



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
9 October 2020

Original: English

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## Human Rights Council

### Forty-fifth session

14 September–7 October 2020

Agenda item 3

**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 6 October 2020**

### **45/7. Local government and human rights**

*The Human Rights Council,*

*Guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations,*

*Recalling the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and relevant international human rights instruments, in particular the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,*

*Recalling also Human Rights Council resolutions 24/2 of 26 September 2013, 27/4 of 25 September 2014, 33/8 of 29 September 2016 and 39/7 of 27 September 2018 on local government and human rights,*

*Recalling further General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015 on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in which the Assembly adopted a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative Sustainable Development Goals and targets, and its commitments to working tirelessly for the full implementation of the Agenda by 2030 at all levels,*

*Underscoring the significant contribution that local government can make to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and their targets, including with regard to the promotion and protection of human rights,*

*Bearing in mind that the Sustainable Development Goals are integrated and indivisible, balance the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental – and are aimed at realizing the human rights of all and at achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls,*

*Bearing in mind also that human rights and fundamental freedoms are the birth right of all human beings, and that their protection and promotion is the first responsibility of Governments,*

*Recognizing the role of local government in the promotion and protection of human rights, without any prejudice to the primary responsibility of the national Government in this regard,*



*Recognizing also* that local government has different forms and functions in every State, in accordance with the constitutional and legal system of the State concerned,

*Recognizing further* that, given its proximity to people and being at the grass-roots level, one of the important functions of local government is to provide public services that address local needs and priorities related to the realization of human rights at the local level,

*Deeply concerned* that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic perpetuates and exacerbates existing inequalities, and that those most at risk are persons in vulnerable and marginalized situations,

*Emphasizing* the importance of upholding human rights in shaping the response to the pandemic both in relation to the public health emergency and the broader impact on people's lives and livelihoods, and in this regard acknowledging the essential role of local government in ensuring a human rights-compliant response to the COVID-19 pandemic at the local level,

*Acknowledging* the role of local government in preventing and reducing inequalities and protecting the rights of persons in vulnerable and marginalized situations from discrimination by developing and implementing local laws, policies and programmes that are based on States' obligations under international human rights law,

*Noting with concern* that local government may face a variety of challenges to fulfilling its role for the realization of human rights owing to, among other things, a lack of resources, awareness and a framework for its work on human rights,

*Underlining* that the promotion of a human rights culture within public services and public servants' knowledge, training and awareness play a vital role in promoting respect for and the realization of human rights in society, and stressing the importance in this regard of human rights education and training for public servants at the local government level,

*Underlining also* that the expertise and knowledge of local government officials are an important asset in the provision of public services and the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the local government level and in the implementation of the pledge in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to leave no one behind,

*Emphasizing* that protecting civic space and providing an enabling environment for civil society participation are essential to promote and protect human rights, as well as to ensure the effectiveness, transparency, accountability and sustainability of the work of local government, while recognizing that States and local government should take appropriate action to empower, including through capacity-building, civil society representatives to effectively exercise the right to participate in public affairs and to engage meaningfully with local government on human rights issues, while respecting the local and national legal frameworks,

*Recognizing* the constructive role of local government in and its contribution to the strengthening of national mechanisms for implementation, reporting and follow-up, and encouraging its continued participation in and contribution to this mechanism,

*Recognizing also* that, despite improvements in several countries, in some instances local stakeholders can face challenges in participating in local government programmes,

*Noting* relevant international and regional initiatives to promote human rights at the local level and the role of local government in the implementation of such initiatives,

*Noting also* that local government is increasingly connected with the United Nations human rights system, including through the universal periodic review, the treaty bodies, the special procedures and the forums mandated by the Human Rights Council,

*Recognizing* that local government is among the key actors in localizing the commitments set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and can contribute, among other things, to raising awareness of and implementing its goals and targets, including through self-assessments, regional and international networks and local strategies,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on effective methods to foster cooperation between local

government and local stakeholders for the promotion and protection of human rights at their level, including by raising awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals;<sup>1</sup>

2. *Encourages* the interaction and exchange of knowledge between local government and local stakeholders, including local civil society, in the formulation and implementation of local government programmes, with the aim of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through the promotion of a human rights culture within public services;

3. *Encourages* local government to ensure the participation of local stakeholders in local government activities and in public affairs in efforts to promote and protect human rights at the local level;

4. *Encourages* States to promote the engagement of local governments in the work of regional and international human rights mechanisms and in implementing relevant recommendations, including in the preparation of State submissions for the universal periodic review, in State reviews by treaty bodies and in the work of the special procedures of the Human Rights Council, in particular during country visits;

5. *Invites* relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, regional human rights mechanisms, national human rights institutions, civil society representatives and other stakeholders to cooperate with local governments to support them in discharging their human rights responsibilities;

6. *Requests* the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to prepare a report, in consultation with all States and relevant intergovernmental organizations, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, relevant special procedures, the Advisory Committee, the treaty bodies, national human rights institutions, civil society representatives, including non-governmental organizations, and local governments, on the role of local government and the challenges faced in the promotion and protection of human rights, including in relation to the right to equality and non-discrimination and the protection of persons in vulnerable and marginalized situations, with a view to identifying possible elements of principles guiding local and national governments in this regard, and to submit the report to the Council prior to its fifty-first session;

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

*36th meeting  
6 October 2020*

[Adopted without a vote.]

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<sup>1</sup> A/HRC/42/22.