



General Assembly

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Human Rights Council

Twenty-third session

Agenda item 8

Follow-up to and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action

Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council*

23/17.

National institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights

The Human Rights Council,

Recalling Human Rights Council resolution 20/14 of 5 July 2012 and relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights concerning national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights, and taking note of Council resolution 22/6 of 21 March 2013,

Reaffirming the importance of establishing and strengthening independent, pluralistic national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights in accordance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles),¹

Reaffirming also the important role that such national institutions play and will continue to play in promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, in strengthening participation and the rule of law, and in developing and enhancing public awareness of those rights and fundamental freedoms,

Reaffirming further, on the twentieth anniversary of its adoption, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights on 25 June 1993, which reaffirmed the important and constructive role played by national human rights institutions, in particular in their advisory capacity to the competent authorities and their role in preventing and remedying human rights violations in disseminating information on human rights and in education in human rights,

Acknowledging the important role that national institutions can play in promoting and protecting the rights of women and girls,

* The resolutions and decisions adopted by the Human Rights Council will be contained in the report of the Council on its twenty-third session (A/HRC/23/2), chap. I.

¹ General Assembly resolution 48/134, annex.

Recognizing the important role of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in assisting the development of independent and effective national human rights institutions, in accordance with the Paris Principles, and recognizing also in this regard the potential for strengthened and complementary cooperation among the Office of the High Commissioner, the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, regional coordinating committees of national institutions and those national institutions in the promotion and protection of human rights,

Noting with interest the twenty-sixth annual meeting of the International Coordinating Committee, held from 6 to 8 May 2013,

Welcoming the strengthening in all regions of regional and cross-regional cooperation among national human rights institutions, and between national human rights institutions and other regional human rights forums,

1. *Welcomes* the most recent reports of the Secretary-General submitted to the Human Rights Council on national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights² and on the activities of the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in accrediting national institutions in compliance with the Paris Principles;³

2. *Takes note with appreciation* of the most recent report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders to the Human Rights Council;⁴

3. *Recognizes* the role of independent national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights in working together with their Governments to ensure full respect for human rights at the national level, including by contributing to follow-up actions, as appropriate, to the recommendations resulting from the international human rights mechanisms;

4. *Welcomes* the increasingly important role of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights in supporting cooperation between their Governments and the United Nations in the promotion and protection of human rights;

5. *Encourages* Member States to establish effective, independent and pluralistic national institutions or, where they already exist, to strengthen them for the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, as outlined in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, and to do so in accordance with the Paris Principles;

6. *Recognizes* that, in accordance with the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, it is the right of each State to choose the framework for national institutions that is best suited to its particular needs at the national level in order to promote human rights in accordance with international human rights standards;

7. *Welcomes* the growing number of Member States establishing or considering the establishment of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights in accordance with the Paris Principles, and welcomes in particular the high number of States that have accepted recommendations to establish national human rights institutions through the universal periodic review and, where relevant, by treaty bodies and special procedures;

² A/HRC/23/27.

³ A/HRC/23/28.

⁴ A/HRC/22/47.

8. *Also welcomes* the continuing number of national institutions seeking accreditation status through the International Coordinating Committee, and encourages national institutions, including ombudsman institutions, to seek accreditation status;

9. *Further welcomes* the important role of the International Coordinating Committee, in close cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in assessing conformity with the Paris Principles and in assisting Governments and national institutions, when requested, to strengthen national human rights institutions in accordance with the Paris Principles;

10. *Encourages* the Secretary-General to continue to give high priority to requests from Member States for assistance in the establishment and strengthening of national human rights institutions in accordance with the Paris Principles;

11. *Encourages* national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights established by Member States to continue to play an active role in preventing and combating all violations of human rights as enumerated in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and relevant international instruments;

12. *Recognizes* the important role played by national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights in the Human Rights Council, including its universal periodic review mechanism, in both preparation and follow-up, and the special procedures, as well as in the human rights treaty bodies, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 60/251 of 15 March 2006 and 65/281 of 17 June 2011, Council resolutions 5/1 and 5/2 of 18 June 2007 and decision 19/119 of 22 March 2012, and Commission on Human Rights resolution 2005/74 of 20 April 2005, and encourages national human rights institutions to continue to participate in and contribute to these mechanisms, including by continuing to engage with the treaty bodies by, inter alia, providing parallel reports and other information;

