

Rabat+5 Symposium on the follow-up to the Rabat Plan of Action

Rabat, 6-7 December 2017

Concept note

Background

The Government of Morocco and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights will co-organize a symposium in Rabat from 6 to 7 December 2017, on the follow-up to the Rabat Plan of Action (Rabat+5 Symposium).

Commemorating the fifth anniversary of the *Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence* (UN Doc. A/HRC/22/17/Add.4), the Rabat+5 Symposium is envisaged to take stock of the use of the Rabat Plan of Action since 2012. Furthermore, the symposium will conduct an analysis of priority areas, outlining good practices, based on the presentation of existing concrete projects in many parts of the world, and defining means of support to existing and new “Faith for Rights” projects at the local level, in complementarity to the Rabat Plan of Action.

In 2012, the Rabat Plan of Action laid out some of religious leaders’ core responsibilities against incitement to hatred. In 2015, the Fez Forum with religious leaders adopted a draft declaration and plan of action on preventing incitement to violence that could lead to atrocity crimes.¹ Expanding those responsibilities to the full spectrum of human rights, the faith-based and civil society actors participating at the OHCHR workshop in March 2017 adopted the Beirut Declaration and its corresponding 18 commitments on “Faith for Rights”. This initiative provides space for a cross-disciplinary reflection on the deep, and mutually enriching, connections between religions and human rights.²

The Rabat Plan of Action and the Beirut Declaration build on existing human rights norms and standards, in particular the two international covenants on civil, political, economic, social and cultural human rights, the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women as well as a number of important standard setting international declarations and resolutions, including General Assembly resolution 68/268 and Human Rights Council

¹ See www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/our-work/Doc.11_FezDeclaration.pdf and www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/our-work/Doc.12_Fez%20Plan%20of%20Action.pdf. In July 2017, the Plan of Action for Religious Leaders and Actors to Prevent Incitement to Violence that could lead to Atrocity Crimes was launched in New York (www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/Plan%20of%20Action%20Advanced%20Copy.pdf).

² See www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/FreedomReligion/Pages/FaithForRights.aspx.

resolutions 16/18 and 34/10. It is essential to explore how best the Rabat and Beirut “Faith for Rights” standards could add practical value to legal norms and political resolutions of which both the Human Rights Council and the independent human rights mechanisms are custodians, within their respective mandates.

Objectives

The Kingdom of Morocco wishes to seize the Rabat+5 commemoration to open a space for assessing the international community’s current efforts and enhance its future collaboration in the area of combatting discrimination on the basis of religion and enhancing the role of faith-based actors in the defence of human dignity.

The Rabat+5 Symposium may lead to establishing an inventory of relevant actors and projects in order to help identifying existing gaps, define capacity building approaches and linking the dots. This might also strengthen the capacities of the existing UN human rights mechanisms by providing them with accurate and up-to-date analysis on environments, dynamics and early warning signs of incidents leading to sectarian conflicts and violence committed in the name of religion.

Outline of the Rabat+5 Symposium

After opening statements by the organizers, several co-drafters of the Rabat Plan of Action and of the Beirut Declaration on “Faith for Rights” will present these documents. Subsequently, participants will discuss the role of States, including State religious authorities, national human rights institutions and faith-based civil society organizations, presenting experiences and lessons learned. The second day of the symposium will start with a synthesis of the respective roles in follow-up to the Rabat Plan of Action and Beirut Declaration on “Faith for Rights”. This will be followed by a brainstorming on support for future projects by the various stakeholders as well as an outline of a possible inventory of relevant actors and projects.

Program and logistics

Please find attached a draft program of the symposium. Furthermore, the attached logistical note indicates further details about the meeting. The Government of Morocco will provide the venue of the conference and its logistic requirements for the conduct of the sessions, including conference services and translation. Accommodation and travel will be the responsibility of each respective participant. All participants are kindly requested to make their own travel and hotel arrangements.

Co-organizers

- Government of Morocco;
- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.