



# General Assembly

Seventy-fourth session

Official Records

Distr.: General  
22 January 2020

Original: English

---

## Third Committee

### Summary record of the 19th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 15 October 2019, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Braun ..... (Luxembourg)

## Contents

Statement by the President of the General Assembly

Agenda item 70: Promotion and protection of human rights (*continued*)

- (a) Implementation of human rights instruments (*continued*)
- (b) Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms (*continued*)
- (c) Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives (*continued*)
- (d) Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (*continued*)

---

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be sent as soon as possible, under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, to the Chief of the Documents Management Section ([dms@un.org](mailto:dms@un.org)), and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>)

19-17802 (E)



Please recycle



The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

### Statement by the President of the General Assembly

1. **Mr. Muhammad-Bande** (President of the General Assembly) said that human rights were the foundation for peace and prosperity, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development emphasized the importance of promoting universal respect for human rights and human dignity. The promotion of peace and security through conflict prevention, poverty eradication, quality education and the implementation of an effective people-centred response to the climate emergency were also among his priorities.

2. Inclusion was the bedrock of rights and should be guaranteed at the community, national, regional and global levels. The General Assembly was the most representative body in the United Nations, and Member States therefore had a responsibility to advance representation and inclusion in their work. In that regard, and on the fortieth anniversary of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, Member States should commit to preventing all forms of sexual and gender-based violence and work to remove structural and cultural impediments for equal participation and equal opportunities for women and girls.

3. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights stated that everyone had a right to education, yet one in five children around the world were not in school. It was therefore necessary to ensure the rights of children everywhere so that they could fulfil their potential. In that regard, the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child was an opportunity for Member States to reflect on their accomplishments and to deepen their commitment to the rights of the child. All entities, including the Human Rights Council and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, were urged to work towards ensuring a better world for all.

### Agenda item 70: Promotion and protection of human rights (continued)

(a) **Implementation of human rights instruments** (continued) (A/74/40, A/74/44, A/74/48, A/74/55, A/74/56, A/74/146, A/74/148, A/74/179, A/74/233, A/74/254 and A/74/256)

(b) **Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms** (continued) (A/74/147, A/74/159, A/74/160, A/74/161, A/74/163, A/74/164, A/74/165, A/74/167, A/74/174, A/74/176,

A/74/178, A/74/181, A/74/183, A/74/185, A/74/186, A/74/189, A/74/190, A/74/191, A/74/197, A/74/198, A/74/212, A/74/213, A/74/215, A/74/226, A/74/227, A/74/229, A/74/243, A/74/245, A/74/255, A/74/261, A/74/262, A/74/270, A/74/271, A/74/277, A/74/285, A/74/314, A/74/318, A/74/335, A/74/349, A/74/351, A/74/358 and A/74/460)

(c) **Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives** (continued)

(A/74/166, A/74/188, A/74/196, A/74/268, A/74/273, A/74/275, A/74/276, A/74/278, A/74/303, A/74/311 and A/74/342)

(d) **Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action** (continued) (A/74/36)

4. **Ms. Bachelet** (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights), introducing her report (A/74/36), which complemented her annual report to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/40/3), said that the world was facing rising challenges to multilateralism and to many fundamental international human rights treaties, laws and values. Despite those challenges, she was convinced that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) could work with all Member States to strengthen the consensus of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, given that all States had an obligation to respect economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights regardless of their type of Government or economic system. The emphasis of her Office on dialogue and partnership with Member States was beginning to bear fruit in thematic areas such as climate change, inequality, business and human rights.

5. The efforts of OHCHR to promote economic, social and cultural rights were essential building blocks for States to meet the Sustainable Development Goals and achieve sustained peace: in Madagascar, it had built the capacity of human rights lawyers, enabling them to support communities in protecting those rights; in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay, it had promoted the use of human rights indicators to quantify the track record of States in support of those rights; in Tunisia, it had built the capacity of domestic courts to adjudicate on issues involving those rights; in Uganda, it had supported the development and launch of guidance and training for judicial officers; and in Colombia, it had facilitated indigenous authorities and the Governor of Amazonas to reach an agreement on an indigenous intercultural health system.

6. Member States had committed to ensuring that the Sustainable Development Goals helped to realize all

human rights, including the right to development. To promote the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, it was necessary to foster partnerships to address financing gaps; identify innovative strategies; facilitate inclusive programmes; and ensure safe participatory spaces. Gender equality was at the core of the work of OHCHR, which had worked with judicial authorities and institutions in Argentina, Panama, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uruguay to address gender stereotypes and bias in the justice system and to ensure greater access to justice for women and girls.

7. To assist national and multinational business actors to uphold human rights, OHCHR provided technical support for the implementation of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and the creation of national action plans, including in Cameroon, Chile, Honduras, Kenya and Peru: in Cambodia, its efforts had focused on agribusiness and land rights; in Fiji, it had strengthened the capacity of civil society and United Nations agencies to monitor and report on the human rights impact of business activities; in Indonesia and Thailand, it had led workshops to identify the impact of business activities on human rights, the environment and migration; and in Senegal, it had supported a national study on the implementation of the Guiding Principles in the extractive sector.

8. The universal periodic review was a key entry point for engagement with States and other stakeholders on human rights issues. A total of 42 States had been reviewed in the past year, including Chad, which had abolished the death penalty for ordinary crimes; Eritrea, which had ratified the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No.182); Côte d'Ivoire, which had revised the penal code to address marital rape and domestic violence; Ethiopia, which had made extensive reforms in line with human rights recommendations; Malaysia, which had issued a standing invitation to special procedure mandate holders; and Viet Nam, which had ratified the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98).

9. OHCHR was providing support to a range of countries through the voluntary fund for financial and technical assistance in the implementation of the universal periodic review and was working to strengthen its relationships with the reformulated country teams and resident coordinators within the new planning system of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework.

10. There was a crucial need for the United Nations peacebuilding and sustaining peace activities to integrate human rights analyses and approaches. OHCHR worked closely with the Department of Peace

Operations to ensure that United Nations peace operations adhered to human rights, international humanitarian law, the protection of civilians and the Secretary General's zero tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse. With the Department of Peace Operations and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, it supported strategic planning in 12 United Nations peace operations and participated in the strategic assessments of peace operations.

11. The fight against impunity and the pursuit of transitional justice were essential to healing wounds, resolving grievances, building support for peace and preventing further human rights violations. In that regard, OHCHR had continued to support States and other stakeholders in the design and implementation of context-specific, nationally owned and victim-focused accountability and transitional justice processes, including in Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, El Salvador, South Sudan, Sri Lanka and Tunisia.

