**55th session of the Human Rights Council**

**Information note for NGOs**

***(Last update: 14 February 2024 – Subject to change)***

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# Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide information to civil society representatives participating in the 55th session of the Human Rights Council. This is based on information available at this moment and will be revised and updated on a regular basis.

**IMPORTANT: This document is subject to change.** For updated information, consult the website:

[NGO Participation in the Human Rights Council | OHCHR](https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/ngo-participation)

[NGO and NHRI Information | OHCHR](https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/ngo-nhri-info)

# Dates and important information

The 55th session of the Human Rights Council is scheduled to take place from **26 February to 5 April 2024,** inRoom XX.

On 2 February 2024, the Bureau agreed that NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC and NHRIs with “A” status would have the possibility to deliver their statements in person or via pre-recorded video statements.

NGOs in consultative status with the ECOSOC and active Designations with UNOG for 2024 wishing to participate in the session are invited to register and to indicate their method of participation (in-person or via video statement) for each debate through **the online registration system** [**https://ngoreg.ohchr.org**](https://ngoreg.ohchr.org) **and fulfil all the relevant requirements** *(see Annex I for a complete checklist for oral statements).* All video messages should be uploaded via the same system. The method of participation can be amended at a later stage.

## General debates

On 2 February 2024, the Bureau of the Human Rights Council agreed that the list of speakers for NGOs for each of the general debates would be set in line with the average number of NGOs that participated in each of the general debates in the previous three March sessions (i.e., the 52nd, 49th and 46th sessions). This is done in order to balance the importance of inclusivity with the availability of time and resources.

The average number of NGOs that participated in each of the general debates in the previous three March sessions of the Council is as follows:

GD item 2 **55**

GD item 3 **110**

GD item 4 **117**

GD item 5 **38**

GD item 6 **16**

GD item 7 **26**

GD item 8 **43**

GD item 9 **57**

GD item 10 **17**

## Access to Palais des Nations

Please note that the Pregny Pavilion is currently under construction works, and NGO representatives need to enter the Palais des Nations via the Peace Gate, which is located adjacent to the Place des Nations. Please allow for sufficient time for security proceedings, which might take longer than expected.

To renew annual and temporary grounds passes (blue badges), a daily temporary badge will be issued to allow NGO representatives to proceed to the Pregny Pavilion.

For the latest information on operating hours of the Palais des nations, as applicable to all access categories, please refer to <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/about/practical-information/pregny-gate-closure>.

# Accreditation to HRC55

**All NGO representatives will have to be duly registered and approved through INDICO**, here: <https://indico.un.org/event/1004372/>. When submitting an accreditation request, NGO representatives are invited to indicate if they already possess an annual badge or a valid temporary ground pass at UNOG. If so, by uploading a picture of it in the relevant field in INDICO platform, this will be accepted *in lieu* of the accreditation letter, which remains mandatory for all temporary accreditations. It is mandatory, for all participants, to provide a valid phone number, possibly mobile phone, for contact tracing purposes.

# Oral statements

The online registration system for the 55th session can be found on the usual website: <https://ngoreg.ohchr.org>. The system will open on **Tuesday, 20 February at 2 PM (Geneva time).**

Only persons accredited by the NGO that registered for a debate are allowed to deliver statements, whether in person or by a video message. **If an NGO representative intends to speak on behalf of another NGO, they are required to have an accreditation letter signed by the representative with accrediting rights of the registered NGO.** The letter should be sent to[ohchr-ngoconfirmation@un.org](mailto:ohchr-ngoconfirmation@un.org) before the deadline for confirmation and brought by the speaker during the debate.

**NGOs will be able to choose their preferred method of participation, either in-person or by a video message, for all debates.** NGOs will also be able to change their methods of participation for all debates (from in-person to video and vice-versa) at a later stage, including for General Debates, until the deadline for confirming their participation. Any changes made after the deadline may not be considered. Please note that this change will **not** affect the position on the list of speakers.

**IMPORTANT: Uploading a transcript is mandatory for both methods of participation. Failure to comply before the deadline will result in the exclusion of the NGO from the list of speakers.**

After registering for a debate, **NGOs can upload a video statement at a later stage**. It is not necessary to upload it at the moment of registration.

**The deadline to upload a video statement or to confirm the speaking slot by uploading the transcript of the statement in case of an in-person intervention is at 6 p.m. on the working day before the debate is scheduled to start.** Video-statements received past this deadline will not be displayed and the NGO will be removed from the list of speakers.

