



General Assembly

Distr.: General
10 December 2018

Original: English

Human Rights Council

Twelfth cycle

Organizational session

3 December 2018

Agenda item 1

Statement by the President*

PRST OS/12/1. Enhancing the efficiency of the Human Rights Council, including by addressing financial and time constraints

At the organizational session of the Human Rights Council held on 3 December 2018, 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, on institution-building of the Council and on the code of conduct for special procedure mandate holders of the Council, respectively, and 16/21 of 25 March 2011, on the review of the work and functioning of the Council,

Welcoming the effectiveness, responsiveness and achievements of the Human Rights Council in fulfilling and implementing its mandate as outlined in General Assembly resolution 60/251 and recognizing its unique role and added value,

Noting the Human Rights Council’s increasing workload and challenges, particularly budgetary constraints, reported by the United Nations Office at Geneva in providing services on a continuing basis for all the meetings of the Council throughout the year, and reaffirming its willingness to consider measures aimed at making its work more efficient and effective,

Welcoming the several rounds of open-ended informal consultations on this matter, guided by the principles of transparency, inclusiveness, predictability, consensus and non-selectivity and held under the auspices of the Bureau for the twelfth cycle, as well as efforts by the previous Bureaux,

1. Decides to continue to discuss the scheduling of the adoption of the final outcomes of the universal periodic review;
2. Also decides to develop a three-year programme of work, to be updated and adopted every year at the organizational session in December;
3. Invites the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva to update in a comprehensive manner, orally and in writing, at the organizational session

* The annexes to the present statement are being issued without formal editing.



held each year in December, the information provided in his letters dated 9 August 2016 and 21 December 2016 and in the report of the Joint Task Force on the Workload of the Human Rights Council dated 24 August 2017 and its annexes, including information on the actual and envisaged resources linked to conference services provided to the Human Rights Council;

4. Decides to continue to discuss the structure and duration of the general debates;

5. Encourages all stakeholders to further discuss how to avoid the proliferation or duplication of statements;

6. Encourages further measures to be considered, with a view to addressing the challenges faced by small delegations, particularly those of small island developing States and least developed countries;

7. Decides to continue the practice of limiting to two hours the duration of panel discussions held during regular sessions, limiting the number of panellists to four, including the moderator, and ensuring a proper gender and geographic balance among the panellists;

8. Strongly encourages the main sponsors of initiatives to take into consideration the multiannual programme of work when deciding on the organization of panels, while preserving delegations' prerogatives to propose panels to be held during sessions of the Human Rights Council, with a view to limiting the number of panels;

9. Encourages participants in interactive dialogues to envisage including in their statements questions for mandate holders;

10. Welcomes the voluntary commitments of States to rationalize their initiatives and related outcomes, including, but not limited to, through biennialization and triennialization, and stresses that the process of rationalization should apply to all resolutions as appropriate, and should continue to be inclusive and transparent, based on consensus and implemented in a fair and equitable manner that will respect the leadership of delegations on their resolutions;

11. Decides, in accordance with paragraph 45 of Human Rights Council resolution 16/21, to revise the format of the voluntary yearly calendar for thematic resolutions of the Council as set out in annex I to the present statement, and encourages delegations to take into account the guiding principles also contained in annex I;

12. Also decides that the voluntary yearly calendar will be regularly updated by the Bureau before each session of the Human Rights Council through consultations with the main sponsors of the resolutions;

13. Encourages States to also consider, on a voluntary basis, sharing information on country resolutions, as a way to improve the transparency and predictability of the work of the Human Rights Council;

14. Calls on all States to maintain their efforts to ensure the sustainability of the rationalization of their initiatives, through the regular updating of the calendar and through an exchange of information to be held every year at the organizational session in December;

15. Stresses the need to respect and implement the provisions of Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 16/21 relating to the working of the Council, including the need for early notification of proposals, and for consultations to be scheduled, as much as possible, in a timely, transparent and inclusive manner that takes into account the constraints faced by delegations;

16. Strongly encourages the progressive and full implementation of the measures on the use of modern technology to improve efficiency, as set out in annex II to the present statement;

17. Decides to assess the impact of the implementation of the measures contained in the present statement after its forty-second session and before the organizational session in December 2019,

18. Also decides to remain actively seized of the matter.”

Annex I

Voluntary yearly calendar for thematic resolutions of the Human Rights Council

MARCH SESSION

Resolutions:

Biennial/triennial resolutions:

Annual resolutions:

Panels:

Special procedures:

SG/HC reports:

Other: (such as Forums, IGWG, SRSGs, etc.)

JUNE SESSION

Resolutions:

Biennial/triennial resolutions:

Annual resolutions:

Panels:

Special procedures:

SG/HC reports:

Other:

Resolutions:

Biennial/triennial resolutions:

Annual resolutions:

Panels:

Special procedures:

SG/HC reports:

Other:

Principles guiding the elaboration and maintenance of a yearly voluntary calendar of thematic resolutions and its implementation

(a) The Council has established a voluntary yearly calendar of thematic resolutions synchronizing schedules for resolutions, mandates and presentation of reports taking into account the need for balance between them (resolution 16/21, paragraphs 45, 46, 47). It also aims at assisting delegations in planning resolutions, avoiding duplication and considering voluntarily, the biennialization and triennialization of their initiatives (PRST 29/1, paragraph 1). This calendar will also be used as a tool/space where delegations could share their plans and ideas to rationalize and improve their initiatives. The calendar will be updated by the Bureau before each session of the Council;

(b) All measures to be taken to rationalize initiatives and resolutions should take place in the context of the Institutional Building Package and other related decisions taken by the Council. In this context the Council has adopted documents that guide States in relation to resolutions, their content, their outcomes and possible ways of rationalization that should still guide this exercise (resolution 5/1, resolution 16/21 and PRST 29/1);

The IB package contains several references on how information and consultations related to resolutions should be organised (early notification of proposals, early submission of draft resolutions, early distribution of reports, information on budgetary implications – see resolution 5/1, paragraphs 111, 112, 113, 117 and resolution 16/21, paragraphs 50 and 53). It stresses in particular that at least one informal open-ended consultation should be held on each draft resolution and/or decision before it is considered for action by the Council. Consultations should, as much as possible, be scheduled in a timely, transparent and inclusive manner that takes into account the constraints faced by delegations, particularly smaller ones.

