

## Proposal of the Bureau:

### **Clustering and staggering of general debates throughout the Annual Programme of Work and restructuring the panel discussions**

This proposal by the Bureau aims at strengthening the Council and reducing the number of regular session meetings held in 2018. Reduced meeting time would give delegations space and time for a more focused and meaningful participation in the Council's proceedings, as well as informal consultations, side events and other relevant meetings.

This proposal touches exclusively upon the general debates and panel discussions, and does not affect the consideration of agenda items in the Council's agenda. All items would remain on the Council's programme of work at each session, with mandated interactive dialogues, presentation of reports, and tabling and adoption of resolutions under relevant items.

#### **1. Clustering and staggering of general debates**

In the March session, all general debates would be consolidated in **three clusters**. Throughout the rest of the year, individual general debates would be **divided (staggered) between June and September sessions**.

##### ***1. Clustering:***

###### ***March session:***

<sup>1</sup>In the March session, the general debates would be consolidated in the following three clusters:

- A clustered general debate on agenda items **3, 8, and 9**, which would take place during the second week of the session;
- A clustered general debate on agenda items **2, 4, and 7**, which would take place during the third week of the session;
- A clustered general debate on agenda items **5, 6, and 10**, which would take place during the fourth week of the session.

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<sup>1</sup> Interactive dialogue with the High Commissioner remains a self-standing dialogue.

## ***II. Staggering:***

### ***June Session:***

In the June session, there would be only General Debates ***on human rights around the world:***

- Individual general debate on the oral update by the High Commissioner for Human Rights (Item **2**);
- Individual general debate on item **4** (Human Rights situations that require the Council's attention);
- Individual general debate on item **6** (Universal Periodic Review)
- Individual general debate on item **7** (Human Rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories);
- Individual general debate on item **10** (Technical assistance and capacity building).

### ***September Session:***

In the September session, there would be only General Debates ***on thematic human rights issues:***

- Individual general debate on the oral update by the High Commissioner for Human Rights (item **2**);
- Individual general debate on item **3** (Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including right to development);
- Individual general debate on item **5** (Human Rights bodies and mechanisms);
- Individual general debate on item **8** (Follow-up and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action);
- Individual general debate on item **9** (Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, follow-up and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action)

Implications of the implementation of the above-mentioned proposal are as follows:

- The speaking time limits for general debates would be brought back to 3 minutes for States members of the Council and 2 minutes for all observers, as in 2016.
- More breaks would be added to the programme of work for each session, increasing the number of working days with two meetings of 3 hours each.
- The total number of general debates per agenda item would be reduced to 2 instead of 3 per year, with the exception of the general debate related to item 2, which would still take place at each session.

***The savings from clustering and staggering general debates would amount to 4.5 meetings per year.***

## **2) Restructuring the panel discussions:**

In order to increase their visibility and focus, the modalities for panel discussions would be restructured by reducing the number of panellists (a maximum of 4, including a moderator).

This would allow for a reduction of the duration of panels to 2 hours while maintaining the same amount of time (1 hour) for statements by member and observer States, NHRIs and NGOs.

***According to the report of the Task Force in 2017, the savings resulting from restructuring panel discussions would amount to approximately 7 meetings per year.***

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**TOTAL SAVINGS WITH SPEAKING TIMES DURING GENERAL DEBATES SET AT 3 MINUTES FOR STATES MEMBERS AND 2 MINUTES FOR ALL OBSERVES: APPX. 11 MEETINGS PER YEAR**