**37th session of the Human Rights Council**

**High-level panel discussion   
Seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights   
and twenty-fifth anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action**

*Concept note*

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| **Date and venue:** | **Wednesday 28 February 2018, 4 - 6 p.m., Palais des Nations, Room XX, Geneva**  (will be broadcast live and archived on <http://webtv.un.org>) |
| **Objectives:** | The Human Rights Council will mark the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and twenty-fifth anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action through a panel discussion with a focus on the implementation of the provisions thereof, including the benefits of enhanced international cooperation to that end, pursuant the Council resolution 35/1. |
| **Chair:** | **H.E. Mr. Vojislav Šuc,** President of the Human Rights Council |
| **Opening statements:** | * **Mr. Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein,** United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights * **H.E. Mr. Anatoly Victorov,** Director of the Department for Humanitarian Cooperation and Human Rights of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Foreign Ministry Commissioner for Human Rights, Democracy and Rule of Law |
| **Panellists:** | * **H.E. Mr. Christian Strohal** (Austria), Special Representative for the Austrian OSCE Chairmanship 2017, former Special Representative and Ambassador for the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights (1992-1993) * **Ms. Leilani Farha** (Canada), Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context * **Mr. Christof Heyns** (South Africa), member of the Human Rights Committee and former Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions (2010 – 2016) * **Ms. Şafak Pavey** (Turkey), Senior Advisor at Women Political Leaders (WPL) Global Network and former member of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities |
| **Outcome:** | OHCHR summary report on the panel discussion to be submitted to the Human Rights Council at its 38th session and to the General Assembly. |
| **Format:** | The duration of the panel discussion will be strictly limited to two hours. A maximum of one hour will be set aside for the podium, including opening statements, moderator comments, if any, panellist presentations, and their responses to questions and concluding remarks. Speaking time limits for the panellists and guests, if any, will be calculated based on the maximum one hour limit for the podium.  States and observers, including national human rights institutions (NHRIs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), intervening from the floor will also have a maximum of one hour. Each speaker will have two minutes to raise issues and to ask panellists questions. The list of speakers for the discussion will be established at the beginning of the panel and, as per practice, statements by high-level dignitaries and groups will be moved to the beginning of the list.  The practice of having two slots for Member and observer States (2x12), NHRIs (2x1) and NGOs (2x2) will be maintained but the possibility for panellists to intervene in-between will depend entirely on the time used at the start of the panel.  Interpretation will be provided in the six United Nations official languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish). |
| **Accessibility for persons with disabilities:** | In an effort to render the Human Rights Council more accessible to persons with disabilities and to promote their full participation in the work of the Council on an equal basis with others, the panel will be made accessible to persons with disabilities. During the debate, international sign interpretation and real-time captioning will be provided and webcasted. In room XX, four seats are reserved for participants using wheelchairs, in the seventh (last) row. Hearing loops are available for collection from the Accessibility focal point at the Secretariat desk. Oral statements may be embossed in Braille from any of the six official languages of the United Nations, upon request and following the procedure described in the “Accessibility guide to the Human Rights Council for persons with disabilities”  (available at: [http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/Accessibility.aspx](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/Accessibility.aspx)) |
| **Background:** | The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was a response to terrors of World War II. Being drafted by representatives with different legal and cultural backgrounds from all regions of the world, on 10 December 1948 the Declaration was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly as a common standard of achievements for all peoples and all nations. Throughout the years this document inspired a vast number of international and regional treaties, as well as national constitutions and domestic laws. Nowadays the Declaration continues to be a universal human rights benchmark for the international community.  The International Conference on Human Rights held in 1993 in Vienna unanimously reaffirmed the commitment of the global community to human rights through the adoption of the Vienna Declaration and the Programme of Action (VDPA). Building on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the VDPA recognized that the promotion and protection of human rights must be a matter of the highest priority for both States and the international community. It envisaged strengthening human rights norms and institutions at the national and international levels.  2018 marks the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as the 25th anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. It offers a valuable opportunity to raise awareness and to reflect on achievements, best practices and challenges with regard to the full realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and benefits of enhanced international cooperation to that end. |
| **Useful documents:** | * Human Rights Council [resolution 35/1](http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/RES/35/1) entitled “Seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and twenty-fifth anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action”; * The 1948 [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Pages/Language.aspx?LangID=eng); * The 1993 [Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/Vienna.aspx); * OHCHR campaign on the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: <http://www.standup4humanrights.org/en/> |

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