



# General Assembly

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## Seventy-ninth session

Item 115 (c) of the preliminary list\*

**Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other  
elections: election of members of the Human Rights Council**

### **Note verbale dated 28 June 2024 from the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly**

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations has the honour to refer to the candidature of the Republic of Korea to the Human Rights Council for the term 2025–2027, at the elections to be held in October 2024 in New York.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution [60/251](#), the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations has the further honour to transmit herewith the voluntary pledges and commitments reaffirming that the promotion and protection of human rights are a priority of the foreign policy of the Republic of Korea (see annex).

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea would be grateful if the present note and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 115 (c) of the preliminary list.

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\* [A/79/50](#).



**Annex to the note verbale dated 28 June 2024 from the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly**

**Candidature of the Republic of Korea to the Human Rights Council, 2025–2027**

**Voluntary pledges and commitments pursuant to General Assembly resolution [60/251](#)**

## **I. Introduction**

1. The Republic of Korea firmly upholds the universal value of human rights, envisaged in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as the centrepiece of its policy goals.
2. With its experience of rising from the rubble of war and achieving both democratization and economic development in less than half a century, the Republic of Korea is ready to continue playing a bridging role within the Human Rights Council. It will work closely with all Member States to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms with the aim of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and realizing sustaining peace by safeguarding the three pillars of the United Nations.
3. The Republic of Korea will continue to support and actively participate in United Nations human rights mechanisms. As part of such efforts, it will increase its contribution to United Nations human rights and humanitarian agencies, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).
4. The Republic of Korea underscores the importance of a human rights-based approach in addressing new challenges of our time, such as emerging digital technologies, including artificial intelligence, and climate change. The Republic of Korea will partner with a variety of stakeholders to ensure that human rights are protected and promoted as humanity embarks on a new path.

## **II. Contributions to the Human Rights Council**

### **A. Support for and contributions to Council deliberations**

5. The Republic of Korea has been actively engaged in discussions on pressing human rights issues, such as the protection of vulnerable populations during conflicts or disasters. It will continue to respond to international calls for action to address human rights emergencies, while seeking to increase humanitarian assistance.
6. The Republic of Korea has been playing a leading role in addressing emerging issues. Recognizing the far-reaching human rights implications of new technologies, it has led the adoption of a biennial Human Rights Council resolution on new and emerging digital technologies and human rights. It has also been playing a leading role in building consensus for the adoption of resolutions on local government and human rights, which highlight the role of local governments in protecting and promoting human rights.
7. The Republic of Korea has also focused on supporting the capacity-building of States and other relevant stakeholders for the promotion and protection of human

rights at all levels, as well as for their participation in the United Nations human rights system. The resolutions led by the Republic of Korea have boosted the capacity of OHCHR to provide technical assistance to States on issues concerning human rights and new and emerging digital technologies. Additionally, the Republic of Korea has spearheaded discussions on capacity-building of local governments to integrate human rights into all of their work, as well as ways to facilitate their participation in United Nations human rights mechanisms. Having recently increased its contributions to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights to a significant degree, the Republic of Korea will further strengthen its efforts to support the capacity-building of Member States in close cooperation with OHCHR. The Republic of Korea will also support universal participation by Member States in the work of the Human Rights Council, including through contributions to the Voluntary Technical Assistance Trust Fund to Support the Participation of Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States in the Work of the Human Rights Council.

## **B. Cooperation with United Nations Human Rights mechanisms**

8. The Republic of Korea remains a strong supporter of United Nations human rights mechanisms and has engaged with them in an active and constructive manner. It has had candid and sincere dialogue with United Nations special procedures on various human rights issues. The Republic of Korea has extended a standing invitation to special procedures and supported their visits to the Republic of Korea. It has also faithfully responded to communications from special procedures.

9. The Republic of Korea has committed to making continuous contributions to OHCHR. The financial contributions of the Republic of Korea to OHCHR have increased about sixfold over the past decade. In 2024, the Republic of Korea more than doubled its contributions to OHCHR, from \$1.9 million in 2023 to \$5 million in 2024.

## **C. Constructive engagement in the universal periodic review**

10. The Republic of Korea places great importance on the universal periodic review mechanism, as it offers a unique opportunity to advance human rights through constructive engagement among Member States, and has fully engaged in the entire universal periodic review process in good faith. In 2023, the Republic of Korea underwent its fourth universal periodic review in an open and constructive manner.

