel accountable for its persistent and systematic violations of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including the Palestinian people's right to self-determination. Moreover, the current onslaught in Gaza had been met with silence by the Council. It was incumbent upon Member States of the Council and the United Nations system to voice their concerns about the grave violations of human rights and international humanitarian law being perpetrated against Palestinian civilians in Gaza, who were being bombarded on a daily basis and denied their right to health, food, education, water, sanitation and freedom of movement. Such violations must be addressed within the Council and the United Nations system as a whole.

97. **Ms. Mendez Gruezo** (Ecuador) said that the current global situation called for the strengthening of multilateralism in addressing human rights. Her country was concerned about the increase in the six grave violations against children and adolescents, the persistent use of sexual violence as a weapon of war, the institutionalization of structures of gender-based discrimination, the systematic violations of international humanitarian law and the unprecedented increase in the numbers of internally displaced persons

and refugees as a consequence of violence. Ecuador therefore reaffirmed the Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights. States should recognize such rights as universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated and should ensure that they were fully enjoyed, without discrimination of any kind. The international community had a collective responsibility to make every effort to promote and realize human rights, as they were inextricably linked with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Secretary-General's call for a new agenda for peace.

98. As a non-permanent member of the Security Council, Ecuador was convinced that peace and international security could be established in societies where human rights and fundamental freedoms were respected and where the expansion of civic space and the strengthening of the rule of law were promoted. It was with that same logic that Ecuador had served as a member of the Human Rights Council on three occasions, a body to which it hoped to return in the period 2027–2029. In particular, her country sought to understand conflicts and crises from the perspective of those who were most vulnerable, namely women, children, persons with disabilities, refugees, internally displaced persons and national, ethnic and religious minorities, and hoped to achieve sustainable solutions by addressing the root causes of violence and discrimination.

99. **Ms. Pichardo Urbina** (Nicaragua) said that international organizations and bodies, including the Human Rights Council, assessed the application of human rights in an unequal manner between countries and applied double standards when it came to the atrocities committed by the imperialists and neo-colonialists. That led to the manipulation and instrumentalization of human rights for other purposes and hegemonic ambitions stemming from imperialist economic and political interests, which affected the dignity and sovereignty of the peoples who sought to carve out their own destiny without any foreign interference. Efforts to promote, protect and develop human rights must be undertaken with respect for the identity, sovereignty and historical development of each country and without losing sight of the universality of such rights, as contained in the declarations, resolutions, agreements and mandates adopted, which placed special emphasis on the sources of information collected for analysis. Such information must be impartial and objective.

100. The report of the Council included an utterly biased resolution on Nicaragua. Her country reaffirmed its total rejection of any kind of resolution that was biased and oblivious to the structural changes Nicaragua

had been undertaking to ensure progress in the enjoyment of human rights by the Nicaraguan people and sustainable development throughout the country. Likewise, it categorically rejected the unilateral creation and appointment of a supposed "Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua", which was merely a smokescreen to give their reports on Nicaragua a false appearance of legality. The reports disseminated subjective, distorted and false information about the situation in Nicaragua, following the directives of the United States and some European countries. Nicaragua had never been and would never be a threat to any country in the world; it was a peaceful, decent and dignified member of the international community that demanded justice and equality. It therefore called for the defence of the human rights of Nicaraguans and for the elimination of the illegal unilateral coercive measures against its people, which directly attacked their fundamental human rights and constituted a true crime against humanity. Nevertheless, those unjust and illegal measures against her country neither discouraged nor intimidated it. Nicaragua would continue to stand firm in the struggle to achieve the maximum level of effectiveness of its political, economic and social democracy. Her delegation called on the Council to assume its responsibilities and recognize and respect the inalienable right of peoples to make their own decisions and to live in peace, with sovereignty, respect and human consideration.

101. *Mr. Marschik (Austria) resumed the Chair.*

102. **Mr. Kim Nam Hyok** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that his delegation totally rejected and strongly condemned the reckless accusations made against his country by South Korea as a grave political provocation and a clear manifestation of its deep-rooted and hostile policy to tarnish the image of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The so-called human rights issues repeatedly touted by South Korea were nothing but a political trick to infringe upon the sovereignty of his country. The international community must give priority attention to the dire human rights situation in South Korea, whose anti-people policies were gravely threatening people's right to life. Moreover, its social and economic crises were getting worse. The world was currently witnessing all kinds of crimes and human rights abuses in South Korea, including sexual violence, human trafficking and kidnapping. The United Nations human rights mechanisms, including the Human Rights Council, should give first priority to addressing such abuses. Furthermore, South Korea must face an international investigation and be held accountable for its serious human rights abuses and crimes. His delegation urged South Korea to end its politically

motivated human rights campaign against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and to focus on addressing the dire human rights situation in its own territory. His country would take all measures against the hostile acts of South Korea in order to defend its national sovereignty and the rights and interests of its own people.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.