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Rapporteur: Mr. Noel M. Novicio (Philippines)

Addendum

Programme questions: proposed programme budget for 2025

(Item 3 (a))

Programme 20 Human rights

1. At its 13th meeting, on 21 May 2024, the Committee considered programme 20, Human rights, of the proposed programme plan for 2025 and programme performance in 2023 ([A/79/6 \(Sect. 24\)](#)). The Committee also had before it a note by the Secretariat on the review of the proposed programme plan for 2025 by sectoral, functional and regional bodies ([E/AC.51/2024/6](#)).

Discussion

2. Delegations expressed appreciation for the presentation of the programme plan for 2025 and for the work carried out by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

3. OHCHR was recognized with appreciation by a delegation as the leading United Nations entity on human rights, and its continued emphasis on mainstreaming human rights throughout the United Nations system and around the world was noted. In that connection, appreciation was expressed for the engagement of OHCHR with a wide range of stakeholders in executing its mission, including civil society, along with Member States, other international and regional organizations, and national and human rights mechanisms. Another delegation encouraged OHCHR to continue to implement the programme, mainstreaming human rights across the United Nations system, advancing the right to development, increasing knowledge, awareness and understanding of human rights issues, supporting the human rights treaty bodies,



providing advisory services and technical cooperation, and supporting the Human Rights Council and its subsidiary bodies and mechanisms.

4. Gratitude was expressed to OHCHR for its unwavering commitment to protecting and defending human rights in increasingly challenging times. The same delegation expressed its continuing support for the work of OHCHR, highlighting that human rights was a bedrock of its country's foreign policy, firmly anchored in its basic law, and that its engagement with regard to gender equality and marginalized groups had gained additional momentum with the introduction of a feminist foreign policy. The delegation noted that its country's engagement in human rights was comprehensive, covering all the universal human rights, from civil and political to economic, social and cultural rights, and from human rights at the interfaces with climate change to challenges coming with the digital age, to name just a few. The delegation also noted that its country believed that human rights began at home and that it had therefore undergone a fourth universal periodic review examination in a self-critical manner and had begun to implement the 283 recommendations that were supported by its country.

5. A delegation expressed the view that global human rights governance was facing severe challenges in all parts of the world and expressed support for OHCHR, as the human rights component of the United Nations Secretariat, for continuing its dialogue and cooperation with Member States, valuing the authoritative information provided by Governments, working objectively, impartially and not selectively in line with its mandate, and rejecting the politicization of human rights and double standards. The same delegation noted its country's commitment to promoting and protecting human rights, actively participating in global human rights governance and promoting constructive dialogue and cooperation on human rights issues among all parties so as to safeguard human rights through security, promote human rights through development and advance human rights through cooperation. The delegation further highlighted that its country had always advocated practising true multilateralism and following the concept of putting human first as a human-centric approach. The delegation noted that the adopted resolutions sponsored by its country included those on the contribution of development to the enjoyment of all human rights, promoting mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of human rights, the negative impact of the legacies of colonialism on the enjoyment of human rights, and promoting and protecting economic, social and cultural rights within the context of addressing inequalities, and urged OHCHR to take tangible measures to ensure the effective implementation of those resolutions.

6. Support was expressed for the mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, as defined in General Assembly resolution [48/141](#), and a delegation noted that its country was aware of the comprehensive nature of the Office's functioning, recalling that OHCHR was a unit of the Secretariat, not an agency or a separate programme. The delegation expressed the view that it could not agree with the use of unspecified terminology and concepts that had not been agreed upon at the intergovernmental level. The delegation noted the attempts by OHCHR to go beyond its mandate and cited the provision of assistance to the human rights treaty bodies as an example thereof. In that connection, the delegation reiterated that the role of the Secretariat, in particular OHCHR, was to provide technical services to the human rights treaty bodies and that OHCHR did not have the authority to improve the working methods of the treaty bodies or to provide them with expert support.

7. It was highlighted that the work of OHCHR stemmed directly from mandating resolutions, including resolution [48/141](#) establishing OHCHR and the Human Rights Council and General Assembly resolutions listed under paragraph 24.11 in the "Legislative mandates" section of the proposed programme plan. In that connection,

the delegation expressed the view that the work of OHCHR was based heavily on initiatives adopted through the intergovernmental process.