11. The Government of the Republic of Korea has actively engaged with civic groups throughout the universal periodic review process, including through listening to their views, and sincerely reviewed the recommendations made by other Member States. Some of the recommendations on its fourth universal periodic review were incorporated into the fourth national action plan for the promotion and protection of human rights, which was published in March 2024.

# **III. Efforts to address key human rights issues and enhancement of policy coherence at the national level**

## **A. Women's rights**

12. The Republic of Korea has co-sponsored resolutions of the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly on the elimination of sexual and gender-based

violence and discrimination against women and girls, especially in vulnerable situations.

13. The Republic of Korea has served as a member of the Commission on the Status of Women, shared its efforts and best practices and actively participated in the discussions on the promotion and protection of the rights of women and girls.

14. The Republic of Korea is keen to promote and strengthen the women and peace and security agenda in the Security Council during its 2024–2025 tenure by amplifying women’s voices and integrating their perspectives into the Council’s work. The Republic of Korea is committed to implementing Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) at the national level by reviewing its third national action plan (2021–2023) and developing the fourth national action plan (2024–2027), both with a whole-of-government approach.

15. The Republic of Korea is making further efforts to advance the women and peace and security agenda through its Action with Women and Peace initiative, launched in 2018. Under this initiative, it embarked on projects to address the particular needs of women and girls in conflict situations and held annual international conferences to discuss issues of critical importance. In 2023, the fifth such conference was held in Seoul, under the theme of “Promoting the women, peace and security agenda at the United Nations Security Council”. In 2024, the Republic of Korea launched the Action with Women and Peace Fund to support the full and meaningful participation of women in peace and security matters.

16. The Republic of Korea remains committed to combating trafficking in persons, including women and girls. The Republic of Korea enacted the Act on the Prevention of Human Trafficking and Protection of Victims, which came into force in January 2023. While striving to prevent crimes and punish the perpetrators, the Republic of Korea will protect and promote the human rights of trafficking victims by vigorously implementing its anti-trafficking law and taking active part in the international initiatives for countering human trafficking.

## **B. Children’s rights**

17. The Republic of Korea was a recipient of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) back in the 1950s, but now it is actively supporting UNICEF as one of its major donors. As a member of the Executive Board of UNICEF for 28 years (1988–1997 and 2006–2023), the Republic of Korea has actively contributed to the policymaking process of UNICEF and its projects for children in need. The Republic of Korea has made a firm commitment to strengthening its partnership with UNICEF. The scope of this partnership has been expanded to include protection, education, health, water, sanitation, hygiene services, climate action and other areas. For 2022, the Republic of Korea provided approximately \$55 million to UNICEF with the goal of promoting the well-being of every child, including core resources, thematic funds, humanitarian aid and others. This made the Republic of Korea the twelfth-largest donor country in 2022.

18. At the national level, the Republic of Korea has promoted the rights of children by withdrawing the reservation to article 21, paragraph (a), of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 2017 through a general revision of the Act on Special Cases concerning Adoption in 2012 and by formulating the second master plan for child policy, 2020–2024, to minimize the negative impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on children.

19. The Republic of Korea revised the Civil Act to protect children from arbitrary physical discipline by parents, which was one of the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

20. Furthermore, as part of its preparations for ratifying the Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in respect of Intercountry Adoption, the Republic of Korea enacted the Act on International Adoption and amended the Special Act on Domestic Adoption and the Child Welfare Act.

### **C. Rights of persons with disabilities**

21. The Republic of Korea has been a party to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and is committed to upholding the principles of and its responsibilities under the Convention. It will work to consistently ensure the full participation of persons with disabilities in the policymaking process and increase cooperation with various stakeholders to build an inclusive society in which persons with disabilities can live independently and without discrimination.

22. In August 2022, the Republic of Korea participated in the review of its combined second and third periodic reports to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and it has taken measures at the national level to fully implement the concluding observations made by the Committee. The Republic of Korea also took part in announcing joint statements of MIKTA (composed of Mexico, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, Türkiye and Australia) and the Group of Friends of Persons with Disabilities at the sixteenth session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in June 2023.

23. The Republic of Korea has been implementing the sixth comprehensive policy plan for persons with disabilities, 2023–2027, to implement the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons. Based on the plan, the Republic of Korea has improved disability welfare institutions by abolishing the disability rating system, facilitating the enactment of the act on strengthening and ensuring the rights of persons with disabilities, announcing a road map for supporting the independent living of deinstitutionalized persons with disabilities and expanding comprehensive support for families with children with disabilities.

