HRC Measures on Coronavirus

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Shotlist

1. Wide short, exterior Palais des Nations

2 MARCH 2020, GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

2. Wide shot, Human Rights Council chambers

3. SOUNDBITE (English) Elisabeth Tichy-Fisslberger, President of the UN Human Rights Council:
“I received an urgent letter from UNOG Director-General Tatiana Valovaya concerning the Coronavirus situation and implication for the 43rd session of the Human Rights Council. In her letter, the Director-General made reference to the measures recommended by the Secretary-General in New York with regard to the Commission on the Status of Women and suggested that the Bureau and the Human Rights Council adopt a similar approach. The Director-General specified that that would entail cancelling all side events and encouraging representatives to refrain from travelling to Geneva for the rest of the session. She also suggested that those Special Procedure mandate holders who are not already in Geneva could be encouraged to participate in the session via video conferencing. Due to this current situation, I called the Bureau for an urgent meeting which has just ended a few minutes ago. The Bureau discussed the letter by the Director-General and in the light of the urgency of the current situation, decided to follow her recommendations.”

4. Wide shot, podium

5. SOUNDBITE (English) Elisabeth Tichy-Fisslberger, President of the UN Human Rights Council:
“I would like to thank everybody for their understanding and their flexibility. These are circumstances that are beyond our control but they force us to react and take measures of precaution and you may recall that the Swiss Government, the Swiss authorities, have encouraged all organisers of events which go beyond 1000
people to cancel them and the calculation was that quite a high number of side events would attract quite a high number of people to this part of the Palais and this is how the Bureau thought and argued when recommending that we would follow the recommendations as expressed by the Director-General.”

6. Wide shot, podium

7. SOUNDbite (English) Elisabeth Tichy-Fisslberger, President of the UN Human Rights Council: “The Human Rights Council as such, I think it was very briefly discussed, will be maintained with informals as well as regional meetings, as necessary.”

8. Med shot, delegations

9. Wide shot, Human Rights Council chambers
Story

The President of the UN Human Rights Council, Elisabeth Tichy-Fisslberger, today (2 Mar) announced that the Council will follow measures recommended by the Secretary-General concerning the Covid-19 outbreak and its implications for the 43rd session of the Human Rights Council.

Tichy-Fisslberger said, “I received an urgent letter from UNOG Director-General Tatiana Valovaya concerning the Coronavirus situation and implication for the 43rd session of the Human Rights Council. In her letter, the Director-General made reference to the measures recommended by the Secretary-General in New York with regard to the Commission on the Status of Women and suggested that the Bureau and the Human Rights Council adopt a similar approach. The Director-General specified that that would entail cancelling all side events and encouraging representatives to refrain from travelling to Geneva for the rest of the session. She also suggested that those Special Procedure mandate holders who are not already in Geneva could be encouraged to participate in the session via video conferencing. Due to this current situation, I called the Bureau for an urgent meeting which has just ended a few minutes ago. The Bureau discussed the letter by the Director-General and in the light of the urgency of the current situation, decided to follow her recommendations.”

The Swiss government on Saturday had announced the ban of all public events of more than 1,000 people.

Tichy-Fisslberger said, “these are circumstances that are beyond our control but they force us to react and take measures of precaution and you may recall that the Swiss Government, the Swiss authorities, have encouraged all organisers of events which go beyond 1,000 people to cancel them and the calculation was that quite a high number of side events would attract quite a high number of people to this part of the Palais and this is how the Bureau thought and argued when recommending that we would follow the recommendations as expressed by the Director-General.

The Human Rights Council session is due to last until 20 March.