

Towards a more diverse, inclusive and representative Council

45th session of the Human Rights Council

Agenda item 2

Joint Statement

Co-penholders Netherlands, Maldives, Japan, Costa Rica and Seychelles

Thank you, Madam President

This statement is on behalf of Albania, Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Maldives, Marshal Islands, Monaco, Mexico, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Poland, Republic of Korea, Romania, Seychelles, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Ukraine.

Human Rights Council membership is open to all States members of the United Nations.

We therefore welcome recent progress in making the Council's membership more diverse, inclusive and representative. The number of countries that have served on the Council has increased from 95 in January 2018, to 116 today. It is important for the Council's credibility that this trend continues, and even more States stand for election.

Membership of the Council implies responsibilities and duties. Resolution 60/251, which set up this Council, states that Council members shall "uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights" and "fully cooperate with the Council".

Human Rights Council members are subjected to heightened public scrutiny. They should engage in the work of the Human Rights Council in a spirit of self-reflection with a genuine commitment to improve, to engage in dialogue and to cooperate with the Council and its mechanisms.

Members should also strive to make progress in the promotion, protection and realization of all human rights at the national and international level, including through the pursuit of the implementation of Council resolutions and, where appropriate recommendations of its mechanisms, but also of the Treaty Bodies. Members should strive to address human rights situations of concern on the basis of objective criteria.

Moreover, all states, but in particular those that serve on the Council should work in close cooperation with civil society. They should strive to create a safe and enabling environment for civil society, both at home and at the Council and consult civil society and engage robustly to prevent any act of intimidation and reprisal, including by addressing such incidents when they occur.

Madam President,

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The Council's effectiveness and credibility is largely determined by its membership. The cosponsors of this statement believe it is time to inject a greater degree of openness and (public) exchange into the process of Human Rights Council elections.

Resolution 60/251 sets out that when electing members, States "shall take into account the contribution of candidates to the promotion and protection of human rights and their voluntary pledges and commitments".

In that regard, we believe that all future Human Rights Council candidates should be formally required to participate in a candidate pledging event convened by the President of the General Assembly, the format of which may be decided upon in consultation UN Member States and other relevant stakeholders. The most recent selection process for the post of UN Secretary-General provides both a precedent and a format for this.

We encourage all states to stand up for election and to move towards a more diverse, inclusive, and representative Human Rights Council.

Thank you.