8. The view was expressed that the activities of the Human Rights Council and the many resolutions, meetings and other events should not be seen as a weakness of the system, but rather as reflecting the success of States in promoting specific issues related to human rights.

9. A delegation reiterated its country's commitment to OHCHR and expressed its intention to continue to work collaboratively with both the Organization and Member States to ensure the realization of human rights for all. The delegation emphasized the important role of OHCHR as the human rights-focused body in the United Nations system and expressed appreciation for the continued focus on responding to the most problematic human rights challenges around the world. The same delegation highlighted that, along with maintaining international peace and security and developing friendly relations among nations, the agenda of promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms was explicitly fundamental to the core work and responsibilities of the United Nations.

10. The view was expressed by a delegation that progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals was rooted in economic and political freedoms and the realization of the core human rights treaties. The delegation emphasized that the States had come together in December 2023 to reaffirm support for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and expressed the view that it was their duty to protect it.

11. A delegation emphasized that it supported international development and work by intergovernmental organizations, including OHCHR, in support of development, but that it did not recognize the right to development. The delegation encouraged all Member States, regardless of their level of development, to implement their human rights obligations and commitments as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, among others. In that connection, the delegation stated that it did not accept that the full realization of any right required resource transfers or debt forgiveness, or that a lack of development was a legitimate excuse for failure to implement defined, universally agreed human rights commitments, including those in the Universal Declaration and the International Covenant. Another delegation noted that the development agenda and the human rights agenda were intrinsically interrelated and that it was not possible to talk about development without taking a multidimensional approach centred on human rights. In that connection, the same delegation expressed the view that the degree of relative development of States could not be used as an instrument to promote violations of human rights and that States had the duty, regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms. A different delegation expressed the view that economic, social and cultural rights, the right to development and civil and political rights were mutually reinforcing and equally important. The same delegation called upon OHCHR to take into account all types of human rights, to holistically increase investment in economic, social and cultural rights, to carry out more substantive work in mainstreaming the right to development, especially in developing countries, to achieve sustainable socioeconomic development and to actively provide human rights technical assistance in line with the needs and priorities of the countries concerned.

12. A delegation said that its country attached utmost importance to the effective functioning of the United Nations human rights machinery and the promotion and protection of human rights, as well as prevention of the most serious violations, and expressed the view that those were essential for maintaining peace and security and ensuring peaceful and just outcomes worldwide. The delegation noted that more and more people were turning to the United Nations and its human rights mechanisms as

a matter of last resort, which put additional strain on the treaty bodies and special procedure mandate holders and on the work of OHCHR. In that connection, the delegation expressed the view that the provision of adequate funding for OHCHR was instrumental if the Office were to fulfil its core mandates. The improved programmatic cooperation with Member States and other partners, as well as the provision by OHCHR of technical assistance and expertise to States in fulfilling their human rights obligations and commitments, was noted with appreciation. The delegation stated that its country maintained a principled position on the interdependent and mutually reinforcing nature of international human rights and humanitarian law and would continue to advocate strengthening the human rights component of humanitarian missions.

13. It was highlighted that Member States were to be committed procedurally and morally to respecting the decisions of the intergovernmental process in the Human Rights Council and to not seeking to use technical programmatic or budgetary processes to override such decisions, including those agreed upon by vote, or where they related to topics to which certain delegations were sensitive. In that context, the delegation noted that its country had not declined to support funding for any mandates for which it had voted against the resolution. The delegation expressed the view that the Committee for Programme and Coordination should not be used to litigate debates on terminology or human rights concepts and that the appropriate policy forum to hold such debates was the Council.

