



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

### Forty-fifth session

14 September–7 October 2020

Agenda item 3

**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 6 October 2020**

### **45/9. The role of good governance in the promotion and protection of human rights**

*The Human Rights Council,*

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

*Guided also by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement of all peoples and all nations, and also the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, which affirmed that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated,*

*Recalling all relevant international human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,*

*Recalling also Human Rights Council resolutions 7/11 of 27 March 2008, 19/20 of 23 March 2012, 25/8 of 27 March 2014, 31/14 of 23 March 2016 and 37/6 of 22 March 2018, all other resolutions relevant to the role of good governance in the promotion of human rights, the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,*

*Welcoming the resolve of States parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption, and noting with interest the provisions of the Convention that have led to the development of a mechanism among States parties to review their progress in combating corruption,*

*Noting with satisfaction the twentieth anniversary of the Warsaw Declaration expressing 19 core democratic principles and practices and recognizing the universality of democratic values, thereby founding the Community of Democracies to support the integrity of democratic processes in societies and to enhance the effectiveness of democratic governance,*



*Welcoming* the commitments made by all States in the 2005 World Summit Outcome<sup>1</sup> to make the fight against corruption a priority at all levels,

*Noting* the ongoing work by several important initiatives towards the deepening of good governance practices at the national, regional and international levels,

*Recognizing* the importance of a conducive environment, at both the national and international levels, for the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms and of the mutually reinforcing relationship between good governance and human rights,

*Recognizing also* that transparent, responsible, accountable, open and participatory government, responsive to the needs and aspirations of the people, is the foundation on which good governance rests, and that such a foundation is one of the indispensable conditions for the full realization of human rights, including the right to development,

*Recognizing further* the crucial importance of the active involvement of civil society, at the national, regional and international levels, in processes of governance and in promoting good governance, including through transparency and accountability, at all levels, which is indispensable for building peaceful, prosperous and democratic societies,

*Stressing* that good governance at the national and international levels is essential for sustained economic growth, sustainable development and the eradication of poverty and hunger, and in this context reaffirming the Millennium Declaration, the 2005 World Summit Outcome, the outcome of the 2010 High-level Summit on the Millennium Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

*Recognizing* the increasing awareness in the international community of the detrimental impact of widespread corruption on human rights through both the weakening of institutions and the erosion of public trust in government, and also through the impairment of the ability of Governments to fulfil all their human rights obligations,

*Recognizing also* that good governance and the fight against corruption have a central role in the promotion and protection of human rights and in the elimination of obstacles to development,

*Realizing* that the fight against corruption at all levels plays an important role in the promotion and protection of human rights and in the process of creating sustainable, effective, accountable and transparent institutions to achieve the full enjoyment of human rights,

*Recognizing* that effective anti-corruption measures and the protection of human rights, including by strengthening transparency and accountability in government, are mutually reinforcing,

*Noting with interest* the outcomes of the third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth sessions of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption, held in Doha in 2009, in Marrakech, Morocco in 2011, in Panama City in 2013, in Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation in 2015, in Vienna in 2017 and in Abu Dhabi in 2019,

*Stressing* the importance of developing and implementing national legislation on the promotion of access to information, of establishing active, free and meaningful participation and of strengthening the administration of justice, transparency, accountability and good governance at all levels,

*Reaffirming* the right of every citizen to have access, in general terms of equality, to public service in his or her country as enshrined in article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 25 (c) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,

*Recognizing* that a professional, accountable and transparent public service upholding the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity is one of the essential components of good governance,

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<sup>1</sup> General Assembly resolution 60/1.

*Recognizing also* that the knowledge, training and awareness of public servants, human rights education and the promotion of a human rights culture within the public service play a vital role in promoting respect for and the realization of human rights in society,

*Recognizing further* that meaningful progress towards good governance can better be achieved with appropriate tools or mechanisms to review, measure and assess such progress,

*Welcoming* the contribution of the United Nations Public Service Awards programme, which recognizes excellence in public service to the promotion of the role, professionalism and visibility of public service, and noting its review to align it with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

*Welcoming also* the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, including its recognition of the need to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies that provide equal access to justice and that are based on respect for human rights, including the right to development, on effective rule of law and good governance at all levels, and on transparent, effective and accountable institutions,

*Stressing* that transparent, accountable and participatory government, responsive to the needs and aspirations of the people, including women and members of vulnerable and marginalized groups, is the foundation on which good governance and democracy rests, and that such a foundation is a sine qua non for the protection of human rights, especially in times when humanity is on an unprecedented scale confronted with such crises as the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic,

*Noting* that, used in compliance with international human rights law, information and communications technology can be an effective tool to foster greater participation and contribute to promoting human rights principles and good governance, while being mindful of the impact, opportunities and challenges of rapid technological change with regard to the promotion, protection and enjoyment of human rights,

