



Human Rights Council**Fifty-first session**

12 September–7 October 2022

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 2022****51/12. Local government and human rights***The Human Rights Council,**Guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations,**Recalling* the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and relevant international human rights instruments, in particular the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,*Recalling also* Human Rights Council resolutions 24/2 of 26 September 2013, 27/4 of 25 September 2014, 33/8 of 29 September 2016, 39/7 of 27 September 2018 and 45/7 of 6 October 2020 on local government and human rights,*Recalling further* General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015 on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and States' commitments to working tirelessly for the full implementation of the Agenda by 2030 at all levels, and recalling also Assembly resolution 71/256 of 23 December 2016 on the New Urban Agenda,*Underscoring* the significant contribution that local governments make to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and their targets, including with regard to the promotion and protection of human rights, as key actors in localizing the commitments set out in the 2030 Agenda, including through self-assessments, regional and international networks and local strategies,*Bearing in mind* that the Sustainable Development Goals are integrated and indivisible, balance the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental – and are aimed at realizing the human rights of all and at achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls,*Bearing in mind also* that human rights and fundamental freedoms are the birth right of all human beings, and that their protection and promotion is the first responsibility of Governments,*Recognizing* the role of local government in the promotion and protection of human rights, without any prejudice to the primary responsibility of the national Government in this regard,

Recognizing also that local government has different forms and functions in every State, in accordance with the constitutional and legal system of the State concerned,

Recognizing further that, given its proximity to people and being at the grass-roots level, one of the important functions of local government is to provide public services that address local needs and priorities related to the realization of human rights at the local level,

Acknowledging that taking a whole-of-government approach and a whole-of-society approach is conducive to ensuring respect for and protection and fulfilment of human rights at all levels, and in this regard emphasizing the need for greater clarity in the distribution of responsibilities and strengthened institutional cooperation and coordination between national and local governments to implement international human rights obligations effectively at all levels of the State,

Bearing in mind that State authorities at all levels should be guided by the following non-exhaustive principles to ensure the protection and promotion of human rights at the local level: universality and inalienability; indivisibility; interdependence and interrelatedness; equality and non-discrimination; participation and inclusion; and accountability and the rule of law,

Emphasizing the importance of upholding human rights in shaping response and recovery efforts during and after the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which has a disproportionate impact on persons in vulnerable and marginalized situations, and in this regard acknowledging the essential role of local governments in ensuring a human rights-compliant response to the COVID-19 pandemic at the local level,

Acknowledging the role of local government in preventing and reducing inequalities and protecting the rights of persons in vulnerable and marginalized situations from discrimination by developing and implementing local laws, policies and programmes, such as action plans, human rights impact assessments and mechanisms for monitoring human rights strategies that are based on States' obligations under international human rights law,

Noting with concern that local governments may face a variety of challenges to fulfilling their role for the promotion and realization of human rights owing to, among other things, a lack of resources, awareness and a framework for their work on human rights,

Underlining that the promotion of a human rights culture within public services and public servants' knowledge, training and awareness play a vital role in promoting respect for and the realization of human rights in society, and stressing the importance in this regard of human rights education and training for public servants at the local government level,

Underlining also that enhanced efforts are needed to build the capacity of local government officials and local actors with respect to the promotion of human rights, including on ways to incorporate human rights protection into all levels of governance through targeted programmes, which may include training, awareness-raising and the provision of guidance tools,

Emphasizing that protecting civic space and providing an enabling environment for civil society participation are essential to promote and protect human rights and to ensure the effectiveness, transparency, accountability and sustainability of the work of local governments, while recognizing that States and local governments should take appropriate action to empower, including through capacity-building, civil society representatives to effectively exercise the right to participate in public affairs and to engage meaningfully with local governments on human rights issues, while respecting the local and national legal frameworks,

Recognizing that, despite improvements in several States, in some instances local stakeholders can face challenges in participating in local government programmes,

Recognizing also the constructive role of local governments in and their contribution to the strengthening of national mechanisms for implementation, reporting and follow-up, and encouraging their continued participation in and contribution to these mechanisms,

Noting relevant international and regional initiatives to promote human rights at the local level and the role of local governments in the implementation of such initiatives,

Noting also that local governments are increasingly connected with the United Nations system and regional organizations, in particular with their human rights mechanisms, including through the universal periodic review, the treaty bodies, the special procedures and the forums mandated by the Human Rights Council,

Taking note of the Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights, which encourages international human rights mechanisms, including the universal periodic review, the treaty bodies and the special procedures, to contribute to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and their targets, inter alia with regard to the promotion and protection of human rights, particularly at the national and local levels,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 76/6 of 15 November 2021 on the follow-up to the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Our Common Agenda" that recognizes the role of local governments in a more inclusive multilateralism, which includes voluntary local reviews of Sustainable Development Goals implementation as a model on which to build,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights submitted to the Human Rights Council pursuant to its resolution 45/7, in which the High Commissioner examined the role of local governments and the challenges faced in the promotion and protection of human rights, including in relation to equality and non-discrimination and the protection of persons in vulnerable and marginalized situations to ensure that no one is left behind, and possible elements of principles guiding local and national governments in this regard;¹

2. *Encourages* local governments to ensure the participation of local stakeholders in local government activities and in public affairs, and an enabling, inclusive, accessible and safe environment for civil society participation, and to promote interaction and exchanges of knowledge with local stakeholders, including local civil society, in the formulation and implementation of local government programmes in efforts to promote and protect human rights at the local level;

3. *Also encourages* local governments, in cooperation with the national Government, to guarantee protection against discrimination and equal access to political participation at the local level, especially for women;

4. *Encourages* States to promote the engagement of local governments in the work of regional and international human rights mechanisms and in implementing relevant recommendations, including in the preparation of State submissions for the universal periodic review and in follow-up thereto, in reviews by the treaty bodies of States and in the work of the special procedures of the Human Rights Council, in particular during country visits;

5. *Also encourages* States to provide local governments with adequate financial resources and technical capacities to fulfil their human rights responsibilities;

6. *Invites* relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, regional human rights mechanisms, national human rights institutions, civil society representatives and other stakeholders to cooperate with local governments to support them, including through capacity-building, in discharging their human rights responsibilities;

7. *Requests* the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to convene a one-day expert meeting, in a hybrid format and fully accessible to persons with disabilities, prior to the fifty-fourth session of the Human Rights Council, on enhancing capacity-building for local governments to incorporate human rights into all their work, as a basis for developing guidance tools on human rights education for local governments, and to submit a report thereon, reflecting the discussions held and identifying areas of priority or concern for consideration of further follow-up action, including in an accessible and easy-to-read format, to the Council at its fifty-sixth session;

8. *Also requests* the Office of the High Commissioner, when preparing the above-mentioned expert meeting and report, to seek input from experts from diverse geographic regions, including from States and local governments, relevant intergovernmental organizations, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, including the United Nations

¹ A/HRC/51/10.

Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), and relevant special procedures, the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee, the treaty bodies, national human rights institutions and civil society representatives, including relevant local government networks and non-governmental organizations;

9. *Invites* the Office of the High Commissioner to continue to support local governments, upon request, in discharging their human rights responsibilities, including by providing guidance and capacity-building, and to continue research on local government and human rights, including on good practices, key challenges, and principles to guide local and national governments in the promotion of human rights;

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

*41st meeting
6 October 2022*

[Adopted without a vote.]
