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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on 2 April 2025

58/8. Human rights, democracy and the rule of law

The Human Rights Council,

Guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations,

Reaffirming the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action,

Reaffirming also the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and other relevant international human rights instruments,

Acknowledging that, by adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, States Members of the United Nations pledged to leave no one behind in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, including, inter alia, Goal 4, to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, Goal 5, to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, and Goal 16, to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels,

Recalling that, by adopting the Pact for the Future,¹ the General Assembly reaffirmed the need to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies that provide equal access to justice and that are based on respect for human rights, on the rule of law and good governance at all levels and on transparent, effective and accountable institutions, while underlining the role of young voices in shaping the discussions and decisions taken in the public space,

Acknowledging that investing in building a strong foundation for lasting international peace and security, sustainable development, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all and upholding the rule of law is the most effective way to safeguard the needs and interests of future generations,

Recalling the Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights, and recognizing that taking a human rights-based approach into consideration contributes to the achievement of the objectives therein,

¹ See General Assembly resolution 79/1.



Recalling also all previous resolutions on democracy and the rule of law adopted by the General Assembly, the Commission on Human Rights and the Human Rights Council, in particular Council resolutions 19/36 of 23 March 2012, 28/14 of 26 March 2015, 34/41 of 24 March 2017, 40/9 of 21 March 2019, 46/4 of 23 March 2021 and 52/22 of 3 April 2023, in which the Council, inter alia, established the Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law and decided on the themes of its first five sessions,

Recalling further the Human Rights Council resolutions on the World Programme for Human Rights Education, and stressing the complementarity and mutual reinforcement of human rights education, training and learning, and education for democracy,

Taking note of the report entitled “Education for democracy”, submitted by the Secretary-General in cooperation with the Director General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,²

Acknowledging that human rights, democracy and the rule of law create an environment in which countries can promote sustainable development, protect individuals from discrimination and ensure equal access to justice for all by involving Governments, parliaments, the United Nations system and other international organizations, local authorities, national human rights institutions, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, human rights defenders, civil society, women’s and girls’ rights organizations, organizations of persons with disabilities, the business and private sectors, the scientific and academic communities and all other interested stakeholders,

Stressing that human rights, democracy and the rule of law are interdependent and mutually reinforcing, and in this regard recalling the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening and coordinating United Nations rule of law activities,³ in which the Secretary-General addressed the ways and means of developing further the linkages between the rule of law and the three main pillars of the United Nations, namely, peace and security, human rights, and development,

Recognizing the link between human rights, democracy, the rule of law and good governance at all levels, and recalling the Human Rights Council resolutions and all other resolutions relevant to the role of good governance in the promotion of human rights,

Convinced that the independence and impartiality of the judiciary, the integrity of the judicial system and an independent legal profession are essential prerequisites for the respect and protection of human rights, the rule of law, good governance and democracy and for ensuring that there is no discrimination in the administration of justice, and should therefore be respected in all circumstances,

Recalling the right of every citizen to vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections, which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot or by equivalent free-voting procedures, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors,

Reaffirming that democracy is based on the freely expressed will of people, including through free and fair elections that are transparent and inclusive, to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems and their full participation in all aspects of their lives,

Reaffirming also that, while democracies share common features, there is no single model of democracy and that democracy does not belong to any country or region, and reaffirming further the necessity of due respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and the right to self-determination,

Bearing in mind that challenges to democracy arise in all democratic societies and that determined and coordinated actions and engagement are required to prevent and combat the

² A/79/344.

³ A/72/268.

trend of democratic backsliding, and the deterioration of the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as for the rule of law,

Recognizing the need for all stakeholders to be a part of the responses to global crises and challenges, to have access to timely and accurate information online and offline and to be involved in decisions that affect them, and acknowledging the importance of an active, inclusive and safe engagement of civil society in policymaking, free from reprisals and acts of intimidation, and of facilitating the private sector's contributions to these responses,

Urging States to acknowledge and protect the important contributions of civil society, Indigenous Peoples, human rights defenders, journalists and media workers to the promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, and to ensure an open, safe and enabling environment for their work, both online and offline,

Acknowledging that education contributes to the strengthening of democracy, good governance and the rule of law at all levels, the reduction of economic inequality, the realization of human rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, accessibility for and inclusion of persons with disabilities, combating racism and all forms of discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, the achievement of all internationally agreed development goals, including the Sustainable Development Goals, the development of human potential, the eradication of poverty and the fostering of greater understanding, dialogue and cooperation among peoples,

Gravely concerned that attacks on schools, students and education personnel continue to escalate, with immediate and long-term consequences for children, especially girls and those with disabilities, recognizing the critical importance of keeping educational environments safe and upholding the right to education, and affirming that education is vital for development, peace, security, the rule of law and the full enjoyment of human rights and freedoms,

