

**Human Rights Council****Fifty-seventh session**

9 September–11 October 2024

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 10 October 2024****57/12. 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, 39/7 of 27 September 2018, 45/7 of 6 October 2020 and 51/12 of 6 October 2022 on local government and human rights, as well as all other relevant resolutions of the Council,*Recalling further* General Assembly resolutions 70/1 of 25 September 2015, on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and States' commitments to working tirelessly for the full implementation of the Agenda by 2030 at all levels, 71/256 of 23 December 2016, on the New Urban Agenda, and 78/1 of 29 September 2023, on the Political declaration of the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the General Assembly, in which States committed to, inter alia, enhancing global, regional, national and local partnerships for sustainable development and to further localize the Sustainable Development Goals and advance integrated planning and implementation at the local level,*Noting* the twelfth session of the World Urban Forum, to be held in Cairo from 4 to 8 November 2024, under the theme "It all starts at home: local action for sustainable cities and communities",*Underscoring* the significant contribution that local governments make to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and their targets, including with regard to the promotion and protection of human rights, as key actors in localizing the commitments set out in the 2030 Agenda, including through self-assessments, regional and international networks and local strategies,*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 all human rights and fundamental freedoms are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated 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, its knowledge of the local needs and priorities 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, and recognizing the benefits of enhanced dialogue and cooperation towards this end between States, local governments, civil society and other local stakeholders, including in promoting knowledge of human rights and serving as a catalyst for human rights progress at the local level,

Acknowledging the role of local government in preventing and reducing inequalities and protecting persons in vulnerable and marginalized situations from discrimination by developing and implementing, in a manner that is consistent with the constitutional frameworks of States, local laws, policies and programmes, such as action plans, human rights impact assessments and mechanisms for monitoring human rights strategies that are based on States' obligations under international human rights law,

Bearing in mind that State authorities at all levels should be guided by the following non-exhaustive principles to ensure the protection and promotion of human rights at the local level: universality and inalienability; indivisibility; interdependence and interrelatedness; equality and non-discrimination; participation and inclusion; and accountability and the rule of law,

Noting with concern that local governments may face a variety of challenges in fulfilling their role for the promotion and realization of human rights, owing to, among other things, a lack of resources and cooperation between national and local government, awareness and a framework for their work on human rights,

Acknowledging that taking a whole-of-government approach and a whole-of-society approach is conducive to ensuring respect for and protection and fulfilment of human rights at all levels, and in this regard emphasizing the need for greater clarity in the distribution of responsibilities and strengthened institutional cooperation and coordination between national and local governments to implement international human rights obligations effectively at all levels of the State,

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 enhanced efforts are needed to build the capacity of local government officials and local actors with respect to the promotion of human rights and their understanding of the work of regional and international human rights mechanisms, including on ways to incorporate human rights protection into all levels of governance through targeted programmes, which may include training, awareness-raising and the provision of guidance tools,

Taking note with appreciation of the report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 51/12,¹ and welcoming the fact that, in the report, the Office highlighted the ongoing need

¹ A/HRC/56/32.

for enhanced capacity-building and guidance to support local governments in implementing human rights in their operations and strengthening engagement with United Nations human rights mechanisms and bodies,

Underlining the importance of the collection and exchange of ideas and good practices, between and among national and local governments, to enrich the understanding of local needs and realities, identify and raise awareness of best practices and improve dialogue and coordination between different levels of government,

Emphasizing the importance of cooperation among different United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, within their respective mandates, in assisting and providing guidance to local governments in incorporating human rights into all their work, in a manner that is consistent with the constitutional frameworks of States,

Recognizing the benefits of the potential support that national human rights institutions and national mechanisms for implementation, reporting and follow-up, where they exist, as well as academic institutions and civil society, can provide to local governments in the promotion and protection of human rights at the local level, including by providing training and recommendations to support policymaking,

Underscoring the importance of data collection and disaggregation for a nuanced understanding of the challenges faced in promoting and protecting human rights at the local level,

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

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

Noting also that local governments are increasingly connected with the United Nations system and regional organizations, in particular with their human rights mechanisms, including through the universal periodic review, the treaty bodies and the special procedures and forums mandated by the Human Rights Council,

Recognizing the constructive role of local governments in and their contribution to the strengthening of national mechanisms for implementation, reporting and follow-up, and encouraging their continued participation in and contribution to these mechanisms,

Taking note of the Secretary-General's call to action for human rights, in which he encouraged the full use of international human rights mechanisms, including the universal periodic review, the treaty bodies and the special procedures, to contribute to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and their targets, inter alia, with regard to the promotion and protection of human rights, particularly at the national and local levels,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 76/6 of 15 November 2021 on the follow-up to the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Our Common Agenda", in which the Secretary-General recognized the role of local governments in a more inclusive multilateralism, which included voluntary local reviews of Sustainable Development Goals implementation providing a model on which to build,

Recalling also the adoption of the Pact for the Future by the General Assembly by its resolution 79/1 of 22 September 2024, in which States Members of the United Nations requested the Secretary-General to provide recommendations on how engagement with local and regional authorities could advance the 2030 Agenda, particularly the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals, by the end of the seventy-ninth session of the Assembly, for Member States' consideration,

Noting that voluntary local reviews that take into account, where relevant, the role of local governments in the promotion and protection of human rights are good opportunities to take stock of progress made and the remaining gaps and challenges,