13. *Welcomes* the increased engagement between the special procedures and national human rights institutions, including during country and follow-up visits and on thematic reports, and encourages the deepening of such engagement, including through the participation of national human rights institutions following the presentation of country mission reports to the Human Rights Council;

14. *Also welcomes* the contribution of national human rights institutions to the ongoing treaty body strengthening process, and encourages national human rights institutions to continue to contribute to the process;

15. *Further welcomes* the efforts of the Secretary-General to encourage national human rights institutions to continue to interact with and advocate for independent participation in all relevant United Nations mechanisms, in accordance with their respective mandates;

16. *Welcomes* the endorsement by the General Assembly of the strengthening of opportunities for national human rights institutions compliant with the Paris Principles to contribute to the work of the Human Rights Council in its resolutions 65/281 and 66/169, and recommends that the Assembly explore the feasibility of enabling national human rights institutions compliant with the Paris Principles to participate in the Assembly based on practices and arrangements agreed upon in Assembly resolution 60/251, Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 5/2, and 16/21 of 25 March 2011, and Commission on Human Rights resolution 2005/74, while ensuring their most effective contribution;

17. *Stresses* the importance of financial and administrative independence and the stability of national human rights institutions for the promotion and protection of the human rights, and notes with satisfaction the efforts of those Member States that have provided their national institutions with more autonomy and independence, including by giving them

an investigative role or enhancing such a role, and encourages other Governments to consider taking similar steps;

18. *Commends* the work of the Office of the High Commissioner with national institutions, including through technical cooperation, and encourages the High Commissioner, in view of the expanded activities relating to national institutions, to ensure that appropriate arrangements are made and budgetary resources provided to continue and further extend activities in support of national human rights institutions, including supporting the work of the International Coordinating Committee and its regional coordinating committees, and invites Governments to contribute additional voluntary funds to that end;

19. *Welcomes* the efforts made by the High Commissioner to strengthen United Nations system-wide coordination on national human rights institutions, and encourages all United Nations human rights mechanisms, as well as its agencies, funds and programmes, to work within their respective mandates with national human rights institutions;

20. *Also welcomes* the strengthening of international cooperation among national institutions, including through the International Coordinating Committee, and encourages the Secretary-General to continue to provide the assistance necessary for holding international, regional and cross-regional meetings and conferences of national institutions, including meetings of the International Coordinating Committee, in cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner;

21. *Stresses* the role that national institutions can play in creating a coherent institutional architecture for women's human rights and gender equality, as stipulated in the recommendations of the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice in its report;⁵

22. *Takes note with interest* of the Amman Declaration and Programme of Action resulting from the eleventh International Conference of National Human Rights Institutions from 5 to 7 November 2012, particularly the commitment of national human rights institutions therein to give priority to women's rights;

23. *Commends* the decision of the International Coordinating Committee to dedicate a session at future annual general meetings to the role of national human rights institutions in promoting and protecting the rights of women and girls;

24. *Stresses* the important contribution of national human rights institutions to the elimination of discrimination and violence against women and girls, as stipulated in the agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-seventh session,⁶ as well as the need to endow those institutions with the necessary human and sufficient financial resources to enable them to function effectively;

25. *Welcomes* the strengthening in all regions of regional cooperation among national human rights institutions, and notes with appreciation the continuing work of the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions, the Network of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Americas, the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions and the European Group of National Human Rights Institutions;

26. *Encourages* all States and national human rights institutions to continue to take appropriate steps to promote cooperation, the exchange of information, the sharing of

⁵ A/HRC/23/50.

⁶ *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2013, Supplement No. 7 (E/2013/27)*.

experience and the dissemination of best practices concerning the establishment and effective operation of national institutions;

27. *Invites* national institutions to include in their cooperation the exchange of best practices on strengthening their liaison role between civil society and their Governments;

28. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Human Rights Council at its twenty-seventh session on the implementation of the present resolution;

29. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Human Rights Council at its twenty-seventh session on the activities of the International Coordinating Committee in accrediting national institutions in compliance with the Paris Principles.

*38th meeting
13 June 2013*

[Adopted without a vote.]
