



# General Assembly

Seventy-fourth session

**24<sup>th</sup>** plenary meeting

Friday, 1 November 2019, 3 p.m.  
New York

Official Records

*President:* Mr. Muhammad-Bande ..... (Nigeria)

*In the absence of the President, Mr. Baati (Tunisia),  
Vice-President, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.*

## Agenda item 65 (continued)

### Report of the Human Rights Council

#### Report of the Human Rights Council (A/74/53 and A/74/53/Add.1)

**Mr. Carazo Zeledón** (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Costa Rica takes note of the report of the Human Rights Council (A/74/53 and A/74/53/Add.1) as well as the briefing by the Council's President, Mr. Coly Seck. We congratulate him on the successful conduct of his work. In addition, without taking any position on specific situations, we support an increasingly substantive and analytical report on the decisions taken by the Council as well as on how the human rights of peoples are addressed across the world.

Costa Rica attaches great importance to the situation of and developments in the enjoyment of human rights in its region and in the world. For that reason, we have always proceeded on the basis of dialogue, international law and consensus-building in promoting the rights and interests of our inhabitants and in our commitment to a sustainable development agenda for all.

Costa Rica strongly supports the United Nations system and multilateralism in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, as well as respect for the promotion and protection of human rights. We wish to

convey to the Human Rights Council the message that it plays a key and essential role in promoting constructive international dialogue and cooperation to ensure respect for and the promotion and protection of human rights around the world as one of the fundamental and founding pillars of the Organization. As a community of nations that represents States, it must ensure the human rights of its peoples. Given the current and future challenges, we must continue to develop a systematic vision that promotes more consistent policies and institutional processes across the various United Nations bodies. That work must be guided by the principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity, non-selectivity and non-politicization and a cross-cutting approach to human rights and the processes for delivering such rights, always mindful of the fact that the system has the vital role of ensuring that States respect all rights of all persons.

Our civilization has made great strides in all areas of life, including with respect to well-being and the enjoyment and realization of human rights. However, we continue to face the greatest economic and social inequalities, which, unfortunately, continue to increase. As long as some have a great deal and others have almost nothing, we cannot progress towards a common ideal and properly address the major challenges of our time.

We have left many people behind. The enjoyment of all human rights by all persons is the only way to deliver on our commitments under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, since fundamental equality is not among nations but among individuals, who must be the ones to guide our common efforts. We wish to

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see the Council function as a convening force for the international community to develop effective responses geared towards the well-being and the dignity of human beings.

That will clearly require changes. There is no doubt that the Council's review in the coming years will be a valuable opportunity for it to renovate and further adapt to the current and future needs of individuals and to address emerging phenomena, such as climate crisis, migration and digital technology, through a human rights approach.

In that regard, Costa Rica expresses its unwavering commitment to and involvement in all multilateral initiatives that seek to uphold the rights of the most deprived peoples and individuals, those whose rights have been violated or those in situations of vulnerability.

In May Costa Rica was pleased to submit its third Universal Periodic Review, which noted significant progress but also highlighted major challenges ahead in its efforts to build an equal and harmonious nation that respects all rights of all persons. We received the recommendations made by the countries that took part in the Universal Periodic Review of Costa Rica and we are strongly committed to implementing them in a constructive and transparent manner.

The Universal Periodic Review is a key tool for a constructive intergovernmental dialogue on human rights. We wish to see it further strengthened, including by developing early warning systems, promoting dialogue among the various parties and supporting countries in their capacity-building efforts.

Costa Rica strongly supports the work of the human rights treaty bodies, which is a key component of the United Nations human rights framework. Ahead of the review of the human rights treaty body system in 2020, we reaffirm our commitment to an independent, efficient and effective treaty body system that is accessible, sustainable and people-centred.

As a result of its custom and historical tendency to promote the defence and protection of human rights and given that elected members to the Council must uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights and cooperate fully with the Council, as provided for in resolution 60/251, Costa Rica stood for election as a member of the Human Rights Council for the period from 2020 to 2022. That was two weeks ago, in October. Costa Rica is grateful to all Member

States that supported it, and we encourage all elected members to fully discharge the responsibility entrusted to them. Costa Rica will support all efforts in that regard, while affirming that it will continue and carry on promoting its candidacy for a seat on the Human Rights Council for the period from 2023 to 2025.

