



General Assembly

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Human Rights Council

Twentieth session

Agenda item 8

Follow-up and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action

Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council*

20/14.

National institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights

The Human Rights Council,

Recalling Human Rights Council resolution 17/9 of 16 June 2011, as well as relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, the most recent of which is resolution 66/169 of 19 December 2011, and those of the Commission on Human Rights concerning national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights,

Welcoming the international recognition of the importance of establishing and strengthening independent, pluralistic national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights in accordance with the Principles relating to the Status of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (“the Paris Principles”),

Reaffirming the important role that such national institutions play and will continue to play in promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, in strengthening participation and the rule of law, and in developing and enhancing public awareness of those rights and fundamental freedoms,

Recalling the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights on 25 June 1993, which reaffirmed the important and constructive role played by national human rights institutions, in particular in their advisory capacity to the competent authorities and their role in preventing and remedying human rights violations, in disseminating information on human rights and in education in human rights,

Recognizing the important role of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in assisting the development of independent and effective national human rights institutions, in accordance with the Paris Principles, and recognizing also in this regard the potential for strengthened and complementary cooperation among the

* The resolutions and decisions adopted by the Human Rights Council will be contained in the report of the Council on its twentieth session (A/HRC/20/2), chap. I.

Office of the High Commissioner, the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, regional coordinating committees of national institutions and those national institutions in the promotion and protection of human rights,

Noting with interest the twenty-fifth annual meeting of the International Coordinating Committee, held from 20 to 22 March 2012,

Welcoming the strengthening in all regions of regional and cross-regional cooperation among national human rights institutions, and between national human rights institutions and other regional human rights forums,

1. *Welcomes* the most recent reports of the Secretary-General submitted to the Human Rights Council on national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights¹ and on the activities of the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in accrediting national institutions in compliance with the Paris Principles;²

2. *Reaffirms* the importance of the establishment and strengthening of effective, independent and pluralistic national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights in accordance with the Paris Principles;

3. *Recognizes* the role of independent national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights in working together with Governments to ensure full respect for human rights at the national level, including by contributing to follow-up actions, as appropriate, to the recommendations resulting from the international human rights mechanisms;

4. *Welcomes* the increasingly important role of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights in supporting cooperation between their Governments and the United Nations in the promotion and protection of human rights;

5. *Encourages* Member States to establish effective, independent and pluralistic national institutions or, where they already exist, to strengthen them for the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, as outlined in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, and to do so in accordance with the Paris Principles;

6. *Recognizes* that, in accordance with the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, it is the right of each State to choose the framework for national institutions that is best suited to its particular needs at the national level in order to promote human rights in accordance with international human rights standards;

7. *Welcomes* the growing number of Member States establishing or considering the establishment of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights in accordance with the Paris Principles, and welcomes in particular the growing number of States that have accepted recommendations to establish national human rights institutions through the universal periodic review and, where relevant, by treaty bodies and special procedures;

8. *Also welcomes* the growing number of national institutions seeking accreditation status through the International Coordinating Committee, and encourages national institutions, including ombudsman institutions, to seek accreditation status;

¹ A/HRC/20/9.

² A/HRC/20/10.

9. *Further welcomes* the important role of the International Coordinating Committee, in close cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in assessing conformity with the Paris Principles and in assisting Governments and national institutions, when requested, to strengthen national human rights institutions in accordance with the Paris Principles;

10. *Encourages* the Secretary-General to continue to give high priority to requests from Member States for assistance in the establishment and strengthening of national human rights institutions in accordance with the Paris Principles;

11. *Encourages* national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights established by Member States to continue to play an active role in preventing and combating all violations of human rights as enumerated in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and relevant international instruments;

12. *Recognizes* the important role played by national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights in the Human Rights Council, including its universal periodic review mechanism, in both preparation and follow-up, and the special procedures, as well as in the human rights treaty bodies, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251 of 15 March 2006, Council resolutions 5/1 and 5/2 of 18 June 2007 and Commission on Human Rights resolution 2005/74 of 20 April 2005;

13. *Welcomes* the strengthening of opportunities to contribute to the work of the Human Rights Council for national human rights institutions compliant with the Paris Principles, as stipulated by the Council review outcome document adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 65/281 of 17 June 2011 and Council decision 19/119 of 22 March 2012, and encourages national human rights institutions to make use of these participatory opportunities;

14. *Also welcomes* the contribution of national human rights institutions to the ongoing treaty body strengthening process, and encourages national human rights institutions to continue to contribute to the process;

15. *Further welcomes* the recognition by the Secretary-General of the contributions that national human rights institutions compliant with the Paris Principles have made to the work of the Commission on the Status of Women, the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing, and supports and welcomes the efforts of the Secretary-General to encourage national human rights institutions to continue to interact with and advocate for independent participation in all relevant United Nations mechanisms in accordance with their respective mandates;

16. *Welcomes* the endorsement by the General Assembly of the strengthening of opportunities for national human rights institutions compliant with the Paris Principles to contribute to the work of the Human Rights Council in its resolutions 65/281 and 66/169, and recommends that the Assembly explore the feasibility of enabling national human rights institutions compliant with the Paris Principles to participate in the Assembly based on practices and arrangements agreed upon in Assembly resolutions 60/251, Council resolutions 5/1 and 5/2, and 16/21 of 25 March 2011, and Commission on Human Rights resolution 2005/74, while ensuring their most effective contribution;

17. *Stresses* the importance of financial and administrative independence and the stability of national human rights institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights, and notes with satisfaction the efforts of those Member States that have provided their national institutions with more autonomy and independence, including by giving them an investigative role or enhancing such a role, and encourages other Governments to consider taking similar steps;

18. *Commends* the high priority given by the Office of the High Commissioner to work with national institutions, including through technical cooperation, and encourages the High Commissioner, in view of the expanded activities relating to national institutions, to ensure that appropriate arrangements are made and budgetary resources provided to continue and further extend activities in support of national human rights institutions, including supporting the work of the International Coordinating Committee and its regional coordinating committees, and invites Governments to contribute additional voluntary funds to that end;

19. *Welcomes* the efforts made by the High Commissioner to strengthen United Nations system-wide coordination on national human rights institutions, and encourages all United Nations human rights mechanisms, as well as its agencies, funds and programmes, to work within their respective mandates with national human rights institutions;

20. *Also welcomes* the strengthening of international cooperation among national institutions, including through the International Coordinating Committee, and encourages the Secretary-General to continue to provide the assistance necessary for holding international, regional and cross-regional meetings and conferences of national institutions, including meetings of the International Coordinating Committee, in cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner;

21. *Takes note with interest* of the Edinburgh Declaration on Business and Human Rights³ resulting from the tenth International Conference of National Human Rights Institutions from 8 to 10 November 2010, and recalls Human Rights Council resolution 17/9, in which the Council welcomed the important role of national human rights institutions established in accordance with the Paris Principles in relation to business and human rights,

22. *Welcomes* the strengthening in all regions of regional cooperation among national human rights institutions, and notes with appreciation the continuing work of the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions, the Network of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Americas, the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions and the European Group of National Human Rights Institutions;

23. *Encourages* all States and national human rights institutions to continue to take appropriate steps to promote the exchange of information and experience concerning the establishment and effective operation of national institutions;

24. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Human Rights Council at its twenty-third session on the implementation of the present resolution;

25. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Human Rights Council at its twenty-third session on the activities of the International Coordinating Committee in accrediting national institutions in compliance with the Paris Principles.

*32nd meeting
5 July 2012*

[Adopted without a vote.]

³ A/HRC/17/NI/1, annex.