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

Note verbale dated 29 July 2024 from the Permanent Mission of Colombia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Colombia to the United Nations has the honour to refer to the candidature of Colombia 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 Colombia 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 Colombia (see annex).

The Permanent Mission of Colombia would be grateful to the President of the General Assembly if the present note and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 115 (c) of the provisional agenda.

* [A/79/150](#).



Annex to the note verbale dated 29 July 2024 from the Permanent Mission of Colombia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

[Original: Spanish]

Candidature of Colombia to the Human Rights Council for the term 2025–2027

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

Human rights for peace

Introduction

1. The Government of Colombia attaches the greatest importance to the promotion and protection of human rights. It is in this spirit that Colombia has put forward its candidature to the Human Rights Council for the period 2025–2027, and it wishes to emphasize that this is the first time since the creation of the Council that Colombia has sought to become a member.
2. As enshrined in the 1991 Political Constitution, Colombia is a social State governed by the rule of law, with democratic, participatory and pluralistic principles. It has a comprehensive commitment to the protection of human rights and aims to promote structural solutions to the problems that have afflicted the nation for decades.
3. Peace as a duty and a fundamental right, under article 22 of our Constitution, has now been developed through a new social contract aimed at guaranteeing the fundamental rights of all Colombians. This is based on the belief that promoting peaceful alternatives for conflict resolution and overcoming systematic human rights violations are essential elements to deepen democracies and build societies.
4. The pillars of Colombian foreign policy, consistent with the very essence of the mission of the United Nations system and intimately linked to promoting and respecting human rights, are therefore building the purpose and scope of peace. This was professed in the preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in terms that remain fully valid almost eight decades after having been adopted: “[The] recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.”
5. Colombia has therefore ratified the fundamental universal human rights treaties and has recognized the competence of various monitoring bodies to hear individual petitions, such as the Human Rights Committee, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Committee on Enforced Disappearances and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.
6. In addition, Colombia is up to date with the submission of each of the treaty reports to the various treaty bodies and is making every effort to comply with the recommendations issued. It is relevant here to highlight the recent submission of the national report under the universal periodic review, which took place on 7 November 2023.
7. With this in mind, Colombia has the honour to make the following voluntary pledges for its candidature to the Human Rights Council for the period 2025–2027.

I. Voluntary pledges for the promotion and protection of human rights at the international level

8. Colombia is offering to share its experience in two crucial areas with the Human Rights Council and with the international community in general. The first area is related to addressing the serious human rights violations that, for decades, resulted in breaches of international humanitarian law committed during the prolonged internal armed conflict experienced in the country. The second area is related to the various attempts made to overcome the human rights crisis and to the overriding and palpable quest for peace as a subject of study, given the different dialogue processes that Colombia has held with illegal groups throughout the years.

9. At the international and multilateral levels, Colombia commits itself, always and in all circumstances, to prioritizing dialogue and peaceful alternatives for conflict resolution, in particular to help overcome manifest and systematic situations of human rights violations in the world, based on respect for the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, international human rights law, international humanitarian law and international refugee law.

10. Colombia will maintain a foreign policy oriented and structured around peace, which in turn is based on respect for human rights, which are universal, indivisible, interrelated and interdependent. Its international commitment is therefore to promote human rights for peace in accordance with State policy in this area, with a view to promoting a just social order that ensures peaceful coexistence and the protection of nature, human rights and freedom. This implies deepening the debates on pressing global situations that affect us all, such as the climate crisis, the global drug problem or migration.

11. Colombia will strive to strengthen constructive dialogue, negotiation and the search for consensus, insofar as possible, as pillars of the work of the Human Rights Council, in order to avoid politicization and promote cross-cutting cooperation in the discussion of human rights.

12. Colombia will apply the general principle of international law that commitments must be fulfilled in good faith, not merely by observing obligations under ratified international instruments. We will also make an effort to value, with the utmost interest and respect, diagnosis and analysis of the United Nations treaty bodies and special procedures, and to implement their recommendations as far as possible.

13. Since 2003, Colombia has extended a standing invitation to the special procedures of the Human Rights Council, under which several rapporteurs have already visited the country. The new Government, headed by President Gustavo Petro and Vice President Francia Márquez, will maintain this invitation and will guarantee constructive work with and regular visits by the special procedures to the country. This has already been the case with visits by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict; the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children; the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence; the Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples; and the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent.

14. It is essential to join efforts to improve the functioning and effectiveness of the universal periodic review as a mechanism of exceptional value at the international level in the field of human rights. Colombia will participate actively in the review, both by reporting the progress achieved on the recommendations made and by actively formulating recommendations that promote objectivity and constructive dialogue.

