**Proposal of the Bureau:**

**Clustering and staggering of general debates throughout the Annual Programme of Work and restructuring the panel discussions**

The short-term measures contained in this proposal are to be applied for 2018 only. Furthermore, measures would only be adopted by the Council with full consensus.

**1. Clustering and staggering of general debates**

In the March session, all general debates would be consolidated in **three clusters.** Throughout the rest of the year, individual general debates would be **divided (staggered) between June and September sessions.**

***I. Clustering:***

***March session:***

[[1]](#footnote-1)In the March session, the general debates would be consolidated in the following three clusters:

- A clustered general debate on agenda items **2, 3, and 9,** which would take place during the second week of the session;

- A clustered general debate on agenda items **4, 7, and 8,** which would take place during the third week of the session;

- A clustered general debate on agenda items **5, 6, and 10**, which would take place during the fourth week of the session.

* We need three clusters in order to reduce meeting time.
* The proposed clustering should emphasize the centrality of the general debate on agenda 10 to the work of the Council and the crucial importance of underlining its non-controversial nature. Given their character, the general debates on agenda items 5 (HR bodies and mechanisms) and 6 (Universal Periodic Review) would fit well with item 10.
* In considering the two other clusters of general debates, it should be borne in mind that the general debates under items 3 and 4 attract the largest number of speakers. Accordingly, it is advisable to place them in different clusters.
* Given its specific nature, agenda item 9 should be placed in a cluster that would encourage delegations to provide substantive comments on the issue of Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, follow up and implementation of the DDPA. Hence it inclusion in a cluster of general debates with items 2 and 3 would be topical.
* Under the clustered general debate on items 4, 7 and 8, delegations would have sufficient time to address the issues that they consider to be most pressing under these items**.**

***II. Staggering:***

***June Session:***

In the June session, there would be individual General Debates:

* Individual general debate on the oral update by the High Commissioner for Human Rights (Item **2**);
* Individual general debate on item **3** (Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including right to development);
* Individual general debate on item **5** (Human Rights bodies and mechanisms);
* Individual general debate on item **6** (Universal Periodic Review)
* Individual general debate on item **10** (Technical assistance and capacity building).

***September Session:***

In the September session, there would be individual General Debates:

* Individual general debate on the oral update by the High Commissioner for Human Rights (item **2**);
* Individual general debate on item **4** (Human Rights situations that require the Council's attention);
* Individual general debate on item **7** (Human Rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories);
* Individual general debate on item **8** (Follow-up and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action);
* Individual general debate on item **9** (Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, follow-up and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action)

* The centrality of items 5, 6 and 10 should be recognized and the individualized general debates undertaken during the same session.
* Given the number of statements under items 3 and 4, it would make it easier to delegations to separate their consideration between the June and September Sessions.
* General debate on item 2 in both June and September allow for delegations to respond to the oral updates of the High Commissioner.
* The number of general debates should be the same in June and September.

***The savings from clustering and staggering general debates would amount to 4.5 meetings per year.***

**2) Restructuring the panel discussions:**

In order to increase their visibility and focus, the modalities for panel discussions would be restructured by reducing the number of panellists (a maximum of 4, including a moderator).

This would allow for a reduction of the duration of panels to 2 hours. Of the 2 hours, a total of 1 hour would be designated to the podium (including opening statements, moderator comments, panellist presentations and responses to questions, and concluding remarks) and 1 hour for interventions by delegations. The format of the 1 hour segment for interventions by delegations (member and observer States, NHRIs and NGOs) will remain unchanged from the practice of past years.

***According to the report of the Task Force in 2017, the savings resulting from restructuring panel discussions would amount to approximately 7 meetings per year.***

**TOTAL SAVINGS WITH SPEAKING TIMES DURING GENERAL DEBATES SET AT *3 MINUTES FOR STATES MEMBERS AND 2 MINUTES FOR ALL OBSERVES*: APPX. 11 MEETINGS PER YEAR**

1. Interacitive dialogue with the High Commissioner remains a self-standing dialogue. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)