

One-day panel discussion to exchange and review the best practices in overcoming the various challenges that local governments face in promoting and protecting human rights



UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

Concept note

Date and format:

Monday 21 July 2025, 10:00 – 12:00 and 15:00 – 17:00 CET

Online (MS Teams)

Objective:

As mandated by the Human Rights Council resolution 57/12, this one-day panel discussion provides a platform to share and review good practices and lessons learned on overcoming various challenges that local governments face in respecting, protecting and fulfilling human rights. This event aims to bring together States, local governments, city networks, United Nations agencies, international organizations, civil society and other stakeholders and will provide an opportunity to discuss challenges, opportunities and a way forward in enhancing 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.

Outcome:

The expected outcomes of the one-day panel discussion are:

- (1) Local governments and other stakeholders exchange views and share good practices to strengthen their capacity to respect, protect and fulfil human rights at the local level and to engage more effectively with the United Nations human rights mechanisms.
- (2) The opportunities, challenges and lessons learned to enhance human rights education and capacity-building for local governments particularly in relation to economic, social and cultural rights will be identified.
- (3) A report compiling 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, reflecting the outcomes of the panel discussion, will be presented to the Human Rights Council at its 63rd session in 2026.

Format:

The meeting will include an opening session, two interactive panel discussions, and a brief closing session. Initial presentations by the

panelists will be followed by interventions by the participants and concluding remarks from the panelists. A maximum of 45 minutes will be reserved for interventions from the floor, consisting of interventions from States, local and regional governments, national human rights institutions, city networks, international organizations, academia, United Nations entities, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders. Speaking time for participants wishing to take the floor will be two minutes.

Background:

In its resolution **57/12** on local government and human rights, the Human Rights Council recognizes the critical role of local governments in realizing human rights, most notably through the provision of public services which address local needs and priorities. The resolution underscores the role of local government in preventing and reducing inequalities and protecting persons in vulnerable and marginalized situations from discrimination. At the same time, the resolution acknowledges several challenges local governments face in fulfilling this role, including limited resources and cooperation between national, regional and local governments, lack of awareness and the absence of a robust framework for their work on human rights. To address these issues, the Council calls for the promotion of a human rights culture within public services, including through human rights education and training for public servants on human rights and the work of regional and international human rights mechanisms. The resolution also recognizes the constructive role of local governments in and their contribution to the strengthening of national mechanisms for implementation, reporting and follow-up, and encourages their continued participation in and contribution to these mechanisms.

In 2023, OHCHR convened an expert meeting on enhancing capacity-building for local governments to incorporate human rights into all their work, and, in 2024, OHCHR submitted a summary report of the expert meeting (A/HRC/56/32) to the 56th session of the Human Rights Council. Therefore, this one-day panel discussion is an opportunity to continue the discussion in this area, considering the findings of the summary report.

Background documents:

- OHCHR's reports on local government and human rights (**A/HRC/56/32**, **A/HRC/51/10**, **A/HRC/42/22**, and **A/HRC/38/22**)
- Final report of the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee on the role of local government in the promotion and protection of human rights (**A/HRC/30/49**)
- Progress report of the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee on the role of local government in the promotion and protection of human rights (**A/HRC/27/59**)
- Human Rights Council resolutions on local government and human rights: **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; **45/7** of 6 October 2020, **51/12** of 6 October 2022, and **57/12** of 10 October 2024

Programme

21 July 2025

10:00 – 10:20 Opening session

10:20 – 12:00 Session 1: Strengthening the capacity of local and regional governments to engage with the United Nations human rights mechanisms and bodies

The objective of this session is to take stock of challenges, barriers as well as solutions and promising practices of local and regional governments to strengthen their engagement with the United Nations human rights mechanisms, including reporting to and implementation of recommendations made by the Treaty Bodies, Universal Periodic Review and Special Procedures, either directly or through the national mechanism for implementation, reporting and follow-up on human rights.

15:00 – 16:45 Session 2: Human rights cities – Enhancing capacity-building of local and regional governments on economic, social and cultural rights

Local and regional governments have an essential role in delivering public services, such as housing, water, sanitation and health care. The aim of this session is to identify promising practices and to facilitate peer-to-peer learning on enhancing the capacities of local and regional governments to realize economic, social and cultural rights at the local level.

16:45 – 17:00 Closing session