



# Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

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## Committee against Torture Seventy-third session

### Summary record of the first part (public)\* of the 1877th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Tuesday, 19 April 2022, at 10 a.m.

*Temporary Chair:* Mr. Korkeakivi (Representative of the Secretary-General)

*Chair:* Mr. Heller

## Contents

Opening of the session

Declaration by the newly elected members of the Committee

Election of the officers of the Committee

Adoption of the agenda

Organizational and other matters

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\* The summary record of the second part (closed) of the meeting appears as document [CAT/C/SR.1877/Add.1](#).

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

### **Opening of the session**

1. **The Temporary Chair** declared open the seventy-third session of the Committee against Torture and welcomed the three newly elected members. He said that the human rights imperative of combating torture remained as timely as ever. The Committee had shown determination to deliver its mandate in that regard notwithstanding the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. In addition to its own distinct role, the Committee was a key part of the treaty body system, which continued to facilitate human rights improvements in all regions despite a range of challenges, including limited resources.

2. Since the previous session, in the context of the treaty body strengthening process, the Committee and the other treaty bodies had provided their views on proposals for a predictable review schedule, the harmonization of working methods and the digital transition. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) had subsequently organized informal conversations on those issues in preparation for the forthcoming meeting of the Chairs of the human rights treaty bodies, with a view to facilitating the development of a unified proposal for treaty body strengthening for submission to the General Assembly in order to secure the necessary support and funding from Member States. The Committee had a strong record of introducing innovative working methods, such as the recent changes it had made to ensure more focused and coordinated dialogues with States parties. That experience could be shared with other treaty bodies and built on to help strengthen the system as a whole.

3. As part of their ongoing cooperation, members of the Committee, other United Nations anti-torture mechanisms and OHCHR had played a critical role in the process of updating the Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Istanbul Protocol), which was expected to be completed by June 2022. It was hoped that the revised Protocol would be an important tool in common efforts to combat torture.

### **Declaration by the newly elected members of the Committee**

4. **The Temporary Chair** invited the newly elected members to make the solemn declaration provided for in rule 14 of the Committee's rules of procedure.

5. **Mr. Buchwald**, speaking via video link, **Ms. Maeda** and **Mr. Rouwane** made the following declaration:

“I solemnly declare that I will perform my duties and exercise my powers as a member of the Committee against Torture honourably, faithfully, independently, impartially and conscientiously.”

### **Election of the officers of the Committee**

6. **The Temporary Chair** said that, at the beginning of its seventy-second session, the Committee had elected a Chair and new officers to serve until one day before the first meeting of the current session. He understood that the Committee members had decided by consensus to nominate Mr. Heller for the office of Chair.

7. *Mr. Heller was elected Chair by acclamation.*

8. *Mr. Heller took the Chair.*

9. **The Chair** announced that the Committee had elected Ms. Racu, Mr. Touzé and Mr. Tuzmukhamedov as Vice-Chairs and Mr. Iscan as Rapporteur by consensus.

### **Adoption of the agenda (CAT/C/73/1) and (CAT/C/73/1/Corr.1)**

10. *The agenda was adopted.*

**Organizational and other matters**

11. **The Chair** said that the session was taking place at a time when multilateralism and the effectiveness of the Charter of the United Nations had been called into question as a result of the ongoing war in Ukraine. The Security Council had proved unable to fulfil its basic aim of maintaining international peace and security. A divided General Assembly had voted for the second time in history to suspend a State from the Human Rights Council. Investigations into serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, including torture and ill-treatment, had been initiated. He wished to emphasize that the Committee was a non-political human rights body whose expert members served in their individual capacities and upheld their oaths to work independently and impartially.

12. During the current session, the Committee would consider six State party reports. Unfortunately, the Permanent Mission of Cuba had informed the secretariat that its delegation would be unable to travel to Geneva for the scheduled dialogue. To accommodate time differences, in a change to the usual practice, it had been proposed to devote the first part of the dialogue, scheduled for the morning, to the Committee's questions and for the delegation to provide its replies remotely during the second part, scheduled for the afternoon. During the session, the Committee also planned to adopt nine lists of issues prior to reporting and 21 decisions on individual communications. It would consider its reports on follow-up to concluding observations, on follow-up to communications submitted under article 22 of the Convention and on allegations of reprisals. On 25 April, the Chair of the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture would present the Subcommittee's annual report; the Committee would adopt its own annual report on 3 May.

*The public part of the meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.*