



General Assembly

Distr.: General
11 December 2024

Original: English

Human Rights Council

Eighteenth cycle

Organizational session

9 December 2024

Agenda item 1

Organizational and procedural matters

Statement by the President

PRST OS/18/1. Efficiency of the Human Rights Council: addressing financial and time constraints

At the organizational session of the Human Rights Council held on 9 December 2024, the President of the Council made the following statement:

“The Human Rights Council,

Guided by the Charter of the United Nations, General Assembly resolutions 60/251 of 15 March 2006 and 65/281 of 17 June 2011, and Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 5/2 of 18 June 2007, respectively on institution-building of the Council and on the Code of Conduct for Special Procedures Mandate Holders of the Human Rights Council, and 16/21 of 25 March 2011, on the review of the work and functioning of the Council,

Welcoming the ongoing implementation of the measures outlined in President’s statements PRST OS/12/1 of 3 December 2018, PRST OS/13/1 of 6 December 2019, PRST OS/16/1 of 9 December 2022 and PRST OS/17/1 of 8 December 2023, and their impact on addressing the financial and time constraints related to its workload,

Recalling that the measures contained in PRST OS/13/1 were extended for one year by PRST OS/14/1 of 7 December 2020 and for one additional year by PRST OS/15/1 of 6 December 2021,

Welcoming the measures taken to enhance interactive dialogues, including the sharing of summaries of the reports of mandate holders, and recalling the importance of ensuring the timely issuance of reports and of encouraging participants in interactive dialogues to envisage, including in their statements, questions and comments for mandate holders relating to their reports,

Recalling its decision 51/101 of 6 October 2022 on appropriate support for the Human Rights Council, wherein, taking into account its heavy and increasing volume of work and the need to give adequate consideration to all items in its annual programme of work in the most cost-efficient manner possible, the Council requested the Secretary-General to provide it with the support necessary to be able to meet not less than 14 weeks to fulfil its annual programme of work,

Taking into account the significant increase in the workload of the Human Rights Council, including the number of resolutions and of special procedure mandates, and recalling that the Council met for more than 14 weeks in 2023 and for 15 weeks in 2024 in



order to consider all the items in its programme of work during its regular sessions, in addition to its intersessional meetings held throughout the year,

Recalling its decision 55/116 of 5 April 2024 on remote participation modalities for hybrid meetings of the Human Rights Council, in which the Council decided to request the General Assembly to consider authorizing the Council to continue its practice of using remote participation modalities for all its future formal and informal meetings during its sessions, its organizational and intersessional meetings, the meetings of its subsidiary bodies and mechanisms, including the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, in accordance with its previously agreed extraordinary modalities,

Recalling also the report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights containing a feasibility study on developing a digital system for the Human Rights Council,¹ which included useful findings and recommendations, based on interviews with multiple stakeholders, on the implementation of practical digital solutions to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Human Rights Council,

Recognizing the need to introduce additional measures in line with its institution-building package to enhance its efficiency by addressing financial and time constraints, and welcoming the informal consultations on the matter led by the current and previous Bureaux, facilitators and focal points, guided by the principles of transparency, inclusiveness, predictability, consensus and non-selectivity,

1. Decides to continue to implement the measures outlined in President's statement PRST OS/12/1, including the three-year programme of work, the two-hour duration of panel discussions, the voluntary rationalization of initiatives and related outcomes and the exchange of information;

2. Invites the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva to continue to provide a comprehensive update, orally and in writing, and to engage in an interactive exchange at the organizational session held each year in December, on the actual and envisaged resources for conference services provided to the Human Rights Council;

3. Requests the Secretary-General to ensure that the Human Rights Council is provided with the support necessary to be able to meet not less than 16 weeks as of 2025, to fulfil its annual programme of work;

4. Calls upon States, on a voluntary basis, to continue to consult other States and relevant core groups when drafting resolutions and to seek the technical support of the Human Rights Council secretariat, with a view to avoiding duplication and overlap with existing mandates or mechanisms and limiting the number of meetings held during regular sessions, with due consideration to the three-year programme of work;

5. Welcomes the sharing of good practices by delegations on measures to make their initiatives and resolutions more efficient and impactful, and encourages such sharing to be announced during organizational meetings to ensure transparency and assist other delegations to continue to rationalize their initiatives, and decides to continue its compilation of such measures and to make them available on the Human Rights Council extranet;

6. Requests the Human Rights Council secretariat to do a mapping of existing initiatives with a view to assisting delegations in avoiding duplication, overlapping and redundancies, while working to enhancing the effectiveness of the Council's work, and to make its mapping available before the fifty-ninth session of the Council;

7. Encourages the Human Rights Council secretariat to provide briefings or training sessions for interested delegations on the rules of procedure, institutions and tools of the Council, including guidelines on good practices in mandating interactive dialogues and panel discussions in resolutions, with the participation of States, and on good practices in the drafting of resolutions, using the voluntary calendar in advance of every session, notably with a view to rationalizing the work of the Council;

¹ A/HRC/56/27.

