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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 9 October 2024

57/5. 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 the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, in which it is 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 the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, in which the General Assembly affirmed important principles that further strengthen good governance and also affirmed the importance of the right to self-determination,

Recalling further 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, 37/6 of 22 March 2018, 45/9 of 6 October 2020 and 51/5 of 6 October 2022, all other resolutions relevant to the role of good governance in the promotion of human rights 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 interest the outcomes of the sessions of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption,

Reaffirming the 2030 Agenda, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, including the recognition therein 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,



Welcoming the commitments made by all States in the political declaration entitled “Our common commitment to effectively addressing challenges and implementing measures to prevent and combat corruption and strengthen international cooperation”¹ to promote, while safeguarding personal data protection and privacy rights, the use of technological innovations to prevent, detect and combat corruption and facilitate digital government in this regard,

Recognizing the importance of a conducive environment, at both the national and the 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, including women, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities and those in vulnerable and marginalized situations, 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, especially in times of crisis,

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 are indispensable for building peaceful, prosperous and democratic societies,

Stressing the importance of developing and implementing national legislation on the promotion of access to diverse and reliable 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 their 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,

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,

Welcoming the contribution of the United Nations Public Service Award 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,

Reaffirming that the full, equal and meaningful participation of women at all levels of decision-making, as well as that of girls, free from violence and discrimination, is essential for good governance,

Welcoming the commitments made by all States in the 2005 World Summit Outcome² to make the fight against corruption a priority at all levels,

Mindful 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 for the achievement of the full enjoyment of human rights,

Recognizing the increasing awareness in the international community of the detrimental impact of widespread corruption on human rights, by weakening institutions, by eroding public trust in government and by impairing the ability of Governments to fulfil all their human rights obligations,

¹ General Assembly resolution S-32/1, annex.

² General Assembly resolution 60/1.

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

Recalling Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption resolution 10/1 of 15 December 2023, in which the Conference called upon States parties to make efforts so that the conditions were present for the effective contribution of individuals and groups outside the public sector, including civil society, non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, the private sector, academia and the media, to achieving the objectives of the Convention, including the ability to operate independently and without fear of reprisal because of their efforts in preventing and combating corruption in that regard, in accordance with domestic law and the respective applicable international obligations, and to promote the engagement of youth in the prevention of and fight against corruption through awareness-raising and other involvement in anti-corruption initiatives,

Recalling also Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption resolution 10/8 of 15 December 2023, in which States parties were encouraged, in accordance with their domestic law, to establish and strengthen confidential complaint systems and protected internal reporting systems that are accessible, diversified and inclusive to facilitate timely reporting of corruption and to ensure the confidentiality of the reporting persons' identities and personal information, including, where appropriate, allowing for anonymous reporting, and utilize innovative and digital technology in those efforts, with due regard for data protection and privacy rights,

Recognizing the opportunities provided by open data and digital technologies to strengthen transparency and accountability and to prevent, detect and investigate corruption,

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,

Stressing that good governance at the local, 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 2030 Agenda,

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

Recognizing the primary responsibility of States, as the main duty bearers, to promote and protect human rights online and offline,

Recognizing also that good governance, including technical and legal safeguards, plays a pivotal role in mitigating the impact of digital divides on human rights, within and among States, and that human rights due diligence is important when integrating new technologies into the public sector,

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,

Recognizing that information and communications technology can hold great potential for strengthening democratic institutions and the resilience of civil society, empowering civic engagement and enabling the work of human rights defenders, public participation and the open and free exchange of ideas,

Stressing that the use of information and communications technology, including the digitalization of public service, can strengthen the efficiency, professionalism, accountability, transparency and accessibility of public institutions,

Recognizing the risks that misuse of information and communications technology may have for the protection, promotion and enjoyment of human rights, fundamental freedoms and good governance,

Expressing concern that misuse of information and communications technology can undermine equal access to public services, and stressing the importance of ensuring the safety and security of critical infrastructure and critical information infrastructure in this regard,

Recognizing that disinformation is a threat to democracy that can undermine political engagement, including by engendering or deepening distrust towards democratic institutions and processes, including electoral processes, and hinder the realization of informed participation in political and public affairs,