12. The world's climate emergency constituted a major threat to human rights. To further the goal of coherent and coordinated action to prevent, mitigate and adapt to climate change, and encourage greater acceptance of the human right to a healthy environment, OHCHR had signed a memorandum of understanding with the United Nations Environment Programme in August 2019. The Office had also devised a joint work plan with the World Health Organization aimed at advancing the human right to health and supporting the 2030 Agenda and the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescent's Health (2016–2030). It had also signed agreements with several African Union entities, including with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights. The International Decade for People of African Descent provided many entry points for deeper cooperation, and OHCHR was supporting the African Union Commission on the development of a compliance framework for African Union peace operations. In the Americas, OHCHR continued to strengthen its partnership with regional bodies such as the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Pan-American Health Organization and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, as well as through the Joint Action Mechanism to Contribute to the Protection of Human Rights Defenders in the Americas.

13. The human rights treaty body review was to take place in 2020. A stronger treaty body system would bolster the work of OHCHR, including in the context of the universal periodic review, expert and fact-finding bodies and capacity-building work on national policies and laws. However, the General Assembly's funding

had not kept pace with the steady increase in the treaty bodies' work. OHCHR was exploring interim solutions to alleviate some of those problems, including diverting extrabudgetary funds to address some of the most critical gaps. However, that would be at the cost of other OHCHR activities and would not solve the underlying issues.

14. **Mr. Santos Maraver** (Spain) said that multilateralism and the international system to promote and protect human rights were key to achieving peace, security, stability and development and were the basis of his Government's foreign policy. His delegation shared the vision of the High Commissioner for OHCHR, especially with regard to the need to underline human rights success stories. However, the structural human rights crises observed in certain countries were a cause for concern and it was necessary to reject any reactionary tendencies to call into question the main human rights agreements. For instance, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action should serve to strengthen the rights of women and girls. Spain was actively working to avoid any regression of human rights, to preserve universality and interdependence and to strengthen the agreements reached, and OHCHR was undertaking crucial work in that regard.

15. **Mr. Siddig** (Sudan) said that his delegation welcomed the constructive dialogue held between the transitional Government of the Sudan and OHCHR, which had led to the signing of an agreement to establish a country office for human rights in Khartoum. The positive political change that had taken place provided an unprecedented opportunity for enhancing the human rights situation in the country. In that context and for the first time in its history, the Sudan had submitted its candidature for the Human Rights Council with the full endorsement of the African Union. In its candidature, the Sudan had pledged to work in cooperation with other countries to protect human rights in accordance with existing mechanisms under the Human Rights Council; to fulfil its obligations regarding ratified conventions and treaties; to implement the principles of transitional justice and accountability for atrocities committed in the country; and to make necessary legal and security sector reforms in accordance with internationally agreed norms.

16. **Mr. Kadiri** (Morocco) said that his delegation commended the engagement of the High Commissioner to the issue of climate change and welcomed her participation in the humanitarian segment of the Economic and Social Council meeting held in June 2019, which had been chaired by Morocco. It also welcomed her efforts to defend the fundamental rights

of migrants, regardless of their migratory status, which was crucial for helping Member States to implement the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and to ensure that efficient work was undertaken on the ground and in the context of the universal periodic review.

17. His delegation welcomed the work carried out by OHCHR in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to prevent terrorism and fight violent extremism. It was also grateful to the High Commissioner for her efforts to combat hate speech in all its forms, an issue that was a priority for his Government. In that context, Morocco had recently presented a draft resolution to the General Assembly on promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue and tolerance in countering hate speech, which had been adopted by consensus as General Assembly resolution [73/328](#). His delegation also commended OHCHR for its efforts to uphold human rights in the digital era.

18. **Mr. Elizondo Belden** (Mexico), thanking the High Commissioner for her official visit to Mexico, said that it had served to strengthen the commitment of his country to working with OHCHR to protect and defend human rights. A recent expression of that work had been the signing of a framework agreement for the country's security forces to receive training in international human rights standards.

19. Propaganda inspired by theories based on the superiority of a race or religion was being used to attack the values of humanism. Hate speech, which was intolerable and demanded an immediate, united and firm reaction from the international community, should have no place in the twenty-first century, and yet it had claimed innocent victims in France, Norway and New Zealand, and more recently in El Paso (United States of America) against innocent people of Mexican and Hispanic origin. Given such a troubling trend, he asked how States could respond to and prevent hate speech from a perspective of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

20. **Mr. Skoog** (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden), said that the shrinking democratic and civic space around the world was a matter of great concern. The Nordic countries appreciated the efforts of the High Commissioner to draw attention to those issues and called on Member States to cooperate fully with OHCHR and provide mandate holders unhindered and meaningful access to individuals and civil society.

21. The Nordic countries condemned all reprisals against those who cooperated with the United Nations and its mechanisms and would continue to defend the

rights of individuals to participate in United Nations deliberations. In that context, they welcomed the work of OHCHR in organizing in-country activities in which civil society and human rights defenders could play a key role. However, given that the opportunities for those actors were often restricted, it was necessary to find solutions that provided them with continued support. He asked how Member States could best cooperate with the United Nations and its mechanisms to support civil society actors working in difficult environments.

22. **Mr. Hassani Nejad Pirkouhi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the increasing attacks on multilateralism and the rise of radical nationalist and supremacist movements posed a global threat to the protection and promotion of human rights. To uphold the principle of universality of human rights, it was essential for OHCHR to hear the voices of those who for a long time had not been considered worthy of being heard. Human rights were not a commodity for some to use against others for political gains. In that regard, his delegation expressed its deep concern over the manipulative campaigns concerning OHCHR membership and the practice of presenting politically motivated country-specific resolutions at the Human Rights Council and the Third Committee. Since the previous year, the impact of the unlawful unilateral measures imposed on the people of his country had been exacerbated. The Government of the United States had targeted the citizens of Iran, in particular women, children, the elderly and those in need of medical attention, in order to settle political scores in what could be considered an act of economic terrorism. The United Nations and its human rights mechanisms had failed to take a position on that genocidal mass violation of the human rights of the Iranian people. Innocent victims deserved to be heard and their suffering to be redressed and compensated. No human being should condone the collective and indiscriminate punishment of civilians.

23. **Mr. Roscoe** (United Kingdom) said that his delegation welcomed the work carried out by OHCHR to catalogue violations and identify perpetrators through commissions of inquiry, fact-finding missions and independent investigative mechanisms. The work of OHCHR was vital to expose human rights violations and ensure that States met their obligations, commitments and responsibilities with regard to human rights. To support that work, the United Kingdom had given a voluntary contribution of \$9 million to OHCHR in 2018 and \$8 million in 2019 to date. Given the financial situation of OHCHR, his delegation hoped that others would do the same.

