

*Joint Statement*

*Local Government and Human Rights*

*HRC 55 – GD Item 3 Geneva, 15 March 2024*

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I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of Chile, Egypt, Romania, Republic of Korea, and my own delegation Switzerland as well as 47 additional States from all regions.

International human rights obligations extend to all levels and branches of government. While the international human rights system focuses on work with central governments, local governments also have an important role to play since they are at the forefront of bringing human rights to all. Indeed, local governments often have competencies in key areas such as housing, water and land management, health, and education, among many others.

The Human Rights Council has acknowledged the role of local governments. Since its first resolution on “local government and human rights” adopted in 2013, the Council has continued to explore the role and responsibilities of local governments in relation to human rights, as well as ways to promote their engagement with international and regional human rights mechanisms. This is in line with the vision of the UN Secretary General emphasized in “Our Common Agenda” on the need for multilateralism to become more inclusive towards a diverse range of voices beyond States, including cities and other subnational authorities. For that purpose, he also established an Advisory Group to provide recommendations on how to strengthen engagement of local and regional governments in UN intergovernmental processes.

As we move towards the Summit of the Future, we need to provide more space to local governments for a more inclusive multilateralism and better protection, respect and fulfilment of human rights for everyone, everywhere and at all levels of our respective States. Given their proximity to the population, their knowledge of the local contexts, their capacity to work through a multi-stakeholder approach, local governments can and must contribute to “Multilateral solutions for a better tomorrow” which should result from the Summit of the Future. For that, we would welcome explicit references on how the UN can strengthen engagement with local governments in the Pact for the Future.

Through this joint statement, we reaffirm our interest in engaging more with our local governments in our work with the UN human rights system, both at the national and international levels. We will therefore explore how to concretely better involve our local governments in relation to our UPR, country visits of

Special procedures, our treaty body reviews or in our NMIRF, when it exists. To facilitate that engagement, we reaffirm the importance of capacity building measures to support our local governments better understand international human rights law and the UN human rights system.

Our local governments are crucial partners to fulfil our international human rights obligations. Applying a whole of government and whole-of-society approach is conducive to better respect for and protection and fulfilment of human rights at all levels. It benefits both States and local governments in addressing human rights challenges and in ensuring that these rights do not only remain letters of intent but actually translated into reality on the ground, in the daily lives of our population.

JST on behalf of Chile, Egypt, Romania, Republic of Korea, Switzerland and

1. Albania
2. Armenia
3. Australia
4. Bangladesh
5. Belgium
6. Brazil
7. Cameroon
8. Colombia
9. Costa Rica
10. Cyprus
11. Czech Republic
12. Denmark
13. Ecuador
14. El Salvador
15. Estonia
16. Finland
17. Georgia
18. Greece
19. Guatemala
20. India
21. Indonesia
22. Ireland
23. Israel
24. Italy
25. Japan
26. Kazakhstan
27. Kyrgyzstan
28. Lithuania
29. Luxembourg
30. Malaysia
31. Maldives

32. Malta
33. Mexico
34. Mongolia
35. Montenegro
36. Morocco
37. Nigeria
38. North Macedonia
39. Norway
40. Panama
41. Poland
42. Portugal
43. Republic of Moldova
44. Sweden
45. United Kingdom
46. United States of America
47. Uruguay