Once you have signed up for a debate, you will have to upload the relevant files through two separate fields: **“Upload transcript”** and **“Upload video”**, as shown below:

**Graphical user interface, application, table

Description automatically generated**

* By clicking on “**Upload transcript”**, you will have to insert the name of the speaker and upload the file with the transcript of the oral intervention in accessible format (Word or Accessible PDF). This is the version that will be used by UN interpreters, and that will be posted on the HRC Extranet.
* By clicking on **“Upload video”**, you will have to upload:

1. A scanned copy of the passport of the speaker;
2. The letter requesting the accreditation of the speaker;
3. The video file (max 250MB); and
4. The subtitles (optional).

**Please note that both steps mentioned above are mandatory. A video uploaded without the transcript will not be processed by the HRC Secretariat and the NGO will be removed from the list of speakers.**

As recalled by the Bureau of the Human Rights Council, with the exception of an official representative of a UN Member State speaking in front of the national flag and/or the official picture of the Head of State/Government, **the background of video-statements should be neutral without any flag, banner, flyer, picture or symbol. Failure to comply will result in the exclusion of the NGO from the list of speakers.**

**The full official name of the NGO should be displayed within the video**. Please note that the name displayed should be the one of the NGO delivering the statement only (no co-sponsors or non-ECOSOC NGOs), and it should be in accordance with that registered in the database of NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC.

As mentioned above, the video and the accompanying files can be uploaded at a later stage. Please note that the video file has to **adhere strictly** to the speaking time limits. Videos that are longer than the allocated time will be rejected automatically by the platform. The same will happen with videos that exceed the weight of 250MB.

The speaking time limits are as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **​​​SPEAKING TIME MODALITIES HRC55 NHRIs/NGOs** ​ | | |
| **Type of discussion** | **Speaking time per intervention** | **Time allocated per debate** |
| General debates | 1 minute and 30 seconds | *Depending on GD* |
| Interactive dialogues | 1 minute and 30 seconds | 15 minutes in total |
| Panel discussions | 1 minute and 30 seconds | Two speaking slots  2 NHRIs, 4 NGOs each slot |
| UPR outcomes | 2 minutes | 20 minutes |

**Captioning of the video is strongly encouraged** in order to ensure accessibility of persons with disabilities. In order to facilitate this procedure, NGOs are able to upload a specific file for subtitles directly in the online registration system. This is not a mandatory field, and it can be left empty.

**REMINDER**: **The accreditation through INDICO is mandatory for all NGO representatives delivering a statement, including those participating by video statements. Failure to comply will result in the exclusion of the NGO from the list of speakers.**

***DISCLAIMER****: By submitting a video statement to the HRC Secretariat for the purpose of screening it during an official meeting of the HRC, the video statement will become an official record of the HRC session and considered as a UN audio-visual asset that can be re-disseminated to media organizations worldwide on a non-commercial basis, in accordance with guidelines of the Department of Global Communications, and will be included in the webcast archive of the meeting on webtv.un.org.*

### Recommended technical specifications for video messages

**Please note that video messages that do not comply with the speaking time limits or exceed the maximum weight of the file (250MB) will not be accepted by the system.**

1. **MP4**The MP4 or MPEG-4 file format is a digital multimedia container format most commonly used to store video and audio, but it can also be used to store other data such as subtitles and still images.
   * video encoding: **H.264**
   * audio encoding: **Min 44100Hz**
   * video resolution: **Min 640x480**

**Max 1920x1080**

**Frame rate 24, 30 fps**

1. **MOV**MOV is the Apple Inc. Quicktime multimedia container file that contains one or more tracks, each of which stores a particular type of data: audio, video, effects, or text (e.g. for subtitles).
   * video encoding: **H.264**
   * audio encoding: **Min 44100Hz**
   * video resolution: **Min 640x480**

**Max 1920x1080**

**Frame rate 24, 30 fps**

1. **AVI/WMV**Audio Video Interleaved (AVI) is a multimedia container format introduced by Microsoft that can contain both audio and video data in a file container that allows audio-with-video playback.

Windows Media Video (WMV) is a video compression format for several proprietary codecs developed by Microsoft.

* + video encoding: **WMV3** (Windows Media Video 9)
  + audio encoding: **Min 44100Hz**
  + video resolution: **Min 640x480**

**Max 1920x1080**

**Frame rate 24, 30 fps**

When using a smartphone, record the video in landscape (horizontal) mode.

Please note that no professional equipment is required to record video messages. Most modern consumer electronics (smartphones, laptops, etc.) are capable of recording video that complies with the specifications.