24. When States engaged with the international system, OHCHR could help to put human rights at the

heart of sustaining peace and sustainable development. His delegation commended the progress that had been highlighted in the report of the High Commissioner in that respect, including the signing of a memorandum of understanding between OHCHR and the Sudan. He asked how the High Commissioner could ensure that all States cooperated fully with OHCHR and how Member States could ensure that any attempts to use limited engagement as justification for avoiding stronger mechanisms were overturned.

25. **Ms. Bassene** (Senegal), speaking on behalf of the members of the Human Rights and Conflict Prevention Caucus, said that human rights could play an important role in conflict prevention and sustaining peace. It was necessary to strengthen the exchange between the bodies and entities working across the three pillars of the United Nations and to promote strong links between Geneva and New York, in particular among OHCHR, the Human Rights Council, the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission. Such institutional exchanges enabled a common approach that was needed for the effective prevention of and response to human rights violations and abuses. It would be useful to learn how Member States could use the momentum generated by United Nations reforms to advance the preventive role of human rights. She asked how the role of human rights in conflict prevention and resolution could be strengthened.

26. **Mr. Heusgen** (Germany), commending the High Commissioner for her report, which highlighted recent negative developments, including xenophobia, the pushback on minorities and challenges to gender equality and women's rights, said that his delegation also wished to highlight the pushback that was taking place on sexual and reproductive rights. Human rights were enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and, as such, should be considered universal rather than regional. His delegation supported the comments made by the High Commissioner on the interlinkage between human rights, peace and development. Human rights violations were at the origin of conflicts, as observed in the Syrian Arab Republic, and peace could only be achieved with accountability mechanisms for crimes committed. Recalling that Germany had invited the High Commissioner to discuss the situation in Haiti in the Security Council, he also encouraged her to carry out field visits to Myanmar and China.

27. **Mr. Favre** (Switzerland) said that his country strongly supported the OHCHR management plan for 2018–2021. The Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network had made a positive assessment of the organizational performance of OHCHR, which had

demonstrated a strong commitment to its mandate and was able to adapt to new political, technological and socioeconomic trends. However, Switzerland was alarmed by the chronic underfunding of the Office. While human rights were one of the three pillars of the United Nations and central to its work, there was a significant gap between the mandate of OHCHR and the financial resources allocated to it. In that regard, Switzerland would continue its engagement within the Fifth Committee to ensure that the human rights pillar received the necessary resources from the regular budget of the United Nations to finance the mandate entrusted to it by Member States. His Government would continue its financial support for OHCHR in the form of voluntary contributions and called on all Member States to strengthen the financial base of the Office.

28. **Ms. Vasilevskaya** (Belarus) said that, in order to successfully carry out its many tasks, OHCHR should focus its limited resources, both human and financial, on the areas that had been determined clearly and by consensus by the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council and should adopt the most effective approaches. Strengthening the capacities of Member States through technical cooperation and the sharing of best practices was an approach that would yield consistent results. Cooperation between Belarus and OHCHR in support of her Government's national plan on human rights had gradually expanded, leading to an increase in the effectiveness of existing instruments for the promotion and protection of human rights in the country and in the awareness of international standards among the public sector and civil society. Belarus was grateful to OHCHR for the seminar for law enforcement agencies in Belarus on non-discriminatory policing methods during sporting events, which had been held the day before the European Games that had taken place in Minsk in June 2019. With the support of an OHCHR Human Rights Adviser assigned to the United Nations country team in Belarus, cooperation was being developed in other areas and national dialogue on human rights was being strengthened.

29. **Ms. Rasheed** (Observer for the State of Palestine) said that, given the independence of OHCHR both from States and within the United Nations system, it should treat all States equally and fairly without political considerations. In that regard, her delegation recalled the obligation of the High Commissioner to fulfil the request made by the Human Rights Council in its resolution 31/36 to produce a database of all business enterprises involved in the unlawful settlement activities of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The database was an

important tool to strengthen the implementation of international law and standards, including the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, in situations of conflict and occupation. Her delegation asked the High Commissioner to give urgency to fulfilling the mandate of resolution 31/36 in its entirety and not to risk jeopardizing the independence of OHCHR or setting a precedent where other mandates could be discredited and therefore not implemented. She asked the High Commissioner to update the Committee on the status of the publication of the aforementioned database.

30. **Ms. Agladze** (Georgia) said that the report of the High Commissioner on cooperation with Georgia (A/HRC/42/34) demonstrated that the human rights situation in the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali under Russian occupation had deteriorated, particularly owing to growing restrictions on freedom of movement. The population living in the occupied Georgian regions and near the occupation line had been forced to endure illegal heavy militarization, kidnappings and arbitrary detentions, restrictions of fundamental human rights and ethnic discrimination. In August 2019, Russian occupation forces had entered the territory controlled by the Government of Georgia, erecting artificial barriers in the village of Gugutiantkari and initiating the construction of a guard post near the village of Chorchana. In September 2019, the occupation regime had closed the so-called crossing points at the occupation line in Tskhinvali, further violating freedom of movement. Similar restrictions had been in effect in the Abkhazia region since June 2019.

31. One of the most alarming developments of the Russian occupation had been the deprivation of life of Georgian citizens. Justice had still not been served for the torture and deprivation of life of Georgian internally displaced persons Davit Basharuli, Giga Otkhazia, Archil Tatunashvili and Irakli Kvaratskhelia. There was a clear need for international security mechanisms and unimpeded access of international human rights monitors to the occupied regions.

32. Her delegation was deeply concerned that, despite the repeated efforts of the High Commissioner and the call contained in Human Rights Council resolution 40/28, the occupying Power and its regime had once again denied OHCHR access to Abkhazia and Tskhinvali. She asked the High Commissioner to share her thoughts on other possible mechanisms to address the human rights violations in the occupied territories of Georgia.

33. **Mr. Lauer** (Luxembourg) said that his delegation welcomed the fruitful cooperation of OHCHR with civil society and the private sector. However, human rights

challenges continued to grow, which required increased capacity for adaptation. In that regard, his delegation welcomed the launch of a global project on business and human rights in the field of technology. In her report, the High Commissioner had said that OHCHR supported multilateral development banks in developing policies on reprisals against environmental and human rights defenders. He would welcome some examples of those policies and further information on the role that Member States could play with regard to those policies. Given the importance of the digital space and new technologies for human rights, both in terms of opportunities and threats, he asked what the next steps would be in that area.