Recognizing also that artificial intelligence systems, when used responsibly, with adequate safeguards and due diligence and consistent with human rights law, can play a significant role in enhancing good governance, including by facilitating access to information and participation in public life, strengthening democratic institutions and the resilience of civil society and being used to combat corruption, and thereby contribute to promoting and protecting human rights, including economic, social and cultural rights, and provide opportunities for effective responses to disinformation and misinformation,

Recognizing further that good governance, including the principles of transparency, participation, inclusivity and accountability, can contribute significantly to regulatory and governance frameworks for artificial intelligence systems that respect, protect and fulfil human rights,

1. *Welcomes* the convening, on 4 September 2023, of a panel discussion on the most efficient ways of upholding good governance to address the human rights impacts of the various digital divides;

2. *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;

3. *Reaffirms* that the same rights that people have offline must also be protected online;

4. *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 recognizes the need to close them;

5. *Encourages* States to foster collaboration between the public and private sectors and with civil society in addressing digital divides, within and among States, and to engage with the private sector, the technical community, academia and regulators to promote respect for human rights related to digital technology, with a focus on accessible and affordable technology solutions;

6. *Also encourages* States to take a comprehensive approach to bridging digital divides, focusing not only on the availability or access to digital technologies and infrastructure but also on facilitating the meaningful engagement of individuals with them, including by taking measures to improve digital, media and information literacy and data literacy;

7. *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 digital divides, to offer a digital dividend to all people and to meet the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals;

8. *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 crises;

9. *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, thereby rectifying imbalances in access to the information and communications technology currently available and ensuring their participation in public life;

10. *Further urges* States to maintain and enhance efforts to promote access to diverse and reliable information on the Internet as one means of facilitating affordable and inclusive education, health, justice and other public services globally, underlining the need to address digital literacy and digital divides;

11. *Urges* States, civil society, the private sector, international organizations, the media and other stakeholders to recognize the compounding risks that disinformation could introduce to electoral and other democratic processes, and to work in a cross-sectoral manner to develop practical strategies, including through media and information literacy, to mitigate risks while promoting the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms;

12. *Encourages* States and, where applicable, other stakeholders to promote, following a risk-based approach, the safe, secure and trustworthy design, development, deployment and decommissioning of artificial intelligence systems in an inclusive and equitable manner, and for the benefit of all, and foster an enabling environment for such systems to protect the exercise of and mitigate the potential adverse impacts on the full and effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms;

13. *Encourages* States to address any weaknesses in the way public services are being delivered, including in the areas of health, education and justice, and to increase accessibility to them, including through new information and communications technology;

14. *Also encourages* States to promote an open, secure, stable, accessible and peaceful information and communications technology environment based on respect for international law, including the obligations enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and international human rights instruments, and to address the risks that misuse of information and communications technology may have for the protection, promotion and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms;

15. *Further encourages* States to consider developing transparency practices, such as e-procurement, open contracting and spending dashboards, to detect and deter corruption risks in government contracts and purchases;

16. *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;

17. *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;

18. *Invites* the Secretary-General to ensure the upholding of the integrity of the United Nations system in its service to humanity, and improved coordination among 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;

19. *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;

20. *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;

21. *Requests* the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee to prepare a study on the impact of artificial intelligence systems on good governance, indicating in particular the areas in which artificial intelligence systems can contribute to promoting and protecting human rights through good governance and those in which such systems pose a challenge to good governance and human rights, highlighting good practices around the globe on the ways to develop, deploy, use and govern artificial intelligence systems, following a risk-based approach, to promote and protect human rights through good governance and identifying necessary safeguards, and to present the study to the Human Rights Council at its sixty-second session;

22. *Also requests* the Advisory Committee to seek the views of and inputs from and to take into account relevant work already done by stakeholders, including States, United Nations agencies, entities, funds and programmes within their respective mandates, international and regional organizations, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the special procedures of the Human Rights Council, relevant treaty bodies, national human rights institutions, civil society, the private sector, academic institutions, multi-stakeholder initiatives and other relevant stakeholders, where applicable, when preparing the above-mentioned study;

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

*46th meeting
9 October 2024*

[Adopted without a vote.]