**All files will be played using VLC Media Player.** **Please note that the Secretariat does not bear responsibility if files that do not comply with the recommended specifications cannot be displayed in our audio-visual system. Depending on the quality of the video-statement, interpreters may stop interpretation. Please speak at a normal speed that allows the translators to understand the statement.**

# Online co-sponsoring of NGO statements

The Secretariat has implemented a feature that **allows NGOs to** **co-sponsor other NGOs’ statements directly through the online registration system** (<https://ngoreg.ohchr.org>). **The previous method, *i.e.* sending the co-sponsorship form via email, will no longer be accepted.**

**Only NGOs with the ECOSOC status and a valid annual designation with the United Nations Office at Geneva can sponsor a statement made by other NGOs.**

In order to co-sponsor the statement of other NGOs, you will have to login with your credentials in the online registration system (<https://ngoreg.ohchr.org>) and click on the tab titled **“Cosponsoring a statement by another NGO”:**



In this tab, you will have to select the debate in which the NGO you are willing to co-sponsor is delivering its statement, and then select the name of the NGO from the drop-down menu. This menu will show all the NGOs registered to a specific debate listed in alphabetical order. If the NGO you are trying to co-sponsor does not appear, they have probably yet to register.

Once you have selected the NGO, you must click on “Co-sponsor”. A list of the statements you are co-sponsoring will subsequently appear below. You will also have the possibility to remove a co-sponsorship to any debate at a later stage.

# List of speakers on HRC Extranet

The lists of speakers for the 55th session will be made available on the [HRC Extranet](https://hrcmeetings.ohchr.org/HRCSessions/RegularSessions/55/Pages/default.aspx) (https://hrcmeetings.ohchr.org/HRCSessions/RegularSessions/55/Pages/default.aspx) and will be updated on a regular basis. Please check the time and date of the last update. Please note that being on the draft lists published on the extranet only indicates NGO registration and does not guarantee participation. To confirm your participation, please follow the instructions in this information note, especially by registering the speaker on Indico and uploading the transcript of your statement. You can find the draft final list of speakers affixed on a board in Room XX, near the seats reserved for NGOs delivering a statement, a few minutes after the beginning of each debate. This list will contain the NGOs that registered and fulfilled all steps for confirmation.

# Confirmation of speaking slots

As per usual practice, all NGOs are requested to confirm their speaking slots.

In-person participants are required to confirm their participation by uploading the transcript of their statement(s) on NGOREG as per the deadline set (6 p.m. on the working day before the debate is scheduled to start). Sending an email to [ohchr-ngoconfirmation@un.org](mailto:ohchr-ngoconfirmation@un.org) is not sufficient to confirm participation. Please note that the speaking slots of those NGOs that have not confirmed their participation before the deadline will be removed from the list of speakers.

For participants through a video message, their participation will be confirmed once both their transcript and the video statement are uploaded on the online registration system as per the deadline set (6 p.m. on the working day before the debate is scheduled to start). Please note that the speaking slots of those NGOs that have not uploaded a video statement before the deadline will be removed from the list of speakers.

# Side events

NGOs holding ECOSOC status and Geneva designation may organize a side event on a theme related to the Human Rights Council agenda. Such side events are held in person in Palais des Nations in one of the official languages of the United Nations.

As implemented since the 51st session of the Human Rights Council, the Secretariat will allocate some space for side events at a reduced level compared to the pre-COVID-19 period due to the ongoing renovations under the Strategic Heritage Plan and their impact on the availability of meeting rooms at Palais des Nations. Hence only a reduced number of side events may be organized, as a result of which it may not be possible to accommodate all requests as submitted initially or at all. Rooms will therefore be allocated according to availability and should only be requested online. Please note that to accommodate as many requests as possible, a maximum of one side event per NGO may be requested. Each side event will last a maximum of one hour. The same requirements and practices as in the pre-COVID19 period will apply.

**The deadline to request an NGO parallel event has passed.** The calendar of NGO side events will be made available on HRC Extranet and in the Sched application. Organizing NGOs are requested to inform the Civil Society Team at [ohchr-hrcngo@un.org](mailto:ohchr-hrcngo@un.org) about cancelations or any other modifications in their side events at the latest three working days before the announced time of their events.

**IMPORTANT**: Given the back-to-back schedule of side events and informal consultations, organizers are strongly invited to start and conclude the side event on time.

For any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Civil Society Team of the Human Rights Council and Treaty Mechanisms Division at: [ohchr-hrcngo@un.org](mailto:ohchr-hrcngo@un.org).

Accreditation to side events: Participants wishing to participate exclusively in side events will have to register on the ad-hoc INDICO page related to side events accreditation only: <https://indico.un.org/event/1009848/>. Organizing NGOs wishing to invite external participants to their side event, may accredit **up to 5 persons** for the sole purpose of participation in the respective event.