34. **Mr. Jinga** (Romania) said that his country reiterated its support for the independence of OHCHR. Given the importance of the indivisibility and universality of human rights, his delegation firmly believed that the international community should put an end to the numerous human rights violations in the world and that each country had a duty to take action. His delegation deplored the lack of cooperation of some countries with OHCHR and with the mechanisms of the Human Rights Council, which undermined the mandate of the High Commissioner and the applicability and full enjoyment of human rights. It was also concerned about the deterioration of human rights in the world, which sometimes led to serious humanitarian crises, and called for efforts to protect the rights of women, children and other vulnerable persons, and to ensure freedom of religion and belief, freedom of expression and opinion, and the rights of human rights defenders. The High Commissioner had recently said that her Office also needed to address issues related to the new digital landscape and privacy. He asked how social media, new digital platforms and artificial intelligence could be used for the benefit of human rights and freedoms while avoiding human rights violations.

35. **Mr. Arbeiter** (Canada) said that his delegation appreciated the steps taken by OHCHR to integrate its work across the United Nations system, particularly in the pillars of peace and security, development and humanitarian assistance. The technical cooperation offered by the Office to ensure the respect of civil, political, cultural, social and economic rights played an important role in building a meaningful dialogue with States. International cooperation was needed to address emerging human rights threats, and the multilateral system needed to increase its focus on those emerging issues. In that regard, his delegation welcomed the High Commissioner's efforts to address emerging challenges, such as climate change and artificial intelligence.

36. The High Commissioner had recently met with the artificial intelligence community, including businesses, researchers and civil society in Montreal, Canada, to discuss the ethical implications of new technologies. It would be interesting to learn how the existing international human rights framework could guide Governments, the private sector and communities in taking decisions on the development and use of artificial intelligence. He asked her to share specific examples with Member States.

37. **Mr. Matt** (Liechtenstein) said that his delegation reiterated its strong support for the work, integrity and independence of OHCHR and expressed concern over the Office's financial situation. In that regard, it was unacceptable that one of the United Nations pillars was so heavily underfunded, and his delegation congratulated the High Commissioner for what she had achieved with such limited resources. Liechtenstein was the leading per capita financial supporter of OHCHR and appreciated its focus on prevention as a key to achieving its management plan for 2018–2021. He welcomed the High Commissioner's commitment to strengthen accountability, the rule of law and transitional justice in order to achieve sustainable peace.

38. While his delegation agreed that prevention should be a key element in efforts to promote and protect human rights, the record of the international community in countries such as Myanmar and the Syrian Arab Republic was rather poor. In that context, he asked how OHCHR hoped to overcome the challenges in preventing human rights violations and strengthen accountability to achieve non-recurrence. It would be useful to learn more about the cooperation between the Office and relevant fact-finding missions and accountability mechanisms created by the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council.

39. **Ms. Matar** (United Arab Emirates) said that her delegation appreciated the work of OHCHR, especially on the status of women, persons with disabilities and children, and acknowledged its work in assisting Member States to fulfil their human rights obligations. In particular, her delegation noted the Office's ongoing support to peace operations and to the implementation of the Secretary-General's priority focus on the prevention platform, which would assist in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations. She would welcome additional information on the key gaps that the Office had identified in addressing the challenges within the climate change-human rights nexus, and on the opportunities for Member States and stakeholders to collaborate in assisting the Office in executing its mandate more effectively in that regard.



40. **Mr. Ugarelli** (Peru), speaking also on behalf of Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Honduras, Guatemala, Panama and Paraguay, said that their respective countries wished to condemn the grave human rights situation in Venezuela, which had led thousands of Venezuelans to flee every day as a result of hunger, lack of medical services, fear and despair caused by a regime that was systematically violating the fundamental rights and freedoms of its own population. The reports of the High Commissioner and her Office provided a detailed description of the extent of the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights violations, while experts from the Organization of American States and civil society organizations had qualified the situation as possible crimes against humanity. Their countries called on the illegal regime of Nicolás Maduro to cooperate in a real and effective manner with international human rights organizations and, in particular, with the independent international fact-finding mission created by the Human Rights Council in September 2019. In view of the complex situation in Venezuela, the serious violations to the most basic rights of its citizens and the categorical evidence presented by various impartial international bodies, Venezuela did not meet the necessary standards for the promotion and protection of human rights.

41. **Mr. García Moritán** (Argentina) said that his delegation welcomed the report of the High Commissioner on the situation of human rights in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela ([A/HRC/41/18](#)) and welcomed its conclusions and recommendations. His delegation also welcomed the adoption of Human Rights Council resolution [42/25](#) on the situation of human rights in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, by which an independent international fact-finding mission was established to investigate the human rights violations committed since 2014 with a view to ensuring full accountability for perpetrators and justice for victims. It also welcomed the firm commitment of the High Commissioner in the defence of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons in the agenda of the United Nations and her crucial support for activities undertaken by the LGBTI Core Group, co-chaired by Argentina and the Netherlands. It also supported the message transmitted by the High Commissioner at the tenth session of the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing, in which she had stated that the existing international human rights instruments did not adequately handle the rights of older persons and as a result they were invisible in the recommendations made by the human rights treaty bodies. Given her experience as the former Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and given that

2020 would mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, he would welcome further information on the challenges faced by the international community in achieving equal opportunities for women.

42. **Ms. Suzuki** (Japan) said that her country would continue to support the High Commissioner, who was often expected to coordinate efforts in a context in which stakeholders, including civil society and human rights defenders, had conflicting interests. It had been an honour for her Government to welcome the High Commissioner to Japan in March 2019 to attend the fifth World Assembly for Women. Her country remained committed to promoting women's empowerment, including through awareness-raising activities, such as the Group of 20 Leaders' Special Event on Women's Empowerment. She asked what steps Member States should take to advance gender equality and promote women's rights.

43. **Ms. Byrne Nason** (Ireland) said that her Government considered the promotion of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms to be the bedrock of the multilateral system. The High Commissioner had spoken about the complexity of the work undertaken by OHCHR and its widening range of tasks. Given the disconnect between the demands made of the Office and the resources provided to it, it was necessary to ensure a sustained resource strategy for OHCHR and the treaty bodies. Her delegation called on Member States who supported OHCHR in principle to do so in practice and in the fulfilment of their obligations. Against that complex backdrop, she asked what Member States could do to support the work of OHCHR. The High Commissioner had recently expressed concern about the increasing reprisals against human rights defenders and those seeking to engage with United Nations mechanisms. It would be interesting to hear what the Office was doing to deal with that situation.

44. **Mr. Skoknic Tapia** (Chile) said that his delegation appreciated the work of OHCHR in highlighting the negative impacts of climate change, which disproportionately affected already disadvantaged individuals and communities around the world. For Chile, which would host the twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change later in 2019, the preamble to the Paris Agreement, which stated that all States should respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, took on force and urgency.



