



**High-level panel on
“Public accessibility and inclusivity: developing strategic initiatives to raise awareness
on the role of Ombudsman and mediator institutions in the promotion and protection of
human rights, good governance and the rule of law”**

**Wednesday, 22 May 2024
Trusteeship Council Chamber, United Nations Headquarters, New York**

CONCEPT NOTE

The President of the General Assembly will convene a high-level panel on “Public accessibility and inclusivity: developing strategic initiatives to raise awareness on the role and work of the Ombudsman and mediator institutions in the promotion and protection of human rights, good governance and the rule of law” pursuant to General Assembly resolution 77/224.

Background

The General Assembly has recognized in various resolutions¹ the importance of Ombudsman and mediator institutions in the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, promoting good governance and respect for the rule of law, and has strongly encouraged Member States to consider the creation or the strengthening of independent and autonomous Ombudsman and mediator institutions, consistent with the principles on the protection and promotion of the Ombudsman institution (the Venice Principles).

The General Assembly has also strongly encouraged Member States to endow Ombudsman and mediator institutions, with the necessary constitutional and legislative framework, as well as State support and protection, adequate financial allocation, a broad mandate across all public services, the powers necessary to ensure that they have the tools they need to select issues, resolve maladministration, investigate thoroughly and communicate results, and all other appropriate means, in order to ensure the efficient and independent exercise of their mandate and to strengthen the legitimacy and credibility of their actions as mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights and the promotion of good governance and respect for the rule of law.

The General Assembly further encouraged Ombudsman and mediator institutions to operate in accordance with all relevant international instruments, including the Paris Principles² and the Venice Principles, in order to strengthen their independence and autonomy and to enhance their capacity to assist Member States in the promotion and protection of human rights and the promotion of good governance and respect for the rule of law.

¹ 63/169 of 20 March 2009, [65/207](#) of 21 December 2010, [67/163](#) of 20 December 2012, [69/168](#) of 18 December 2014, [71/200](#) of 19 December 2016, [72/186](#) of 19 December 2017, [75/186](#) of 16 December 2020, and [77/224](#) of 15 December 2022.

² Endorsed by General Assembly resolution 48/134 on 20 December 1993.



The Venice Principles³ represent the first, independent, international set of standards for the Ombudsman institution and were acknowledged by the General Assembly. They serve as a relevant international standard for establishing and maintaining effective Ombudsman institutions worldwide.

Objectives

The high-level panel will be an opportunity for discussion on developing strategic initiatives to raise awareness on the role and work of Ombudsman and mediator institutions in the promotion and protection of human rights, good governance, and the rule of law.

Guiding questions

Participants are invited to share their experiences and reflect on best practices and persisting challenges by addressing the following guiding questions:

- Has the creation or the strengthening of the independence and autonomy of Ombudsman and mediator institutions been consistent with the Paris and the Venice Principles?
- What steps have been taken to endow Ombudsman and mediator institutions with the necessary constitutional and legislative framework as well as the necessary financial and administrative independence and stability?
- What are some examples of collaboration or actions by Ombudsman and mediator institutions that have contributed to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, promotion of good governance and respect for the rule of law, including their advisory role with respect to drafting or amending existing national laws and policies, ratifying relevant international instruments and bringing national legislation and national practices in line with their relevant States' international human rights obligations?
- How can Ombudsman and representatives or members of mediator institutions be supported and protected from reprisals and threats in respect of performance of their lawful duties and obligations, ensuring that such acts are promptly and duly investigated, and the perpetrators held accountable?
- Have the Paris Principles been taken into account when assigning to the Ombudsman or the mediator institutions the role of national preventive mechanisms and national monitoring mechanisms?
- What are some examples of outreach activities at the national level, in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders, in order to raise awareness of the important role of Ombudsman and mediator institutions?

³ Adopted by the Council of Europe's Venice Commission in March 2019 and acknowledged by General Assembly resolution 75/186 of 16 December 2020.



Format and outcome

The high-level panel will take place in person on Wednesday, 22 May 2024, from 10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m., in the Trusteeship Council Chamber, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

The panel will consist of an opening segment and an interactive panel discussion. A detailed programme will be circulated in due course.

The United Nations Webcast services will provide live streaming coverage of the high-level meeting in all 6 official languages as well as on-demand coverage (recorded video) in English and original language, through the UN Web TV website at: <http://webtv.un.org>.

The President of the General Assembly will prepare a summary of the discussion for transmission to all Member States, in line with resolution 77/224.

Participation

Participation in the high-level panel will be open for Member States and Observers of the General Assembly, the United Nations system, as well as representatives of nongovernmental organizations in consultative status with ECOSOC.

Accessibility arrangements

Delegations are requested to inform the Secretariat of the accessibility requirements of their delegates in order to facilitate participation in meetings. Upon request, adjustments can be made to seating arrangements with a view to enabling the participation of persons with disabilities. For individual requests, please contact the Meetings Support Section of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (email: accessibilitycentre@un.org; phone: 212 963 7348/9) no later than three working days prior to the meeting.
