

## **Minutes of the Human Rights Council Bureau Meeting**

**of 11 March 2020**

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On 11 March 2020, the Bureau held an additional urgent meeting with the participation of UNOG to discuss the implications of the new set of measures adopted by the Swiss authorities to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus on the current 43<sup>rd</sup> session of the Human Rights Council.

The President informed that notwithstanding the measures implemented to date, a number of delegations continue to raise concerns on the spread of COVID-19. The Secretariat informed that the latest decision of the Bureau to ensure “social distancing” between participants had been applied, but that their enforcement proved to pose a sizeable challenge in particular for General Debates.

The Bureau discussed with UNOG Director for Conference Management, Ms. Corinne Momal-Vanian, and the HRC Secretariat the implications of the evolving situation. It also took into account the recent assessment of the WHO and concluded that under the current circumstances, an orderly suspension of the session by the end of this week was the best approach to follow.

The Bureau therefore agreed to put forward to the Council for its approval, at the end of the morning meeting on 12 March at 12:00 p.m., the following proposal:

- To suspend the 43<sup>rd</sup> session of the Human Rights Council on 13 March 2020 until further notice
- Before the suspension of the session, the Council would:
  - Proceed with the adoptions of the UPR outcomes scheduled for the 43<sup>rd</sup> session on 12 and 13 March 2020 and – in case the panellists are already present in or on their way to Geneva - hold the annual debate on racial discrimination. All remaining plenary debates would be postponed to the resumption of the 43<sup>rd</sup> session;
  - Adopt a decision extending all mandates and mandated activities which would otherwise expire until the resumption of the 43<sup>rd</sup> session;
  - Appoint the 19 mandate holders to be appointed at the 43<sup>rd</sup> session;

- All resolutions that will be tabled before Friday, 13 March 2020 at 1 p.m. would be acted upon at the resumed session.

In addition, the Bureau decided that until the suspension of the session:

- Only one person per delegation will have access both to the Assembly Hall and to rooms provided for informals;
- Delegations from States under Review for the UPR adoptions will have two seats at the podium in addition to the one at their usual place;
- Only NGOs inscribed on the list of speakers will have access to the plenary.
- Webcast will continue to be provided in Room XX for all other participants.

Furthermore, the Bureau invited the Secretariat to stay in contact with delegations of States under Review at the 36th UPR session before they make travel arrangements.

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