45. In the year marking the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it was necessary to reaffirm the unrestricted defence of the universal, indivisible and interdependent nature of the rights of individuals. In that context, he asked the High Commissioner to explain her approach and vision in relation to the review processes of the treaty bodies in 2020, and the next review process of the Human Rights Council.

46. **Ms. Lodhi** (Pakistan) said that rising violations of human rights and of the principles underpinning their universality and interdependence were nowhere more evident than in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Her delegation welcomed the statement by the High Commissioner regarding the impact of recent actions by India on human rights and the need for engagement with Kashmiris in any decision-making processes affecting their future, as well as additional statements of concern by the Secretary-General, special procedure mandate holders, civil society and human rights organizations and in international media regarding the continuing lockdown in Indian-occupied Kashmir.

47. Pakistan fully supported the call by OHCHR to establish a commission of inquiry to investigate the gross and systematic human rights violations reported in the region, including deprivation of liberty and torture. As the primary United Nations human rights body, the Office must be assisted in executing its mandate effectively and in implementing its own recommendations, in particular those on Kashmir. Pakistan would remain fully and constructively engaged with the High Commissioner, in both New York and Geneva.

48. **Ms. Zappia** (Italy) recalling that human rights were enshrined in her country's Constitution and were at the core of its foreign policy, said that her Government had undertaken a system-wide process in preparation for its third universal period review in November 2019. Italy was proud of its accomplishments and was ready to pursue further improvements where required.

49. Regarding the statement that more needed to be done to achieve sustainable development, she enquired how the universal periodic review system could help to fill the need for complementarity, given that the Sustainable Development Goals were about human rights, and how the review system could be used to underline where countries needed support.

50. **Ms. Chifwaila** (Zambia), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the States members of the Group were parties to many instruments that imposed obligations often requiring expertise at

both the national and regional levels. In order to address gaps in capacity, it was necessary to enhance the provision of technical assistance and support to assist in meeting those obligations. She therefore welcomed the continuation of capacity-building programmes and subregional training workshops, as well as the meeting of the Chairs of the human rights treaty bodies, which afforded the opportunity for States to exchange views.

51. In advancing the human rights agenda at the global level, it was necessary to guarantee non-selectivity, impartiality, transparency, objectivity and respect for cultural, social and religious differences and to avoid polarization, politicization, double standards and the imposition of narrow cultural standards on others. The Group therefore noted with concern the inclusion in the report of the High Commissioner of priority areas that were clearly non-consensual and did not garner the support of the wider international community. It sought clarification on the process by which such priority areas were determined.

52. Citing the need for OHCHR to always abide by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the Group also expressed concern for the growing reliance on extrabudgetary resources, including earmarked contributions, and noted the need to ensure better geographical representation of Office staff.

53. **Ms. Alnesf** (Qatar) said that her country spared no effort in supporting the work of the High Commissioner and her Office, including through an annual contribution of approximately \$1 million. Qatar also hosted the United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region, which played an important role in bolstering human rights. Further cooperation between Qatar and OHCHR included a memorandum of understanding, signed at the 2019 Social Forum of the Human Rights Council, between the Office, the Education Above All Foundation and the Silatech organization. It was aimed at socioeconomically empowering women and young people and fostering the exchange of expertise on education and human rights, as well as in other areas of mutual interest. Qatar remained committed to enhancing and protecting human rights at the national, regional and international levels.

54. **Mr. Tun** (Myanmar) said that consideration of human rights situations should be based on genuine cooperation and constructive dialogue with the countries concerned. OHCHR was expected to deliver on its mandate in a transparent, impartial and objective manner. Because States had the primary responsibility for upholding the human rights of their peoples, the Office needed to pay careful attention to the concerns

and needs of Governments and peoples. As a nascent democracy, Myanmar faced overwhelming challenges in many areas. His Government was determined to overcome them for the benefit and betterment of its people and reiterated its call for an understanding of the complexities involved and for constructive assistance from the international community in finding a sustainable solution with regard to the promotion and protection of human rights.

55. Accuracy of information was vital to appropriate policy decision-making, especially when addressing serious human rights violations. Misleading reports and unconstructive recommendations served only to create further divisions and mistrust, were detrimental to social cohesion and undermined his Government's efforts to bring peace, national reconciliation and development to Myanmar. His delegation looked forward to working with partner countries and the United Nations, including OHCHR, in a constructive and objective manner, to strengthen efforts to promote and protect the human rights in the country.

56. **Mr. Pildegovičs** (Latvia) said that his country remained concerned about the deteriorating situation in the illegally annexed Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine, where violations of international humanitarian and human rights law continued to be documented. Proper and unimpeded access by international and regional human rights monitoring missions, including OHCHR, and non-governmental organizations was crucial to analysing the situation on the ground. His delegation was especially concerned about the disproportionate number of police raids on the homes, businesses and meeting places of Crimean Tatars, the ongoing suppression of their right to freedom of expression and the continued conscription of male Crimean residents. It concurred with the Office's recommendations in that regard.

57. Reiterating his Government's unwavering support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, he asked the High Commissioner to provide an assessment of the situation on the right of freedom of expression in the area, in particular following the introduction of new laws by the Russian Federation on offences of public insults towards State authorities and on the distribution of false information of public importance. He also requested an assessment of possible improvements in international access to monitor reported human rights violations at detention centres in Crimea, including torture and the lack of medical assistance.

58. **Mr. Radomski** (Poland) said that his country remained firmly committed to unrestricted cooperation with OHCHR and all treaty bodies and mandate holders, whose independence was of paramount importance and whose work contributed to the implementation of international human rights standards. His delegation shared the concerns of the High Commissioner regarding the challenges facing civil society and was alarmed by continued attempts in some countries to restrict activities of civil society actors and to limit the right of freedom of religion or belief, which lay at the heart of all freedoms, including freedom of speech, association and assembly.

59. Deeply concerned about the rise of religious persecution and intolerance, his delegation thanked the High Commissioner and all Member States for their observance of the newly established International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief and wished to know what more could be done to foster interreligious dialogue and reconciliation worldwide.

60. **Mr. Margaryan** (Armenia) said that his delegation appreciated the engagement of OHCHR with stakeholders and the support provided to Member States and to the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms in globally promoting and upholding human rights and fundamental freedoms. Progress in that regard was at the core of his country's reform agenda and its pledge as a candidate country to the Human Rights Council for 2020–2022 to enhance mechanisms and partnerships aimed at empowering women and youth, fostering cooperation to prevent genocide and mass atrocities, promoting tolerance and combating hate speech and hate crimes, and strengthening refugee protections mechanisms. His delegation stood ready to further advance close cooperation with OHCHR and with United Nations treaty bodies and mechanisms and independent experts so as to contribute to the promotion of human rights internationally.

