

Rationalizing the Agenda

Background

In creating the Human Rights Council, the General Assembly decided “that the Council shall be responsible for promoting universal respect for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction of any kind and in a fair and equal manner;” (A/RES/60/251 OP 2), that the Council should address situations of human rights, including gross and systematic violations, and make recommendations thereon. It should also promote the effective coordination and the mainstreaming of human rights within the United Nations system;” (A/RES/60/251 OP 3), and “that the work of the Council shall be guided by the principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity, constructive international dialogue and cooperation, with a view to enhancing the promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development.” (A/RES/60/251 OP 4)

Issues to Address

The Council has been selective and sometimes highly politicized in its approach to country situations. All country situations should be addressed in an even handed, effective manner.

Concrete Proposals

1. Eliminate the artificial distinction between items 4 and 10, so that the Council can both send a message of concern on the human rights situation in a country and offer technical assistance in the same resolution. To prevent a net reduction of addressing country specific issues, countries should be given 10 minutes for their interventions under this item.
2. Incorporate item 7 under this item as well, to ensure that all countries are treated similarly.