*Noting with concern* that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a detrimental effect on public access to reliable information, and stressing that providing transparent, accurate and timely information can contribute to containing the pandemic and its impact while respecting the right of every person to hold an opinion without interference and to freedom of expression, including the right to seek, receive and impart information, including accurate information relating to public health and safety and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, through any media, both online and offline, and acknowledging the United Nations “Verified” initiative that encourages us all to check the advice we share,

*Noting* that States have been confronted with the need to provide public services and to respond to the needs of people in the exceptional circumstances of a global pandemic,

*Recalling* that the Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19 is aimed at ensuring a global response in the fight against the virus to support the most vulnerable, especially women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities, and conflict-affected populations living under already dire humanitarian conditions with extremely poor or non-existent public services, such as health-care systems, and acknowledging that the elimination of any impediments to the delivery of humanitarian assistance to residents living in conflict-affected zones, and their access to it, in accordance with international humanitarian law, is of the utmost importance for alleviating their heavy plight and realizing their human rights,

*Taking into account* the ongoing work of the United Nations system and other relevant international and regional organizations relating to the role of good governance in the promotion and protection of human rights,

1. *Welcomes* the convening on 14 June 2019 of a half-day intersessional seminar on the role of good governance in the promotion and protection of human rights, and on sharing best practices in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 16 in this regard;

2. *Takes note with appreciation* of the report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the above-mentioned seminar;<sup>2</sup>
3. *Recognizes* that international human rights law provides a set of standards to guide governing processes and to assess performance outcomes, and in this regard stresses that good governance is necessary for establishing and maintaining an environment conducive to the promotion and protection of human rights;
4. *Notes with concern* that the current pandemic lockdowns may limit freedom of movement and access to basic public services and, among other things, affect jobs, livelihoods and family life;
5. *Also notes with concern* that many forms of the digital divide remain between and within countries and between men and women, boys and girls, older and younger persons and persons with disabilities, and recognizing the need to close them;
6. *Acknowledges* that many countries all over the world need support in terms of expanding infrastructure, technological cooperation and capacity-building, including human and institutional capacity-building, to ensure the accessibility, affordability and availability of the Internet in order to bridge the digital divide and offer a digital dividend to all people and to meet the Sustainable Development Goal targets;
7. *Urges* States to ensure the right of every person to have access, on equal terms, to public services in his or her country by using new communications technology and global interconnectedness, technological innovation and organizational solutions to respond in the best possible way to the needs of people confronted with the risks of the pandemic;
8. *Also urges* States to progressively take steps to expand Internet access in order to provide public services accessible to all, especially the poor and those at most risk of social exclusion, thus rectifying imbalances in access to information and the communications technology currently available, and ensuring their participation in public life;
9. *Encourages* States to address any weaknesses in the way public services are being delivered, including in the areas of health, education, justice and other areas, and to increase accessibility to them, including through new communications technology, thus mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the enjoyment of all human rights;
10. *Welcomes* the commitments made by all States in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to good governance in the promotion and protection of human rights, including by using strengthened means of technology and embracing their implementation;
11. *Underlines* that the primary responsibility lies with States at the national level, including through their constitutional provisions and other enabling legislation, consistent with their international obligations, to ensure that professional public services uphold the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity and are predicated on good governance principles, including impartiality, the rule of law, transparency, accountability, participation, inclusivity and combating corruption, and stresses the importance of human rights training and education in this regard;
12. *Invites* the Secretary-General to ensure the upholding of the integrity of the United Nations system in its service to humanity, and improved coordination between United Nations agencies, programmes and funds, with a view to ensuring that the United Nations system continues to improve the quality of its work at all levels, including in support of objectives and priorities at the national level;
13. *Encourages* the relevant mechanisms of the Human Rights Council to continue to consider, within their respective mandates, the issue of the role of good governance in the promotion and protection of human rights;

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<sup>2</sup> A/HRC/43/34.

14. *Encourages* States to consider developing and implementing appropriate tools or mechanisms to review, measure and assess progress in good governance, including but not limited to the Sustainable Development Goals;

15. *Requests* the High Commissioner:

(a) To organize, at the fiftieth session of the Human Rights Council, a panel discussion on good governance in the promotion and protection of human rights during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, with a view to discuss the most efficient ways of using new technologies to overcome challenges and to ensure the full realization of human rights and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals;

(b) To liaise with States, relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, the treaty bodies, the special procedures of the Human Rights Council and regional human rights mechanisms, as well as with representatives of civil society, including non-governmental organizations and national human rights institutions, with a view to ensuring their contribution to the above-mentioned panel discussion;

(c) To prepare a report on the panel discussion in the form of a summary, and to present it to the Human Rights Council at its fifty-second session;

16. *Decides* to remain seized of the matter.

*36th meeting  
6 October 2020*

[Adopted without a vote.]

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