61. **Mr. Duarte Lopes** (Portugal), recalling the issue of the backlog in OHCHR dealing with complaints, said that the principles being discussed would be severely weakened by excessive wait times for replies from the system. He wondered what Member States could do, in addition to the financial contributions mentioned by the High Commissioner, to help to reduce that backlog.

62. **Mr. Forax** (Observer for the European Union), welcoming the work and achievements of OHCHR, especially amid rising challenges and limited funding, said that progress in promoting and protecting human rights, at all levels, required intensified multilateral cooperation, dialogue and partnership between the

Office and all human rights mechanisms, including all United Nations entities and regional bodies, as well as with civil society actors and States. In that vein, his delegation welcomed the High Commissioner's vision to highlight positive stories in the field.

63. Recalling the observations on the pushback against human rights issues, in particular women's rights, he enquired about the best ways to support both civil society and private sector efforts to defend the gains already made. In the light of the growing number and multiple forms of reprisals, he asked how the General Assembly should respond to the invitation of the Human Rights Council, in its resolution 42/28, to remain seized of all work in the area. He also wondered how cooperation between New York and Geneva could be improved, including within the Security Council, in the promotion of human rights.

64. **Mr. Aidid** (Malaysia) said that his delegation welcomed the High Commissioner's end-of-mission statement and assessment following her recent visit to his country, acknowledged her observations and would continue to strive to support the human rights agenda. During the visit, the High Commissioner's first to South-East Asia in that capacity and the first by OHCHR to Malaysia, she had met with the Prime Minister and several cabinet ministers, had engaged with a broad spectrum of civil society organizations and had toured an alternative learning centre for Rohingya children. The visit paved the way for closer cooperation with the United Nations and her Office in the promotion and protection of human rights and the realization of the 2030 Agenda. He reiterated his Government's commitment to the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all Malaysians, as protected under its Federal Constitution.

65. **Mr. Moussa** (Egypt) said that his delegation welcomed the High Commissioner's emphasis on efforts by OHCHR to advocate the right to development, which was a fundamental and inalienable right addressed in all international human rights instruments, including the Charter of the United Nations, indivisible from and interrelated with all other human rights and integral to the progress and prosperity of peoples worldwide. It was time to translate those provisions into concrete national, regional and global development policies to address the wide array of seemingly intractable problems plaguing the global landscape.

66. His delegation also welcomed her focus on the environment and her work on identifying the negative impacts of climate change on the rights of individuals and communities, in particular with regard to rising levels of desertification and water scarcity afflicting

many parts of the world, including the Sahel region in Egypt. As access to water was essential for sustaining the right to life, constructive and inclusive engagement in transboundary cooperation was necessary for the mutual benefit of all countries affected. The High Commissioner was encouraged to examine the correlation between water scarcity and the lack of transboundary cooperation in the enjoyment of human rights, including its contribution to social unrest and conflict.

67. **Mr. Djani** (Indonesia) said that the Human Rights Council was the prime mechanism for ensuring the fair and equal protection of human rights, which were universal, indivisible, interrelated, interdependent and mutually reinforcing, and which must be addressed fairly, equally and with the same emphasis. Amid daunting national, regional and global challenges, it was essential to strengthen triangular cooperation, including with the High Commissioner and her Office, in advancing the human rights and sustainable development agenda. As the promotion and protection for human rights could only be achieved through constructive dialogue, mutual respect and cooperation, the Council and Member States were encouraged to continue to work with OHCHR, including on the review of its monitoring mechanism, guided by the principles of non-selectivity, impartiality, constructive dialogue and equal focus on all human rights, and to avoid double standards, polarization and politicization. His delegation would continue to cooperate with the regional Office in Bangkok on promoting human rights in Asia and beyond. The work of the Council must continue to be instrumental in strengthening and mainstreaming all human rights, including the right to development.

68. **Mr. Ponikvar** (Slovenia) said that his delegation welcomed the focus placed on climate change and the environment in the High Commissioner's work, but was concerned about the ongoing underfunding of OHCHR, especially in the light of the looming liquidity crisis. Any additional cuts in funding, even if temporary, would target the human rights pillar of the United Nations system; it was therefore crucial to make every effort to avoid silos and mainstream human rights across the system. His delegation therefore also supported her regular briefings to the Security Council.

69. Following up on the statement by Argentina, he inquired about the vision for her Office's future engagement on the rights of older persons.

70. **Ms. Elmansouri** (Tunisia), thanking the High Commissioner for her recent visit, said that her Government remained firmly committed to establishing

democracy through free and transparent parliamentary and presidential elections and to ensuring respect for human rights and the rule of law, in accordance with its obligations under international human rights law.

71. Tunisia valued cooperation with OHCHR and open discussion with all relevant United Nations mechanisms, among which the Human Rights Council was a key organ for ensuring high standards for human rights and enhancing multilateral cooperation, in particular through the universal periodic review. She asked how Member States in New York could contribute to ongoing efforts to bridge the gap between New York and Geneva and rationalize the work of the Council without undermining its value and independence, in particular in the light of the upcoming review of the treaty bodies and the status of the Council.

72. Tunisia fully supported the rights of all to cooperate with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms without fear of reprisals and commended efforts made to verify the existence of such acts. Follow-up on the steps taken by the Governments of Member States to address alleged violations and protect their constituencies against all reprisals through constructive engagement with the United Nations should be clearly reflected as good practices.

73. **Mr. Mack** (United States of America) said that his country, recognizing that most OHCHR initiatives and programming could prove critical to States' honouring the inalienable human rights of all individuals, was proud to continue its support through significant voluntary contributions. Mechanisms such as commissions of inquiry and independent investigation mechanisms played an important role in promoting accountability and deterring abuses. In the face of unprecedented human rights violations by repressive totalitarian regimes, his delegation was pleased to see the creation of a new fact-finding mission to document the abusive actions of the Maduro regime in Venezuela and hoped that the High Commissioner would eventually obtain unhindered access to that country, the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region of China and anywhere else where human rights abuses occurred.

74. The High Commissioner should use her influence to address and remove the flaws that had forced the United States to withdraw from the Human Rights Council, namely the lack of meaningful adherence to the minimum standards established for Council membership. That failure enabled countries with appalling human rights records to remain members, and the persistence of item 7, a vehicle for the perpetual and unjust condemnation of Israel.

