

Statement by

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at the

High-Level Segment of the 49th Session of the UN Human Rights Council

*1 March 2022*

Mr President,

Madam High Commissioner,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honour and a privilege to address the UN Human Rights Council. Even though I could not attend this session live, this “in person” meeting can be seen as a sign of success in our long and exhausting battle against COVID-19.

Though, last week we woke up into the darkest times since the end of WW2. I am deeply sadden and appalled by the horrific events in Ukraine caused by Russian unprovoked attack. My thoughts are with Ukraine and its people – their lives are at grave risk. We have established international law and international fora to pursue dialogue and to react. It is time to react.

Russia’s military aggression on the territory of Ukraine have already resulted in massive and grave human rights violations. Slovenia supports urgent debate of the UN HRC on the “situation of human rights in Ukraine stemming from the Russian aggression.” We will promote a resolution establishing a Commission of Inquiry at the Human Rights Council.

Madam High Commissioner,

The nature of contemporary human rights challenges has evolved over time. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought it even further. In his recent remarks to the General Assembly, the Secretary-General recognised five concrete global challenges. To tackle them, we must choose cooperation instead of polarisation. And we must place human rights front and centre. In the words of the Secretary-General: “The time to act is now!”

Regarding the High Commissioner’s 2022 “Agenda of action and rights” Slovenia believes that this comprehensive plan offers an innovative, rights-based solutions for addressing the main global challenges. We are especially grateful for the inclusion of concrete and decisive action to uphold the human right to a healthy environment and to promote the human rights of older persons.

Together with Our Common Agenda, the High Commissioner’s plan provides a roadmap, guiding our actions towards the final eight years we have to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Council should continue with the use of modern technologies that were introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic and that can increase its accessibility, as well as improve its transparency. We are in particular in favour of technical solutions that can be helpful to Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries. Together, we should be exploring ways to improve support for universal participation in the work of this Council.

We remain concerned over the increased level of politicisation of human rights. In the challenging global environment, we need to rely on multilateralism and dialogue. The Human Rights Council can be a platform that unites us. That is why we strongly support the President of the Human Rights Council’s call for strategic dialogue and his wish to hold a series of retreats.

Today's reality makes the responsibility of the Human Rights Council significantly bigger. The Council plays the main role in leading global discussions upholding the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights for all.

Madam High Commissioner,

In conclusion, please allow me to mention that Slovenia remains a firm supporter of the Human Rights Council as well as of the Office of the High Commissioner and its invaluable work. We understand that it is imperative to secure the highest possible financial independence of the Office in this regard. Therefore, we are stepping up our efforts by pledging the predictability of our annual financial contribution.

As an active observer state, we are looking forward to possibly re-join the Council for the third time as one of its 47 Member States in the 2026–2028 period.

Thank you.