# Reprisals

Any act of intimidation or reprisal for cooperation in the context of the HRC session should be promptly reported to the HRC Secretariat.

# Programme of work, SCHED, additional information and useful contacts

All relevant information on the 55th session is made available on the [HRC website](https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session55/regular-session) (https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session55/regular-session) and the [HRC Extranet](https://hrcmeetings.ohchr.org/HRCSessions/RegularSessions/55/Pages/default.aspx) (<https://hrcmeetings.ohchr.org/HRCSessions/RegularSessions/55/Pages/default.aspx>). Credentials are no longer needed to access the Extranet.

**The programme of work is subject to change**. For updated information on the schedule, NGOs are invited to consult the SCHED meeting calendar of the session, which reflects all changes in the schedule of the debates. The link will be available on the [HRC website](https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session55/regular-session) (https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session55/regular-session).

**NGOs participating in person** are responsible for being in Room XX on time for delivering their statement. If an NGO is absent when called to deliver their statement, they cannot do it in another moment. Please note that NGOs can only deliver their statement from the two sits allocated for it in Room XX. The Secretariat staff supporting NGOs will be there before the beginning of the debate to assist NGO representatives, to check their accreditation and to organize the order of the speakers. NGOs should arrive with sufficient time in advance to allow for it.

**Taking pictures and videos inside Room XX is not allowed**. This is also valid for NGOs delivering a statement, even with their consent and even if done by someone from their group. Only people accredited as press (with a Press badge) are allowed to do so.

**Distribution of material** by NGOs in ECOSOC consultative status is allowed in accordance with the relevant rules stated in the [Practical guide](https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/ngo-participation). Please note that such material may be posted or displayed only on the tables and boards clearly marked for this purpose (i.e., outside plenary Room XX and in front of Serpentine Bar). Distribution of NGO material elsewhere in the Palais des Nations is not permitted.

For any further questions or information, please contact us through the usual e-mail address at [ohchr-hrcngo@un.org](mailto:ohchr-hrcngo@un.org). Questions relating to accreditation should be sent to the following address: [ohchr-hrcaccreditation@un.org](mailto:ohchr-hrcaccreditation@un.org). For all questions regarding oral statements, please contact [ohchr-ngoconfirmation@un.org](mailto:ohchr-ngoconfirmation@un.org).

For updated information, consult the website: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/NgoParticipation.aspx>.

# **ANNEX I – CHECKLIST FOR NGO ORAL STATEMENT**

This checklist is designed to facilitate NGOs’ participation in the 55th session by summarizing the mandatory steps that they are required to take in order to deliver oral statements (in-person or via pre-recorded video messages). Please note that failure in following these steps will result in your request not being processed.

**Checklist:**

* Your NGO is in consultative status with ECOSOC (<http://csonet.org/>).
* Your NGO has duly accredited Designated representatives with UNOG for 2024 (<https://www.ungeneva.org/en/practical-information/civil-society>).
* You have registered to deliver an oral statement through the online registration system (<https://ngoreg.ohchr.org>).
* You and/or the person who will deliver the statement on behalf of your organisation is/are accredited and approved for the session in INDICO (<https://indico.un.org/event/1004372/>).
* You have checked your position on the list of speakers uploaded on [HRC Extranet](https://hrcmeetings.ohchr.org/HRCSessions/RegularSessions/55/Pages/default.aspx) (<https://hrcmeetings.ohchr.org/HRCSessions/RegularSessions/55/Pages/default.aspx>) and on the draft final list of speaker affixed on the board in Room XX, near the seats reserved for NGOs delivering a statement.
* You have uploaded all relevant documents, including the video file in case of video statement, to the online registration system (<https://ngoreg.ohchr.org>) before the deadline of 6 pm on the working day before the debate is scheduled to start. For updated information on the schedule, you can check SCHED. The link will be available on the [HRC website](https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session55/regular-session) (<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session55/regular-session>). Please remember that uploading the transcript of your intervention is **mandatory** for both in-person and video statements.
* **For video statements**: You have made sure that your video statement(s) abide by the rules applicable for video statements, *i.e.* the background should be neutral without any flag, banner, flyer, picture or symbol and the full official name of the NGO in consultative status with ECOSOC should be displayed in the video. You have confirmed your participation by uploading your video statement and the transcript of your statement to the online registration system before the deadline.
* **For in-person participants**: You have confirmed your participation by uploading the transcript of your statement in the online registration system before the deadline.
* **For joint statements**: You have co-sponsored the respective statement(s) directly through the online registration system <https://ngoreg.ohchr.org> .