The IB package encourages States to show restraint in resorting to resolutions, in order to avoid proliferation of resolutions, without prejudice to the right of States to decide on the periodicity of presenting their draft proposals, and identify various ways to do so, including for example minimising duplication of initiatives or the staggering of resolutions (see resolution 5/1, paragraph 117, and resolution 16/21, paragraph 45 and 46).

- The IB package contains important principles related to the working culture of the Human Rights Council, such as transparency, inclusiveness and predictability (see resolution 5/1, paragraph 117, resolution 16/21, paragraph 50, and presidential statement 29/1, paragraph 5). It stresses in particular the need to respect and implement the provisions of resolutions 5/1 and 16/21 relating to the working culture of the Council, including the need for early notification of proposals, early submission of draft resolutions and decisions by the end of the penultimate week of regular sessions, and early distribution of all reports, and to observe the principles of transparency and inclusiveness with regard to the consultation process. Main sponsors are also encouraged to consider ways to share information on comments made to draft resolutions in a transparent manner.
- The IB package provides some guidance on other work formats and outcomes (see resolution 5/1, paragraphs 115 and 118).

(c) It is necessary for resolutions, in particular those containing technical assistance provisions, to be accompanied by an adequate assessment of the commensurate resources requirements;

(d) All measures to be envisaged to rationalize resolutions and initiatives will be voluntary and respect the right of each State to take an initiative at the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly and to decide on its periodicity keeping in mind the specificities and requirements of each initiative;

(e) The process of rationalization should be inclusive and transparent, be based on consensus and be implemented in a fair and equitable manner by all. Should the main sponsors of a resolution decide to implement some rationalization measures such as the biennialization or triennialization of their resolutions, their leadership on their resolutions should be respected;

(f) Consideration should be given to how resolutions could be made more action-oriented and how their follow-up and implementation by all concerned could be facilitated, including by devoting enough space for States to discuss the implementation of resolutions and the various outputs requested by these resolutions.

March sessions

<i>Initiative</i>	<i>SG/HC reports</i>	<i>Other HR Mechanisms, Bodies & Annual Panels</i>	<i>Special procedures</i>
Title of the resolution (main sponsors) + symbol number		Ex: panels, forums, IGWGs, seminars, etc.	Title of the mandate and session at which the mandate is expected to be extended
Indicate whether biennial/triennial resolution			
Indicate whether there is a related GA resolution (+ symbol number)			

Annex II

Measures on the use of modern technology to improve the efficiency of the Human Rights Council

1. Measures to be implemented by the 40th session of the Human Rights Council (HRC) in March 2019:

- (a) Ensure the possibility of tabling resolutions online by using e-mail submission;
- (b) Ensure the possibility of uploading statements for Members and Observers or create an automatic system of uploading statements by using copies submitted for translators;
- (c) Create and maintain an up-to-date electronic directory of HRC and UPR WG delegates, as well as the Secretariat with contact details and responsibilities, during and in-between sessions;
- (d) Create and maintain an up-to-date voluntary electronic directory of human rights NGOs;
- (e) Maintain a real-time speakers' list on a HRC online platform/HRC application;
- (f) Make available online all drafts and amended versions of resolutions prior to and after informal consultations and publish all supporting documentation relevant to the draft resolution;
- (g) In the "oral statements" page on the Extranet add, for every ID, the relevant URL link to the webcast; and
- (h) Extranet should have URL links to the UNOG press meeting summaries on the sessions, for quick access to summaries of interventions.

2. Measures to be implemented by the end of 2019:

- (a) Develop and keep an up-to-date and online calendar of events related to the activities of the HRC, including side events organized by delegations and NGOs, and whenever possible, a schedule of informal consultations;
- (b) Ensure the possibility of co-sponsoring resolutions online and showing status of co-sponsorship in real time;
- (c) Allow users to open statements on the Extranet as web pages, instead of downloading them as files;
- (d) Simplify access to information on the Extranet (less clicks to access info);
- (e) Ensure the possibility of online room reservation for side events, informal consultations and meetings of groups;
- (f) Develop different search options for archived information;
- (g) In the statements' data-base, provide the option to indicate not only the agenda item but also the title of the sub-item (for example, dialogue with SR on xxx issue). In the case of joint statements, provide the option to indicate a list of co-sponsoring States; and
- (h) Publish UPR draft reports on the Extranet and ensure the possibility for each delegation to access recommendations online and check its translation, to relieve the work of Troika.

3. Measures to be implemented by the end of 2020:

- (a) Allow users to open the Order of the Day and the Bulletin of Informal Meetings (BIM) on the Extranet as web pages, instead of downloading them as files; and
- (b) Develop a HRC application (HRC App) for delegates for mobile devices (for all operating systems).