14. Efforts of the Office that were geared towards promoting and protecting human rights and ensuring their enjoyment and full realization by all persons in all forms through technical assistance, support for bodies and mechanisms of the human rights systems and, when appropriate, establishment of a presence in different countries were recognized. The delegation noted that, as its country had actively participated in the creation of the Human Rights Council in 2006 and been elected to the Council three times, most recently for the period 2019–2021, it could bear witness first-hand to the work done and efforts made by OHCHR. The delegation noted that human rights had always been a vital component of the foreign policy of its country, which participated in international discussions with regard to respecting the rights of minorities and defending the situation of the most vulnerable populations and with regard to human rights vulnerability in any specific situation. In that connection, the delegation noted that its country had undertaken intense domestic efforts with regard to social integration through social inclusion and had made progress in the fight against discrimination against the most vulnerable groups, the wider inclusion of all persons, the adoption of educational and other policies for inclusivity to promote equity in learning and employment and to decrease inequality in those areas, as well as in strengthening institutions and international bodies. Furthermore, the delegation stated that its country had worked towards modifying the legal framework to eliminate any discriminatory positions.

15. The Office was encouraged to continue to realize its vision for 2025 with regard to persons with disabilities and the gender perspective in human rights. In that connection, the delegation pointed out that the proposed programme indeed had a cross-sectional approach and proposed results in that regard.

16. A delegation reaffirmed its country's commitment to promoting and protecting human rights and emphasized the critical role that the Human Rights Council played in increasing awareness at the international level of the critical nature of protecting and promoting human rights. The importance of the work of the international community, under the auspices of United Nations human rights mechanisms, to protect basic human rights and freedoms was also emphasized. The delegation expressed the view that chief among human rights and freedoms was the right to life. In that connection, the delegation stated that people all over the world faced daily

violations of their human rights, including the right to life, and highlighted that chief among those people were the Palestinian people in Gaza and other occupied territory.

17. A delegation said that its country firmly defended the protection and promotion of human rights as a cornerstone of its foreign policy and recognized it as the foundation for achieving lasting peace, security and sustainable development. The view was expressed that the world was grappling with significant human rights challenges and that poverty, discrimination, armed conflict and the harmful effects of climate change continued to undermine the dignity inherent to all human beings. In that connection, the delegation reaffirmed the imperative need to promote and protect the human rights of all persons without discrimination of any type, prioritizing the most vulnerable groups, such as girls and women, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent, as well as the LGBTQ+ community, and also to protect the environment, all of which should be guided by universality, objectivity, impartiality, indivisibility and non-selectivity as principles.

18. A question was asked about the new OHCHR management plan and how it related to the proposed programme plan. A delegation expressed the view that OHCHR should embrace diversity and take on talent from a wide range of sources, stating that it looked forward to increased transparency in the management of the Office and in addressing the imbalance in the geographical representation of the Office's staff, especially high-ranking officials.

19. A delegation expressed its country's readiness to work with OHCHR in its effort to counter discrimination on all grounds, advancing the rights of children and women, raising awareness of human rights, responding to the needs of the vulnerable for protection and addressing situations of international concern, as identified by the Human Rights Council and other relevant United Nations bodies. Support was expressed for the continued engagement of OHCHR with Member States and all relevant actors to assist them in their efforts to promote and protect human rights.

20. The efforts of the High Commissioner were recognized, especially the work to fully guarantee enjoyment of human rights in an international context marked by more and more armed conflict. The delegation expressed appreciation for the proposed programme plan, which continued to ensure the importance of human rights in the United Nations and around the world. The same delegation expressed its country's support for all measures to facilitate the efforts of the Human Rights Council and its subsidiary bodies and OHCHR.

21. A delegation highlighted that the Human Rights Council was currently chaired by its country, which had also been an active member of that very important organ in the promotion and the protection of human rights, including on aspects related to gender, artificial intelligence and education. The support provided by the Secretary-General to the work of the Council, both institutionally and organizationally, for the promotion and protection of human rights was commended. The delegation recalled its country's highly valued initiatives and active role at the international level, reflecting the country's unwavering dedication to human rights.

22. Regarding the proposed programme plan, a delegation applauded the overall strategy of OHCHR and welcomed the assessment of OHCHR achievement against its previous deliverables as a template for its goals in the coming year.

23. With regard to paragraph 24.4, in which it was stated that OHCHR would provide support to Member States upon request, a delegation sought further clarification on what had happened in cases in which human rights violations were carried out or perpetrated by the States themselves, on who was responsible for making such requests for intervention by OHCHR and on how such cases were addressed.