### **D. Rights of migrants and refugees**

24. The Republic of Korea has contributed to the global efforts for refugee protection since it joined UNHCR in 2000. In 2016, it joined the UNHCR “20+ million club”, an informal group of donors who contribute more than \$20 million annually to the organization. Moreover, in close partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Republic of Korea entered into its four-year rotating membership of the IOM Council Bureau starting from the 113th session (2022) and took on a coordinating role within the IOM Asia-Pacific group.

25. The Republic of Korea began its pilot refugee resettlement programme in 2015 with an annual ceiling of 30 refugees and increased the ceiling to 60 in 2017 in an effort to share the burden and responsibility in addressing global refugee issues. In addition, the Republic of Korea has been carrying out the fourth basic plan for immigration policy and the fourth basic plan for multicultural family policy for 2023–2027.

26. After joining the Global Compact on Refugees in 2018, the Republic of Korea faithfully implemented its pledges made at the first Global Refugee Forum, in 2019, and announced new pledges at the second forum. The Republic of Korea will increase

its unearmarked contributions to UNHCR so that the Office can efficiently respond to emergencies and continue its support for neglected refugee crises. The Republic of Korea has more than quadrupled its unearmarked funding, from \$3.8 million in 2023 to \$18 million in 2024, and will seek to ensure that at least 30 per cent of its annual humanitarian contributions toward UNHCR is unearmarked, or that at least 50 per cent is flexible funding. In addition, the Republic of Korea will continue to provide official development assistance for refugee-hosting countries to share the burden and responsibility. The Republic of Korea will also strengthen the humanitarian, development and peace nexus approach in its multi-year projects for refugee support in order to help address prolonged refugee crises.

27. The Republic of Korea is implementing its pledges on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration announced at the first International Migration Review Forum, in 2022.

## **IV. Contribution to expanding the frontier of human rights issues**

### **A. New and emerging digital technologies and human rights**

28. To identify human rights opportunities and challenges stemming from the rapid evolution of new and emerging digital technologies, and to explore ways to respond to them, the Republic of Korea led the adoption of resolutions on new and emerging digital technologies and human rights at the forty-first, forty-seventh and fifty-third sessions of the Human Rights Council. In particular, in its latest resolution on that topic (resolution [53/29](#)), the Council addressed the human rights implications of artificial intelligence technology and spearheaded efforts to strengthen the capacity of OHCHR in providing technical assistance in the field of digital technologies and human rights. The Republic of Korea has also held various side events on new and emerging digital technologies and human rights on the margins of sessions of the Council and the General Assembly.

29. In 2023, the Republic of Korea announced a digital bill of rights, setting forth standards and principles in the digital age, including freedoms and rights in the digital sphere, equitable opportunities and digital innovation.

30. The Republic of Korea will endeavour to promote a human rights-based approach towards new and emerging digital technologies and seek to expand the scope of human rights discussions in the Human Rights Council, including through resolutions on emerging human rights issues.

### **B. Local government and human rights**

31. Thanks to their proximity to local populations and first-hand knowledge of communities, local governments are well positioned to promote social inclusion. Since 2013, the Republic of Korea has led the biennial adoption of resolutions on local government and human rights to highlight the role of local governments in promoting and protecting human rights and to ensure respect for and protection and fulfilment of human rights at all levels. More recently, including by leading the biennial adoption of the Human Rights Council resolution on local government and human rights, the Republic of Korea has been spearheading discussions on ways for local governments to integrate human rights into all of their work and participate more in the United Nations human rights system.

32. The Republic of Korea will continue its efforts to place local governments more firmly in the international human rights framework and promote a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach in the promotion and protection of human rights. It plans to present a follow-up biennial resolution at the fifty-seventh session of the Human Rights Council to lead international dialogue on how to achieve this goal.

## **V. Implementation of international human rights instruments**

33. The Republic of Korea has ratified and is implementing eight core international human rights treaties and five optional protocols: International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol; International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its Optional Protocol; Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols; Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol.

34. In 2021, the Republic of Korea withdrew its reservation to article 25, paragraph (e), of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In addition, the Republic of Korea ratified the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in January 2023.

35. The Republic of Korea will continue to work with treaty bodies in proceeding with the upcoming review procedures and ensure full compliance with the human rights instruments to which it is a party.

36. The Republic of Korea will seek to ratify additional human rights instruments and withdraw reservations to human rights treaties in line with legal amendments and institutional developments in a wide array of fields. The following measures are currently under consideration:

(a) Withdrawal of its reservations to article 16, paragraph (g), of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;

(b) Ratification of the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in respect of Intercountry Adoption;

(c) Accession to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.