15. Colombia is committed to strengthening the international system's mechanisms to make progress in safeguarding women's rights, based on a feminist foreign policy that guides and guarantees the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in the highest decision-making bodies. It will therefore remain committed to the full implementation of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) on women and peace and security, including the adoption of a national action plan and the implementation of the relevant resolutions adopted by the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly. In doing so, it will give the highest priority to strengthening gender mainstreaming work and implementation efforts by involving women in peacebuilding, guaranteeing their participation in politics, expanding efforts to prevent all forms of violence against women and punishing violations of their rights.

16. Colombia will continue to promote the right to equality and non-discrimination to ensure that LGBTQI+ persons can effectively exercise their rights. In this regard, it consistently supports language on the recognition of multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination and their impacts, and highlights the importance of elements of diversity and the protection of human rights without any distinction. Colombia supported the establishment of the mandate of the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity at the Human Rights Council, and will continue to promote the rights of LGBTQI+ persons in the work of the General Assembly.

17. Colombia will continue with its commitment to protect the rights and guarantee the survival of Afrodescendant communities and Indigenous Peoples in the work of the United Nations, with a focus on measures aimed at settling the debts that have historically affected these populations. It will sustain efforts in the forums dealing with this matter, such as the Human Rights Council, the General Assembly, the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent, while always bearing in mind such valuable international instruments as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, and the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169), of the International Labour Organization.

18. Colombia will work jointly and in a cooperative spirit with civil society in order to strengthen its participation and contributions to the work of the Human Rights Council.

19. Colombia will promote forums, resolutions and other mechanisms to strengthen and enrich actions aimed at consolidating national transitional justice systems, in order to ensure truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence. We are ready to share our vast experience in this field.

20. In order to have vibrant democratic societies, it is essential to support and strengthen policies that safeguard the lives, dignity and work of human rights defenders and social leaders. Colombia undertakes to work within the Human Rights Council to defend their legitimate work and provide guarantees for its development, as agreed in the 1998 Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted by General Assembly resolution [53/144](#), and as developed in other documents.

21. Colombia will continue to implement and advocate for the implementation of policies in favour of the migrant population, with a human rights perspective, to combat the abuses and dangers that may be involved in transit. We will seek to achieve the objectives set forth in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, and we will promote universal ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

22. Colombia is committed to protecting the right of all people, present and future generations, to live in a healthy environment and to sustainable development, which is why Colombia will host the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2024. It will also work for the rights of access to information, public participation and justice in environmental matters, as established in the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement), and will promote accountability and access to reparations for victims of human rights violations related to business activities, both through voluntary mechanisms and legally binding instruments.

23. Colombia will strengthen the interaction between the inter-American system and the universal human rights system, in its role of promoting and protecting human rights in the context of climate change. It is essential to consolidate clear international norms and standards common to all States regarding the impact and effectiveness of human rights in the context of environmental emergencies, paying special attention to the impacts on the most vulnerable populations.

24. Colombia considers it essential that the international discussion on drugs be truly comprehensive and multidisciplinary, giving special importance to safeguarding human rights fully and effectively in the implementation of international and national drug policies. In this regard, Colombia will promote the permanent and recurrent positioning of human rights and drugs issues within the Human Rights Council

II. Voluntary pledges for the promotion and protection of human rights at the national level

25. Colombia is determined to do everything within its legitimate power to overcome the serious human rights situation it has suffered for years, characterized by a high level of sociopolitical violence, social exclusion and impunity. The new Government is committed to achieving a definitive end to the armed conflict affecting the country.

26. For this reason, President Gustavo Petro promoted Act No. 2272 of 2022, which established that:

The policy of peace is a State policy. It will be a cross-cutting priority in State affairs, and will be participatory, broad, inclusive and comprehensive, in the implementation of agreements and in relation to negotiation processes, dialogue and the administration of justice. The primary purpose of the instruments of total peace will be the achievement of stable and lasting peace, with guarantees of non-repetition and security for all Colombians, and standards that prevent impunity and guarantee, to the greatest extent possible, victims' rights to truth, justice and reparation.

27. To achieve the above, the national Government made the commitment to comply with the mandates that derive from a truly democratic society. As a “force for life”, we must be able to defend diversity, equality, justice, the realization of economic, social, cultural and environmental rights and the strengthening of the social State governed by the rule of law.