24. With regard to addressing the rehabilitation needs of victims of torture and slavery, as discussed in paragraph 24.6, a delegation stated, on the basis of the experience of its country, that it was important to encourage more support and implementation of programmes that effectively addressed the rehabilitation needs of victims of war and slavery. In that connection, the same delegation expressed the view that, in the absence of adequate support, especially after United Nations interventions in crisis zones, sustainable peace was not possible when victims remained traumatized. The delegation highlighted that, after more than two decades of peace, its country was still facing the negative effects of traumatized war victims who did not go through the actual rehabilitation processes, and emphasized that silencing the guns in conflict zones was one thing, but dealing with the other ugly impacts of the crisis on victims was essential in maintaining lasting peace.

25. A delegation noted that a particular focus of its country's engagement worldwide addressed accountability for grave human rights violations because post-conflict societies needed accountability and reconciliation to embark on a peaceful and stable future. In that connection, the delegation emphasized that its country engaged with OHCHR to accelerate the processes, from the time when an evidence collection mandate was adopted to the moment when actual evidence collection started. The same delegation noted that evidence collection regularly took several months, which was enough time for witnesses and evidence to disappear, and noted with appreciation that OHCHR had presented a concept note to address that challenge.

26. A delegation welcomed subprogramme 1 (a), Human rights mainstreaming, subprogramme 1 (b), Right to development, and subprogramme 1 (c), Research and analysis, to enhance knowledge and awareness of human rights.

27. The Office's advisory role and support for the Human Rights Council and its subsidiary bodies and other normative bodies that were created by virtue of the treaties to promote dialogue and reporting with countries were highlighted.

28. In reference to subprogramme 1 (a), Human rights mainstreaming, strong support was expressed for the element relating to human rights mainstreaming and its planned results as a method to ensure integration of understanding, promotion and protection of human rights into the wider work of the United Nations. In the connection, further information was sought on how OHCHR would ensure that human rights mainstreaming was more fully embedded across the United Nations system and as to what benefits OHCHR anticipated from that mainstreaming in 2025. Another delegation, referring to paragraph 24.21, asked what "the wide dissemination of a toolkit" was. The same delegation, referring to paragraph 24.25, sought further information on OHCHR support to States in their budgeting processes. A different delegation reaffirmed the interdependence, indivisibility and interrelatedness of all human rights, saying that the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world rested on upholding all human rights, and therefore they must be safeguarded in a fair and equal manner. The same delegation expressed the view that adherence to the core principles of impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity was vital. The delegation expressed appreciation for the progress made by the United Nations human rights programme, especially for the realization of economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development, and underlined the linkage between the three pillars of the United Nations: peace and security, development and human rights. The same delegation expressed appreciation for the Office's plan to engage with the United Nations development system through participation in inter-agency forums and cooperation with United Nations country teams. The delegation expressed support for the programme's focus on the right to development, underscored the need for urgent operationalization of that inalienable right of all peoples and welcomed the integration of disability inclusion into the work of the Office.

29. With regard to subprogramme 1 (b), Right to development, a delegation made reference to result 3, anti-corruption policies and practices to address the negative impact of corruption on the enjoyment of human rights, and expressed the view that the damaging effect of corruption on societies and people was very often underestimated and, in that regard, enquired about the further plans of OHCHR for coordination with other relevant entities, such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Another delegation expressed appreciation for the development of such policies and practices and for the provision of support to States in that regard. In reference to paragraphs 24.34 and 24.35 and figure 24.I, a delegation welcomed the positive outcome of exceeding the planned target of the Working Group on the Right to Development and the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development from 2023, but noted that the planned target was adjusted significantly downward for 2025 and sought an explanation for the possible impact of having to decrease the number of participants. In that connection, the delegation asked whether the lessons learned from the previous years could be used.

30. Regarding subprogramme 1 (c), Research and analysis, a delegation emphasized the importance of offering defenders of the human rights of Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent the opportunity to make their efforts known. A different delegation made reference to paragraph 24.43 (e), under the “Strategy” section, and expressed concern regarding the efforts to implement the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, given its country’s long-standing and well-known position on that issue. Another delegation, referring to paragraph 24.51, sought clarification on the mandate of the human rights defenders training programme. Another delegation highlighted the enhanced contemporary importance of research and analysis in areas such as the elimination of all forms of discrimination, racism, xenophobia and related intolerance, and combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, incitement to violence and violence against persons based on religion or belief.