75. Engagement on issues peripheral to the core mandate of OHCHR, such as climate change, risked undercutting its efficacy and, in the more politically fraught areas, its credibility and its reputation for impartiality. Instead, the Office should intensify its focus on integrating human rights considerations into United Nations peace operations and on enhancing early warning and prevention mechanisms. Commending the Office for its work to raise awareness of the human rights-related concerns of LGBTI persons, his delegation reiterated its call for the complete decriminalization of offenses related to sexual orientation.

76. **Mr. Cepero Aguilar** (Cuba) said that, in the face of increasing austerity measures primarily due to the failure of the United States to honour its financial commitments to the Organization, his delegation hoped that OHCHR would be able to continue to work within the context of its intergovernmental mandate and to ensure adequate support for all human rights, including the right to development. The resources of the Office should therefore not be used to promote punitive agendas against developing countries.

77. His delegation noted that the greatest threat to multilateralism came from the irresponsible actions of the United States, which had withdrawn from both the Human Rights Council and its climate commitments, and that racist and xenophobic hate speech from the highest office of that country continued to undermine the full enjoyment of human rights by people of marginalized groups. Cuba reiterated its support for the work of the High Commissioner and her Office on the basis of the principles of impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity and in the spirit of constructive and cooperative international dialogue.

78. **Mr. Xing** Jisheng (China) said that his country appreciated the commitment of OHCHR to the advancement of human rights through constructive dialogue and cooperation but that the Office needed to remain impartial, objective, constructive and non-selective; reject politicization, double standards, naming and shaming and the public exertion of pressure; respect the development path chosen by each country; invest more in economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development; address the impact of unilateral coercive measures and terrorism on human rights; enhance the transparency of internal decision-making; and address the serious geographical imbalance in its staffing.

79. The measures taken in Xinjiang to counter terrorism and radicalization were not human rights issues and did not target a particular ethnic group or

religion. While firmly opposed to foreign interference, China welcomed objective and impartial visits and had invited thousands of foreign officials and experts, including OHCHR, to tour the area. The United States, a victim of the most severe terrorist attack in human history, had intentionally distorted facts in an attempt to pressure China and serve its own political motives. In obstructing counter-terrorism efforts in other countries, it was sending the wrong message to terrorist forces, which would ultimately undermine its own interests. In also disregarding the facts, Germany was expressing arrogance, ignorance, prejudice and a deeply embedded sense of superiority, which had already caused untold human tragedy in the past. China advised those countries to reflect upon and remedy their own problems and to avoid double standards, politicization and confrontation.

80. **Mr. Giorgio** (Eritrea) said that, as the sole United Nations entity principally responsible for human rights, OHCHR was to be commended for placing equal emphasis and focus on all human rights, including the right to development. Stronger and more enhanced engagement with Member States would help the High Commissioner and her Office to identify challenges, provide solutions and support national efforts to effectively promote and protect human rights everywhere, including through technical assistance and capacity-building upon request. The Office should further encourage international cooperation by promoting the universal periodic review as a unique and universal human rights mechanism. His delegation called on all States to provide support for the voluntary fund for financial and technical assistance, which remained low, and recommended that the Office reissue its appeal for earmarked funding to alleviate persistent budget constraints.

81. With regard to the strengthening of the treaty body system and its upcoming review, an intergovernmental process would ensure objectivity and independence while increasing the effectiveness of the system, which needed to be better equipped to support State parties in the implementation of their commitments and reporting obligations. In addition, while the sharing of experiences and best practices between treaty bodies was useful, the specificities of the respective bodies and their mandates should also be respected and maintained.

82. **Ms. Ali** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that constructive dialogue to uphold both international law and the principles of sovereignty and non-interference was the best means to promote human rights and avoid confrontation and an absence of consensus. The High Commissioner and her Office must take into account all information provided by States so as to present an

objective picture and must not listen to erroneous information disseminated by certain entities, including within the United Nations, in particular the OHCHR media centre and the branch in Beirut. The Office should be following developments in the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the occupied Golan. It should also be upholding its mandate to ensure the end of unilateral measures, which had adverse effects on the promotion of human rights. International cooperation programmes were important for building the capacity of States to fulfil their obligations to promote and protect human rights, but must not be conditional or allow for interference with national sovereignty and independence.

83. **Mr. Driuchin** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation welcomed the High Commissioner's efforts to depoliticize discussion on human rights and rebuild constructive dialogue with Member States on the full range of international human rights issues, as well as the more balanced and careful approach taken to the human rights situation in individual countries, on the basis of their real needs and requests. In particular, the structured dialogue and activities aimed at providing assistance to Venezuela, through the signing of a bilateral memorandum of understanding and the opening of a branch of OHCHR in that country, should be taken as a model of cooperation by the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council. The decisions taken by the Council with respect to Venezuela were inherently biased, politicized and destructive, and could only worsen the country's human rights situation. The United States had attempted to politicize the issue during the present debate, which should not be used as a forum for making unfounded accusations and settling scores against political opponents.

84. With regard to treaty body reform, the report of the Chairs of the human rights treaty bodies on their thirty-first annual meeting (A/74/256) had not yet been discussed or adopted by the Third Committee, but any reforms of those bodies must be carried out in strict accordance with their respective mandates.

85. The informal briefings and meetings instigated by the High Commissioner's predecessors on the programmes and activities of OHCHR were clearly not working. Direct and official dialogue between the Human Rights Council and OHCHR was needed to discuss the full scope of activities undertaken by the Office.

86. **Mr. Kim** Nam Hyok (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that developing countries, in particular those holding independent views, were the main targets of growing politicization, selectivity and

double standards in the field of human rights. The High Commissioner and OHCHR must abide by the principles of non-selectivity, non-politicization, objectivity and impartiality and ensure that human rights were not used as a political tool to put pressure on other countries, violate their sovereignty or interfere in their internal affairs. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea would fulfil its obligations under the international human rights treaties to which it was party and would contribute to efforts to protect and promote of human rights through cooperation and exchange.

87. **Mr. Youssef Aden Moussa** (Djibouti) first asked what support OHCHR could bring to the movement of young people who were increasingly mobilizing to protest peacefully against the lack of action to combat climate change. Second, he enquired about any efforts made by the High Commissioner since taking office to improve geographical representation in her Office. Third, he queried whether she found it increasingly difficult to promote and protect human rights in an uncertain geopolitical context marked by trade tensions, rising terrorism, xenophobia and racism. Lastly, he asked about the relationship between the field offices and headquarters in Geneva.