Noting the principles enshrined in the Recommendation on Education for Peace and Human Rights, International Understanding, Cooperation, Fundamental Freedoms, Global Citizenship and Sustainable Development, which emphasize the role of education in achieving peace, human rights and fundamental freedoms, international understanding, cooperation, democracy, the rule of law, global citizenship, sustainable development and the ability to think critically in an evolving information landscape,

Acknowledging the fundamental importance of human rights education and training, including through digital platforms, in consolidating democracy and contributing to the promotion, protection and effective realization of all human rights, including by fostering critical thinking and by developing competences for active civic engagement in decision-making processes for building inclusive and peaceful societies and more resilient democracies, and stressing the need to close all digital divides with a view to ensuring that the benefits of new and emerging digital technologies are available to all, without discrimination of any kind,

Reaffirming the importance of access to reliable, affordable and accessible information and communications technology and of digital, media and information literacy in fostering responsible use of digital technologies and access to reliable knowledge, while acknowledging the importance of open and inclusive educational resources in ensuring equitable access to quality education for all, acknowledging that innovation, technological change and education in the digital age are essential for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and emphasizing that the full, safe, accessible, equal and meaningful participation and representation of women at all levels of decision-making in political and public affairs are critical to democracy,

Acknowledging that innovation, technological change and assistive technology in the digital age are important for achieving the full and meaningful participation of all persons with disabilities, and emphasizing the importance of their full, safe, equal and meaningful participation in designing and implementing policies, programmes and initiatives, free from discrimination,

Reaffirming the need for States to develop and implement policies and strategies that ensure access to safe, inclusive, equitable and quality education and equal opportunities for

children and young persons and that enable their full, effective and meaningful participation in designing and implementing policies, programmes and initiatives, free from any form of discrimination,

Encouraging States to further their efforts to develop and strengthen educational policies and initiatives that contribute to combating disinformation, misinformation, stigmatization, racism, xenophobia and related intolerance, hate speech and discrimination of any kind, exclusion, and violence, in particular through accessible digital, media and information literacy, to improve education for democracy in the emerging digital environment and to strengthen the resilience of societies against the negative impact of disinformation at all levels,

Recalling that the exercise of human rights, including the freedom to seek, receive and impart information, and to participate in the conduct of government and public affairs, and providing science-based and evidence-based data and information to the public, are vital to transparent and inclusive democracies,

Stressing that a democratic society depends on respect for human rights, including the right to freedom of opinion and expression, and that undue restrictions on the freedom to seek, receive and impart information undermine democracy and the rule of law by preventing efforts aimed at informing citizens, including during democratic processes and at all stages of elections, and holding public authorities accountable and exposing corruption, and stressing also the importance of promoting a safe and diverse information environment that produces accurate, trustworthy and reliable information, meaning that people can rely on the accuracy of the information they access while being exposed to a variety of ideas,

Calling upon States to promote open, stable and secure access to the Internet for all and to encourage digital platforms to promote and secure access to free, independent and reliable information,

Urging States, civil society, the private sector, international organizations, the media and other stakeholders to recognize the compounding risks that disinformation and online hate speech could introduce to electoral and broader democratic processes and to collaborate across sectors in developing practical strategies, including through media information, artificial intelligence and data literacy, to mitigate these risks, thereby ensuring informed participation in political and public affairs, while safeguarding the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Underlining that, while States have the primary responsibility for safeguarding and strengthening democracy and the rule of law, the United Nations has an important role in providing assistance and coordinating international efforts to support States, at their request, in their democratization processes,

Recognizing the value of the Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law for exchange, dialogue, mutual understanding and cooperation on the interrelationship between human rights, democracy and the rule of law, in accordance with the principles and purposes of the Charter, while acknowledging the importance of existing regional formats in the field of human rights, and underlining the relevance of continuing the debates in this framework,

1. *Notes* the rescheduling, to October 2025, of the fifth session of the Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law, under the theme “Democracy and climate change: focusing on solutions”, owing to the liquidity crisis affecting the United Nations Secretariat;

2. *Encourages* States, with the cooperation of all stakeholders, to promote good governance at all levels and to develop effective, accountable and transparent democratic practices, processes and institutions and participatory and representative decision-making processes inclusive of all women, girls and persons in vulnerable situations, while also reaffirming their full commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

3. *Decides* that the theme of the sixth session of the Forum, to be held in 2026, will be “Education for civic participation: empowering future generations, fostering knowledge and critical thinking”;

4. *Encourages* in this respect an increased exchange of good practices on education, enhanced communication, training, public awareness-raising, public participation, public access to information and international cooperation;

5. *Decides* that participation in the sixth session of the Forum will be in accordance with the modalities set out by the Human Rights Council in its resolutions 28/14, 34/41, 40/9, 46/4 and 52/22;

6. *Encourages* States and all stakeholders to pay particular attention to promoting the broadest possible and most equitable participation in the Forum, with due regard for geographical and gender balance;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to continue to provide the Forum, at its sixth session, with all the necessary services and facilities, including interpretation in all official languages of the United Nations.

*55th meeting
2 April 2025*

[Adopted without a vote.]