Recognizing the benefits that the digitalization of cities, when adequate human rights safeguards are in place, brings to the promotion and protection of human rights at the local level, including by strengthening the accessibility, availability and quality of public services, strengthening democratic institutions and empowering civic engagement, while also recognizing the need to address its potential risks to the promotion and protection of human rights, in particular the serious risks arising from the scale and quality of the collection and processing of data, often relating to personal data, as well as its potential to exacerbate discrimination and digital divides, including the gender digital divide,

Recognizing also the need for local governments, within their respective responsibilities and capacities under domestic legal frameworks, to develop, deploy and use new and emerging digital technologies in the context of the digitalization of cities in a manner that effectively respects, promotes, protects and fulfils the human rights of its inhabitants, with a view to realizing a vision wherein the rights of individuals are at the centre of schemes for such digitalization, and stressing the importance of sharing of best practices and multi-stakeholder cooperation towards this end,

1. *Encourages* States and local governments to enhance coordination and cooperation in developing and implementing laws, policies and guidelines that incorporate human rights promotion and protection into local governance, including those related to awareness-raising and capacity-building, taking into account the local needs and priorities in the delivery of public services and disparities among local governments in their capacity or resources to implement human rights obligations;

2. *Also encourages* States and local governments to collect, disaggregate and analyse data on the local human rights situation, with the aim of adopting evidence-based laws, policies and programmes;

3. *Encourages* States to provide local governments with adequate financial resources and technical capacities to fulfil their human rights responsibilities and strengthen cooperation in the distribution and allocation of such resources;

4. *Also 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 and in follow-up thereto, in reviews by the treaty bodies of the reports of States parties 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, as well as with each other, to support them, including through capacity-building, in discharging their human rights responsibilities and engaging in the work of regional and international human rights mechanisms;

6. *Encourages* local governments to ensure the participation of local stakeholders in local government activities and in public affairs and an enabling, inclusive, accessible and safe environment for civil society participation and to promote interaction and exchanges of knowledge with local stakeholders, including local civil society, in the formulation and implementation of local government programmes in efforts to promote and protect human rights at the local level;

7. *Also encourages* local governments, in cooperation with their national Governments, to guarantee protection against discrimination and equal access to political participation at the local level, especially for women;

8. *Calls upon* local governments, in the development and operation of schemes for the digitalization of cities, including smart city projects, within their respective responsibilities and capacities under domestic legal frameworks:

(a) To implement adequate human rights safeguards, such as robust data protection and cybersecurity frameworks, and promote technical solutions to secure and protect the confidentiality of digital communications and transactions;

(b) To ensure that data used in the training of algorithms for the delivery of public services, including those related to decision-making, are accurate, relevant and representative, gathered in a manner that respects human rights and audited against encoded bias;

(c) To take effective measures to ensure that everyone has equal access, without discrimination of any kind, to public services provided by local governments, including by assessing the human rights impact of such schemes on public service delivery and appropriately addressing them in their design, development, deployment and use, as well as fostering, as appropriate, the digital literacy and skills of individuals necessary to take full advantage of these digitalized services;

(d) To take measures, as appropriate, to provide relevant technical assistance and capacity-building for local government officials involved in such schemes, including on the relevant obligations of States under international human rights law and the human rights impacts of the development, deployment and use of digital technologies in the context of the digitalization of cities;

9. *Encourages* local governments, within their respective responsibilities and capacities under domestic legal frameworks, to promote the full, equal and meaningful participation of all relevant stakeholders in decisions related to the development and operation of schemes for the digitalization of cities, including smart city projects, and to strengthen related international cooperation and the sharing of best practices on the better utilization of new and emerging digital technologies to respect, protect and fulfil human rights in the context of the digitalization of cities;

10. *Requests* the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to convene a one-day panel discussion, in a hybrid format and fully accessible to persons with disabilities, prior to the sixtieth session of the Human Rights Council, to exchange and review the best practices of States, local governments and other relevant stakeholders in overcoming the various challenges that local governments face in promoting and protecting human rights, including those related to better coordination and cooperation between national and local governments, human rights education and capacity-building for local government officials and supporting better engagement of local governments in the work of United Nations human rights mechanisms, and invites States, local governments from all regional groups of the United Nations, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the United Nations Development Programme and other United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, civil society and city networks, as well as relevant international organizations, to actively contribute to the panel discussion;

11. *Also requests* the Office of the High Commissioner to prepare a report, including in an accessible and easy-to-read format, in which it compiles and analyses the best practices of States, local governments and other relevant stakeholders in overcoming the various challenges that local governments face in promoting and protecting human rights, including those related to better coordination and cooperation between national and local governments, human rights education and capacity-building for local government officials and supporting better engagement of local governments in the work of United Nations human rights mechanisms, identifying lessons learned and outlining concrete recommendations for States and local governments, taking into account the results of the panel discussion to be convened before the sixtieth session of the Human Rights Council, and to present the report to the Council at its sixty-third session;

12. *Further requests* the Office of the High Commissioner, when preparing the above-mentioned panel discussion and report, to seek input from States and local governments from all regional groups of the United Nations, relevant intergovernmental organizations, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, including the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and the United Nations Development Programme, relevant special procedures, the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee, the treaty bodies,

national human rights institutions and civil society representatives, including relevant local government networks and non-governmental organizations;

13. *Invites* the Office of the High Commissioner, in collaboration with relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, to continue to support local governments, upon request, in discharging their human rights responsibilities, including by providing guidance and capacity-building, and to continue its research on local government and human rights, including on good practices, key challenges and principles to guide local and national governments in the promotion of human rights;

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

*47th meeting
10 October 2024*

[Adopted without a vote.]