88. **Mr. Konfourou** (Mali) said that the human rights situation in his country was the result of the lack of State presence and services in certain areas of the country owing to insecurity. Most reported violations were essentially the work of terrorist groups, drug traffickers and other organized criminal groups. Committed to increasing accountability and fighting impunity, his Government maintained a zero tolerance policy, having strengthened its judicial, legislative and institutional framework with regard to the violation of human rights. Today, many alleged violators had been arrested and were awaiting trial. His delegation welcomed the adoption of Human Rights Council resolution [40/26](#) in support of much-needed technical assistance and national capacity-building in the field. His Government renewed its commitment to cooperate with all partners in order to protect human rights in Mali and was grateful for the support already received.

89. **Ms. Bellout** (Algeria) said that her country had established legislation aimed at the protection and promotion of all human rights, in line with its international commitments and obligations, and was a whole-hearted participant in the universal periodic review mechanism of the Human Rights Council. Algeria welcomed the support provided for the strategic plan and human rights components of United Nations peacekeeping operations and for the development of the conduct and discipline compliance architecture of African Union peace operations. A human rights

component should be integrated into all United Nations peace operations in order to leave no one behind.

90. Her Government had produced tangible results in most of the Sustainable Development Goals, through improvements to public services and efforts to meet economic and environmental challenges. Algeria was also involved in regional and international efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda, through South-South cooperation, training and the sharing of good practices, as well as in United National development system reform efforts, and had presented a voluntary national review at the high-level political forum on sustainable development held in 2019, with a focus on leaving no one behind.

91. **Mr. Carazo** (Costa Rica) said that attacks on human dignity required global solutions and solidarity between peoples, as well as political bravery in demanding respect for human rights and a sound environment to live in. The climate crisis was serious, not only for its direct impact on people's daily lives, but also as a multiplier of internal and international conflict. Efforts to address those global threats were commendable but must involve the upholding of human rights in order to adequately address the challenges facing humanity. Costa Rica was concerned about human rights everywhere, in particular in Nicaragua and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

92. **Ms. Bachelet** (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) said that she would continue to visit States from all regions, because even developed countries faced challenges in improving the lives of their more vulnerable groups. Her Office would also continue to work with missions to ensure access to new countries and to create conditions for meaningful visits to ensure that reports were more accurate and offered better recommendations.

93. Despite being one of the three pillars of the United Nations system, human rights received only a very small percentage of the Organization's regular budget. Voluntary contributions were used whenever there was no conflict of interest, but unearmarked contributions made it possible to address specific requests from Member States and to meet operational priorities. Funding restrictions also affected the work of the treaty bodies, as travel expenses were often the only funding provided to experts, who were not salaried. A recent increase in the number of weeks that the treaty bodies could operate had not been accompanied by an increase in staff to work on complaints and petitions regarding alleged violations, leading to a backlog in assessments needed for decision-making. Members States needed to consider the specificities of the human rights system, as



certain issues might have a greater impact on OHCHR than on other agencies.

94. Although the human rights treaty body review was an intergovernmental process, the Chairs of those bodies had met to discuss ways to improve results, avoid duplications and support Member States in preparing presentations. That internal review had led to several recommendations, some in line with work already begun by Member States, and had begun to implement some alignments and voluntary reductions in certain activities. OHCHR would continue to work with all stakeholders, including States, treaty body experts, national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations, to strengthen the system. Meanwhile, efforts to ensure both broad geographical representation and gender parity among Office staff were underway, including through the creation of global rosters, but candidates still needed to meet all requirements in accordance with the Secretariat's rules on applications. All Member States were requested to assist in filling those rosters, in particular at the P-3 to P-5 levels.

95. For the universal periodic review to contribute more meaningfully to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, it was necessary to include more questions linked to the Sustainable Development Goals, so as to highlight the root causes that were obstructing sustainable development, contributing to inequality or fuelling conflict. An important consideration was how to improve national data collection systems to better identify groups being left behind. Data disaggregation was necessary to develop policies aimed at ensuring empowerment, inclusiveness and equality for marginalized groups, but it was crucial to avoid potential discrimination caused by collection methods. Following the intersessional meeting of Member States, held by the Human Rights Council in January 2019, different task forces had been created, including one aimed at helping the Office to better support Member States in addressing those challenges.

96. Improved cooperation was necessary across the entire United Nations system. Effective responses to crises required a two-way flow of information between the Human Rights Council in Geneva and the Security Council in New York, which often grappled with the same situations in which human rights were frequently a central component. The treaty bodies and special procedure mandate holders were often among the first to identify early warning signs and draw attention to unfolding crises and emerging risks. OHCHR remained available to provide additional information, advice and support to the Security Council that could lead to

preventive action and decision-making in the areas of peace and security or development.

97. OHCHR worked with other agencies to protect human rights defenders from pushback on human rights and the environment, including through the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, and called on all countries to either adopt the Agreement or use it as a model for other regions. The Office also partnered with Governments to monitor violations against journalists and human rights defenders and provided recommendations for improving the capacity of national institutions. Engagement with States was necessary to inquire about facts relating to reprisals and to reiterate that attacks and threats against those who engaged with the United Nations or national human rights institutions ran counter to the interests of all. Member States needed take a clear position against the growing trend. The ongoing interactive dialogue on the report of the Secretary-General on cooperation with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights (A/HRC/42/30), which dealt with activities in response to acts of intimidation and reprisal, should be extended to New York, where a side event was to be held with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders to discuss recent trends.

98. Under the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech, leaders everywhere had been called upon to promote constructive language aimed at fostering social cohesion, not division and violence, and technology companies had been approached to find ways to block hate speech messages on social media, where they flourished. Important efforts to foster interreligious dialogue and reconciliation worldwide had also been made, including through work with faith-based actors, resulting in the Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights and its 18 commitments as a framework for social development and environmental change through solidarity and mutual respect.

99. Work was being carried out with technology developers on eliminating gender and racial biases from recruitment and facial recognition platforms. Recommendations stemming from the High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation included bringing all stakeholders together under the aegis of the United Nations to address the high pace of technology change in a more concerted and multilateral way and thereby find a common solution, as opposed to relying on corporate ethics offices, as ethics differed by company and by region.

100. While climate change was not specifically part of her Office's mandate, the resulting effects, such as droughts and rising oceans, caused food insecurity, displacement and conflict that, in turn, led to human rights violations in many parts of the world. It was necessary for Member States to understand the importance of climate change, support youth participation in addressing the phenomenon and continue to meet all commitments taken at the Climate Action Summit 2019.

101. Aside from additional funding, Member States could provide political support by speaking out for human rights, both nationally and with global allies; providing access to the Office when necessary; identifying ways in which the Office could better take their perspectives into account in the various human rights mechanisms; bringing the human rights agenda closer to the Security Council and other New York-based agencies; requesting technical cooperation and assistance; and, importantly, sharing good human rights stories to incentivize countries to do better.

*The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.*