We recognize that all countries throughout the world face challenges to ensure the realization of human rights for all peoples, and we will continue to do so. However, if we discuss and call attention to human rights situations wherever they may occur in the world, that is not politicizing rights but rather the most genuine expression of empathy and humanity, as well as our sovereign obligation as States.

In accountability processes there are two actors: those who hold accountable and those who are held accountable. That means that we must have genuine exchanges and a truly constructive dialogue among countries. I must say that we would have liked to see the continued presence of the representative of the Human Rights Council during our statements as Member States. We would also like to have seen States members of the Council, including several recently elected countries, involved in this forum to share their decisions on and commitments to human rights. We underscore that, but for a few exceptions, that has not been the case.

For its part, Costa Rica has always been a positive and constructive partner dedicated to seeking to defend individual rights, regardless of whether or not we were a member of the Human Rights Council. We will uphold our consistent promise to continue to strengthen human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law.

**Ms. Ali** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): We have taken note of the report (A/74/53 and Add A/74/53/Add.1) of the Human Rights Council (HRC).

The delegation of my country, the Syrian Arab Republic, reiterates its firm stance on the politicization of human rights issues and mechanisms, as well as their use as a political tool to serve narrow interests of certain powerful States Members of the United Nations and to target other Member States, including my country, for reasons that are connected neither to international law, the Charter of the United Nations, nor human rights. Accordingly, we would like to reaffirm our position with regard to item 4 of the Human Rights Council's agenda, "Human rights situations that require the Council's attention", which has served to establish

the Council's contradictory approach to its work, in particular its selectivity in the human rights situations it chooses to address, in violation of resolution 60/251, which calls for refraining from double standards and politicization when it comes to human rights cases. The resolutions adopted by the Human Rights Council under agenda item 4 reflect their sponsors' biased and subjective approach, which is evident, for example, in HRC resolution 42/27, entitled "The human rights situation in the Syrian Arab Republic", the sponsor of which continues to use the resolution to promote its version of the situation in my country, propagate controversial concepts and push the Human Rights Council to take up issues that are beyond its mandate.

Similarly, we have repeatedly expressed our rejection of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as its mandate, periodic and special reports and all the recommendations and findings contained therein, as the Commission has consistently demonstrated that it is politicized and lacks objectivity and professionalism in its work. We therefore disassociate ourselves from the information contained in the report which provides the basis for HRC resolution 42/27, as well as from any information produced by the Commission of Inquiry. We renew our rejection of both.

My delegation stresses the importance of the Universal Periodic Review mechanism as an embodiment of the spirit of cooperation and constructive dialogue required to strengthen the global human rights situation, particularly through the interaction with all States on an equal footing and by ensuring that the country in question is fully involved. In this regard, we stress that the mechanism designed to improve and revitalize the Human Rights Council and increase its efficiency should not be prejudiced by the institutional-building package developed for this mechanism and by related measures. We also stress the importance of carrying out the work of the Council in a transparent way, including through organizing open and inclusive debates for Member States on reviewing frameworks to regulate the work of the Council, without exclusions that contradict its character as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly. Such exclusions would eventually erode the fundamental basis upon which the Council was established.

We reiterate our support for item 7 on the Council's agenda, "Human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories" and the mandates and

reports related to it. This agenda item is closely linked to the ongoing and incessant human rights violations stemming from the Israeli occupation, which itself requires our continued attention and monitoring. We also reiterate the importance of focusing the attention of the Human Rights Council on the effects of terrorism and the application of obligatory unilateral measures on human rights. The rise of hatred and xenophobia in the world requires continued dialogue on ways to counter a threat that undermines the principle of non-discrimination, which is a pillar of international human rights law.

We believe that it is of paramount importance to ensure coordination between the Human Rights Council and the Third Committee of the General Assembly, in line with General Assembly resolution 60/251 and the institutional-building package, and to discourage attempts to connect work of the Council with mandates of other bodies, particularly the Security Council, which will divert the Human Rights Council from fulfilling its mandated role and meeting its goals, while undermining the commitments of special-procedures mandate-holders to the Code of Conduct and the principles contained therein, especially those of impartiality and objectivity, and prevent them from fulfilling their mandates.

In conclusion, the Syrian Arab Republic stands ready to continue engaging with the Council to strengthen its role as an international mechanism for promoting universal respect for human rights based on impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity.