28. This purpose implies the defence and realization of the principles enshrined in the 1991 Political Constitution and in the international treaties on human rights and international humanitarian law ratified by Colombia, which in our legal system have a higher rank than that of the law. The treaties of the first group take precedence over domestic legislation, by express mandate of article 93 of the Constitution. The latter, according to the jurisprudence of the Constitutional Court, make up the constitutional body of law.

29. The national Government considers it imperative to abide by and effectively implement the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace, signed between the State and the then guerillas of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army in 2016; to strive for the achievement of total peace, based on respect for, and the guarantee of, human rights and the territorialization of the terms agreed; to promote social and environmental justice, and to move towards a social and environmental rule of law. For Colombia, building total peace involves inclusive efforts to transform territories, combat violence and protect lives through dialogue. It also means fostering and strengthening governance throughout the country, particularly in border regions, through agreements with illegal armed actors, especially in remote territories and urban areas affected by poverty and inequality.

30. The national Government supports the comprehensive transitional justice system established through the 2016 Final Agreement and its three components: (i) the Unit for the Search for Persons deemed Missing; (ii) the Special Jurisdiction for Peace; and (iii) the Commission for the Clarification of Truth, Coexistence and Non-Repetition. These are the pillars guaranteeing truth, justice, reparation and non-repetition for the victims of the conflict.

31. Colombia will continue to make progress in implementing the Victims and Land Restitution Act, enacted in 2011 and extended for 10 more years in 2021, which seeks to recognize, identify and provide reparations to the more than 9 million victims of Colombia’s armed conflict.

32. In the context of coexistence between peasants, Indigenous Peoples, Afrodescendants and the Black, Raizal and Palenquero population, the new Government will promote dialogue towards intercultural governance, the strengthening of their own governments, autonomy and the guarantee of the right to free, prior and informed consultation.

33. One of the objectives of President Gustavo Petro’s new Government is to fully redress the historical debt owed to Indigenous Peoples, Afrodescendants and the Black, Raizal and Palenquero population. This is a goal envisaged for the medium to long term so that guidelines can be drawn up and the foundations of a public policy against racism can be laid.

34. As a “force for life”, Colombia is convinced that the changes necessary for present and future challenges are made possible by women, and together with them it will undertake the necessary transformations to settle the existing historical debt in terms of political representation, equality and autonomy.

35. Colombia will take decisive measures to strengthen child protection capacities through international cooperation and dialogue. We will therefore make every effort to achieve the eradication of all forms of violence against children and adolescents. Colombia will host the first Global Ministerial Conference on ending violence against children in Bogotá in November 2024.

36. The new Government is moving towards an approach of human security and democratization of the State based on equality, respect and protection of the lives of the population. It will be an approach based on overcoming the deficit of economic, social, cultural and environmental rights, which will make it possible to forge true life projects far removed from fear and uncertainty.

37. The new protection policies to be implemented by the national Government seek to recover a comprehensive security approach for the defence of social leaders and human rights defenders, based on a differential individual and collective approach that prioritizes the preservation of the lives of leaders and their communities.

38. In this regard, a central objective of the national Government's new model for dealing with drug trafficking, illegal mining and deforestation in Colombia will be preventing victimization of and aggression against the leaders of peasant, Indigenous, Afrodescendant, Black, Raizal and Palenquero communities, and the stigmatization and criminalization of their leaders.

39. In the area of drugs, President Petro's Government is moving forward with the implementation of a new national policy, which is people-centred and based on a human rights approach. In this context, there is a need to address the relationship between drugs and human rights from a holistic and differential approach, in order to counteract the harmful effects that the implementation of drug control policies has on respect for, and the promotion and protection of, human rights and fundamental freedoms, while meeting the specific needs of different sectors of the population, especially those who have been marginalized or are in vulnerable situations, such as Indigenous Peoples, Afrodescendants and peasants.

40. The Government will provide all guarantees for the exercise of the rights to freedom of expression, movement and social protest and the right to defend rights, in particular the rights to territory and a healthy environment, access to public information and freedom of the press.

41. The national Government will continue to implement policies in favour of the migrant population, with a focus on regularization in order to achieve economic and social inclusion.

42. The national Government is aware of the negative impact of the environmental crisis on the enjoyment of human rights, especially on historically marginalized and vulnerable populations. Its commitment lies in the implementation of mitigation measures and actions with differential approaches to reduce vulnerability to climate change.

43. In summary, Colombia is committed to fully developing its capacity to promote and protect human rights as a basis for a more just society and the achievement of total peace in the country and internationally, with a view to contributing, based on its own experience, to the proper functioning of the Human Rights Council and to overcoming situations of human rights violations throughout the world.