8. Reiterates the importance of promoting gender equality and the full and equal participation of women in the work of the Human Rights Council and welcomes the positive steps taken to this end, including on addressing cases of harassment, including sexual harassment, in the context of the meetings and events of the Council, and calls for continued engagement to strengthen existing procedures and mechanisms;

9. Stresses the need to continue to adopt measures to enhance accessibility at the Human Rights Council with the purpose of ensuring the inclusive and effective participation of persons with disabilities in accordance with the current task force accessibility plan and subsequent ones, and encourages all States Members of the United Nations to integrate accessibility considerations in their initiatives to ensure that the financial requirements needed to support accessibility for persons with disabilities are fully met;

10. Requests the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to facilitate and support exchanges of good practices by States, on a voluntary basis, related to participation in and engagement with the universal periodic review, including on the implementation of accepted recommendations, with a view to peer-learning;

11. Reaffirms that the Voluntary Fund for Participation in the Universal Periodic Review and the Voluntary Fund for Financial and Technical Assistance in the Implementation of the Universal Periodic Review are important tools to ensure equal participation in the universal periodic review and to support the efficiency and impact of that mechanism, and encourages all States to contribute to the funds;

12. Recognizes the need to strengthen efficiency by enhancing the engagement and participation of all States, in particular small island developing States and least developed countries, to ensure inclusive and meaningful participation in the work of the Human Rights Council, including through digital tools and resources, and in this regard encourages all States to contribute to the Voluntary Technical Assistance Trust Fund to Support the Participation of Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States in the Work of the Human Rights Council;

13. Requests the Office of the High Commissioner to update the e-Learning tool on the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms designed for least developed countries and small island developing States, recognizing that the tool is available for all States and other stakeholders to be used in familiarizing themselves with the work of the Council;

14. Welcomes the efforts for the implementation of the measures on the use of modern technology set out in annex II to President's statement PRST OS/12/1, in particular the e-deleGATE and Events systems, and the introduction of other innovative measures, such as the digital drawing by lots for the universal periodic review process, and strongly encourages the continuous, progressive and full implementation of modern technology measures to improve the efficiency of the Human Rights Council for all stakeholders, including those to improve accessibility services for persons with disabilities and to facilitate the participation of civil society;

15. Requests the Office of the High Commissioner to create a knowledge management tool (to be possibly called "AccessHRC") that would combine digital platforms into one user-friendly tool allowing access to registration tools, the calendar and the programme of work, digital speakers lists, modalities, statements and information about dialogues and resolutions via smartphone and computer, and to develop a live information-sharing tool about the activities of the Human Rights Council during meetings while promoting the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the Council's work;

16. Encourages States and all relevant stakeholders to continue discussions with a view to develop a digital information, accessibility and analysis system that would provide the Human Rights Council with up-to-date information on reports by mandate holders and the Office of the High Commissioner, statements and universal periodic review documents, including with the aim of promoting dialogue among international organizations based in Geneva, and to share the good practices and lessons learned on the use of modern technology in strengthening effectiveness and inclusion in their work;

17. Decides that the speaking time limits in interactive dialogues will continue to be one and a half minutes for all stakeholder interventions and five minutes for countries

concerned, and that all mandate holders and mechanisms will be allocated 20 minutes, with two additional minutes for each country visit report and/or other mandated report;

18. Also decides to continue to explore the possibility of limited reclustered of interactive dialogues on overlapping thematic or country-specific issues on a voluntary basis;

19. Requests mandate holders and the Office of the High Commissioner to ensure the adequate and timely availability of reports to the Human Rights Council in all official languages of the United Nations, and the prompt publication of the official responses of States to country visit reports of mandate holders as part of the documentation of the session;

20. Decides to continue to set the speaking time limit to one and a half minutes for all interventions by members and observers of the Human Rights Council during panel discussions;

21. Also decides to extend, for one additional year, the measures contained in PRST OS/13/1 related to general debates, whereby general debates will be convened at the March and September sessions of the Human Rights Council on all agenda items and that no general debates will be held at its June session;

22. Further decides to extend, for one additional year, the measure contained in PRST OS/13/1 related to the annual interactive dialogue on the annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, whereby the dialogue will be conducted at its June session;

23. Decides to continue to discuss ways and means to enhance its efficiency and effectiveness and to remain actively seized of the matter.”