**Mrs. Al-Abri (Oman)** (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to begin by thanking the President of the Human Rights Council for the Council's latest report (A/74/53 and A/74/53/Add.1), which is the subject of our discussion today under agenda item 65.

My country is proud of its achievements on the protection and promotion of human rights. We would like to emphasize that our Government's efforts will continue in this regard, through the integrated system of laws and legislation we have developed in accordance with principles enshrined in the Basic Law of the State of November 1996, so as to protect the rights of individuals and society as a whole, with a view to achieving equality in all sectors of Omani society. I should like to highlight in this context the accession of my country to several international conventions in the area of human rights.

Our Government is undertaking efforts to promote human rights in Oman through several national commissions. I would also like to cite the praise that my country received from the Human Rights Council in 2015 following the presentation of its national report to the Universal Periodic Review on Human Rights.

Allow me now to refer to the discussion in the Council report before us of the human rights situation of the Palestinian people. We would like to emphasize the need for the international community to provide the protection needed by the Palestinian people. We call on the Israeli authorities to abide by the provisions of international law and cease all violations of the inalienable rights of the brotherly Palestinian people. We would also like to emphasize our concern about the humanitarian situation in the brotherly Republic of Yemen and call on the international community to continue to assist the Yemeni people in the humanitarian plight they are experiencing.

In conclusion, I applaud the role played by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in the promotion of human rights. We hope the Office will continue its effort in accordance with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

**Mr. Verdier** (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to thank the President of the Human Rights Council for his briefing this morning to the General Assembly (see A/74/PV.23) on the report of the Council (A/74/53 and A/74/53/Add.1) .

Argentina is currently a member of the Human Rights Council, and we are firmly committed to continuing to strengthen the universal system of promotion and protection of human rights. We note our country's close cooperation with all the special procedures of the Human Rights Council. We host visits from various Special Rapporteurs and working groups on the promotion and protection of human rights, and we support initiatives that seek to renew existing mandates or create new mandates.

Argentina supports the Universal Periodic Review as a significant and objective tool of the universal system for the promotion and protection of human rights. My country has also submitted various and innovative draft resolutions in the Human Rights Council. Notable among them is the proposed establishment of an international agenda of the right to truth. We have also promoted the thematic mandates of the

Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence and the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons. Promoting the universalization of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance is central both to Argentina's foreign policy and to the efforts made in the General Assembly to strengthen the protection of the rights of the elderly.

With regard to recent sessions of the Human Rights Council, we welcome the renewal of the mandate of the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, Mr. Victor Madrigal-Borloz, through Human Rights Council resolution 41/18. We created this mandate because we were convinced that the scale, gravity and widespread nature of this type of violence and discrimination required a specific response from the Council in the form of a specialized mechanism. We were not mistaken in that assessment.

Similarly, we welcome Human Rights Council resolution 42/25, entitled "Situation of human rights in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela", adopted during the forty-second session of the Council, which establishes an independent international fact-finding mission to investigate possible human rights violations committed in Venezuela since 2014, with a view to ensuring full accountability of the perpetrators and justice for the victims..

I would like to conclude by renewing Argentina's firm commitment to promoting multilateralism as an effective mechanism to safeguard human rights.

**The Acting President:** We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

Before giving the floor to speakers in exercise of the right of reply, may I remind members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and 5 minutes for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

**Mr. Xing Jisheng** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China wishes to exercise its right of reply to respond to the statement made by the representative of the United States. That statement made it all too clear that the United States is completely disconnected from the broad membership and is no longer in touch with its thinking.

During China's Universal Periodic Review last year, more than 120 countries applauded China's human rights achievements. China hopes that the United States, as the host country and an important founding member of the United Nations, can listen carefully to the voices of Member States, respect their views and do some serious soul-searching. The United States should ask itself why it seems to be isolated in its positions and why the discussions in multilateral forums are entirely different from what it had envisaged. That is what the United States should be doing, rather than engaging in wild speculation or flinging wanton accusations on trumped-up pretexts.

China also encourages the United States to carefully read the Charter of the United Nations, which it helped

to draft, respect the character of the United Nations as an intergovernmental, international organization and demonstrate genuine respect for Member States by addressing them by their correct names.

China congratulates all the newly elected members of the Human Rights Council, welcomes the contribution of all Member States to the work of the Council and is ready to cooperate with all members on the basis of equality and mutual respect.

**The Acting President:** The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 65.

*The meeting rose at 3.35 p.m.*