31. With regard to subprogramme 2, Supporting human rights treaty bodies, a delegation asked why the 2026 target was lower than the 2024 target in figure 24.VI. The same delegation made reference to databases and substantive digital materials that were part of table 24.14 and enquired about the specific data that OHCHR would collect and whether such data collection would exceed the mandates of the treaty bodies, respect the judicial sovereignty of the States concerned and be limited to public data within the United Nations system. A different delegation reaffirmed its country’s abiding support for and unwavering commitment to the Human Rights Council’s allied mechanisms for active engagement with special procedure mandate holders and its constructive approach to communications and regular reporting to the treaty bodies. The delegation expressed the view that human rights mechanisms yielded the most favourable results when the highest standards of objectivity, transparency and professionalism were maintained, which remained the basis of trust, mutual respect and confidence between the States and OHCHR in discharging their respective mandates. The same delegation stressed that all special procedures and treaty bodies ought to adhere to the code of conduct, in particular in the case of public communications issued by them. In that connection, the delegation expressed appreciation for the fact that several special procedure mandate holders had repeatedly raised concerns about the dire human rights situation in Gaza in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

32. In the context of subprogramme 3, Advisory services, technical cooperation and field activities, appreciation was expressed for efforts to maintain and publicize the potential for policy support from the Office. The delegation expressed the view that such provisions were essential to advancing the effective protection of all human rights through enhanced capacity-building. Another delegation, in reference to paragraph 24.75 and figure 24.VIII, noted that there was constant progress in the

number of Member States that took action to enhance legislation and policies that integrated economic, social and cultural rights. The same delegation asked why the planned target for 2025 was 93 Member States, while the actual 2021 result was 62, and whether that planned target meant that about half the States Members of the United Nations were not seeking to improve their policies or legislation on economic, social and cultural rights. In that connection, the delegation asked whether action could be taken by OHCHR to improve the situation. A different delegation, citing the “Substantive deliverables” category of table 24.16, sought further clarification on technical support and substantive services to human rights components in peace missions, including preparing inputs on the human rights situation mandated by the Security Council. Another delegation expressed support for the technical assistance mandate of OHCHR, which remained one of the most preferred means of promoting universal respect for basic human rights and fundamental freedoms. The same delegation expressed the view that the technical assistance mandate should be offered with the consent of the State concerned, as it was proven to be most favourable when that assistance supplemented States’ national human rights and development priorities, and emphasized the need to enhance those synergies. Another delegation welcomed the advisory services, technical cooperation and field activities with regard to effectively protecting and promoting the enjoyment of all human rights and reducing inequalities.

33. A delegation expressed the view that subprogramme 3, Advisory services, technical cooperation and field activities, remained a crucial means by which to enhance capacity-building and thus reduce inequalities, contributing ultimately to the acceleration of the implementation of the Goals. The Office’s efforts to explore avenues for collaboration with Member States, including on capacity-building and human rights, across various countries were praised.

34. With regard to subprogramme 4, Supporting the Human Rights Council, its subsidiary bodies and mechanisms, appreciation was expressed for the continued support provided to the Council and its subsidiary bodies. Another delegation noted the administrative and financial difficulties faced by OHCHR in discharging its mandate and expressed regret that the Office had been forced to postpone some important mandated activities because of the liquidity crisis. The same delegation stressed the need for States Members of the United Nations to pay their annual contributions in a timely manner and underscored the need for equitable geographical representation.

35. While matters relating to parts of the programme dealing with resources were not within the mandate of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, delegations expressed views related to the resources of OHCHR.

Conclusions and recommendations

36. **The Committee recommended that the plenary or the relevant Main Committee or Main Committees of the General Assembly, in line with Assembly resolution 78/244, consider the programme plan for programme 20, Human rights, of the proposed programme budget for 2025 under the agenda item entitled “Programme planning” at the seventy-ninth session of the Assembly.**