



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

### Forty-seventh session

21 June–13 July 2021

Agenda item 1

### Organizational and procedural matters

#### Statement by the President

#### PRST 47/... Human rights implications of the COVID-19 pandemic

At the ... meeting, held on ... July 2021, the President of the Human Rights Council made the following statement:

“The Human Rights Council,

*Guided* by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, and reaffirming President’s statement PRST 43/1 of 29 May 2020 on the human rights implications of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic,

*Recognizing* that the COVID-19 pandemic is one of the greatest global challenges in the history of the United Nations, deeply concerned about the negative impact of the pandemic on the enjoyment of human rights around the world, and emphasizing the importance of human rights in shaping the response to the pandemic in terms of both the public health emergency and the broader impact on people’s lives and livelihoods,

*Emphasizing* that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to demonstrate that all human rights, including civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights, are universal, indivisible and interdependent and interrelated,

*Acknowledging* that the COVID-19 pandemic is a powerful reminder of our interconnectedness and vulnerabilities, as the virus respects no borders, and that combating the pandemic calls for an open, transparent, robust, coordinated, large-scale, science-based and inclusive global response in the spirit of solidarity,

*Deeply concerned* that the COVID-19 pandemic perpetuates and exacerbates existing inequalities, and that those most at risk are persons in vulnerable and marginalized situations, including older persons, migrants, refugees, internally displaced persons, persons with disabilities, persons belonging to minorities, indigenous peoples, persons deprived of their liberty, homeless persons and persons living in poverty, and recognizing the need to ensure non-discrimination and equality



while stressing the importance of age- and gender-responsive and disability-sensitive measures in this regard,

*Noting with concern* that the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed serious shortcomings in preparedness for, timely and effective prevention and detection of, and response to potential health emergencies, including the capacity and resilience of health systems, indicating the need to better prepare for future health emergencies,

*Emphasizing* the importance of timely, equitable and unhindered access to safe, affordable, effective and quality medicines, vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics, and other health products and technologies necessary to ensure an adequate and effective response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including for people most vulnerable to armed conflict, extreme poverty, natural disasters or climate change, and of the urgent removal of unjustified obstacles thereto,

*Recognizing* the primary responsibility of Governments to adopt and implement responses to the COVID-19 pandemic that are specific to their national context, and that emergency measures, policies and strategies put in place by countries to address and mitigate the impact of COVID-19 must be targeted, necessary, transparent, non-discriminatory, time-bound, proportionate and in accordance with their obligations under applicable international human rights law, and reaffirming the obligation of States in this regard, in accordance with article 4 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,

*Recognizing also* the fundamental role of the United Nations system in catalysing and coordinating the comprehensive global response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the central efforts of Member States therein, and in this regard acknowledging the crucial leading role played by the World Health Organization,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the enjoyment of human rights around the world, including good practices and areas of concern, presented to the Human Rights Council at its forty-sixth session;<sup>1</sup>

2. *Calls upon* States to ensure that all human rights are respected, protected and fulfilled while combating the pandemic, and that their responses to the COVID-19 pandemic are in full compliance with their human rights obligations and commitments;

3. *Calls for* intensified international cooperation and solidarity to contain, mitigate and overcome the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences through responses that are people-centred, gender-responsive, with full respect for human rights, multidimensional, coordinated, inclusive, innovative, swift and decisive at all levels, including by supporting the exchange of information, scientific knowledge and best practices through, inter alia, the development of new interoperable data tools and the strengthening of platforms to inform mitigation and response actions and continuously monitor the impact of the pandemic, especially to assist people in vulnerable situations and the poorest and most vulnerable countries, to build a more equitable, inclusive, sustainable and resilient future and to “get back on track” to realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

4. *Requests* the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to prepare a report on the human rights implications of the responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, including best practices, lessons learned and ongoing challenges, with a view to better preparing for future health emergencies, and to present it to the Human

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<sup>1</sup> A/HRC/46/19.

Rights Council at its fiftieth session, to be followed by an enhanced interactive dialogue;

5. *Invites* the High Commissioner to give an oral update on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and responses to it, on the enjoyment of all human rights, to the Human Rights Council at its forty-ninth session;

6. *Decides* to remain seized of the matter.”

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