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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 13 September 2024 from the Permanent Mission of Kenya to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

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

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kenya to the United Nations also has the honour to transmit herewith the voluntary pledges and commitments in accordance with General Assembly resolution [60/251](#) (see annex), and would be grateful to the Office of the President of the General Assembly if the present note and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Assembly, under item 115 (c) of the provisional agenda.



Annex to the note verbale dated 13 September 2024 from the Permanent Mission of Kenya to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Candidature of Kenya to the Human Rights Council, 2025–2027

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

Introduction

1. The Republic of Kenya has the honour to present its candidature for membership of the Human Rights Council for the term 2025–2027, at the elections to be held during the seventy-ninth session of the General Assembly in October 2024 in New York.
2. Kenya strongly supports the Human Rights Council, recognizing its vital role in safeguarding human rights globally. The Council stands as a vital cornerstone within the United Nations, fostering international collaboration to safeguard the fundamental rights of every person across the globe.
3. Kenya champions the inherent and universal value of all human rights, unwavering in its defence of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights for every person on the planet. The Government recognizes these rights as the bedrock of human dignity, liberty and the flourishing of open, free societies around the world. This conviction fuels Kenya's strong commitment to upholding human rights, for it believes that doing so fosters a just, prosperous and stable world.
4. As a member of the Human Rights Council, Kenya commits to a collaborative journey of advancing and protecting human rights for all. It believes in achieving this through partnerships built on equality, constructive dialogue and a shared commitment to include all stakeholders. This collaborative spirit will be the cornerstone of upholding the principles of equality and non-discrimination, ensuring no voice is left unheard.

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

Pledges and commitments at the national level

5. Kenya's role as a regional hub for the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights highlights its commitment to human rights unity. Through nationwide inclusive dialogues with the Kenyan people, the Government identified four key achievable pledges reflecting ongoing efforts for lasting human rights progress.
6. Recognizing the need to address evolving human rights challenges, the Government pledges to review the 2014 national policy and action plan on human rights to take into consideration emerging challenges. By learning from past experiences, this initiative presents a valuable opportunity to shape a future where human rights are seamlessly integrated into all aspects of development and governance.
7. Kenya takes a bold stride towards environmental sustainability and is committed to efforts to achieve 100 per cent renewable power by 2030. This commitment contributes to the global efforts to address climate change, improve air quality and foster sustainable development. By increasing the share of clean energy from 92 per cent to 100 per cent, Kenya sets a precedent for responsible environmental stewardship.

8. Demonstrating unwavering commitment to human rights, Kenya pledges to enact legislation criminalizing enforced disappearances even before the formal domestic processes of acceding to the treaty are complete. This landmark move establishes robust mechanisms for prevention, investigation, prosecution and victim support. It signals a strong commitment to accountability, reduced impunity and delivering justice to affected families who have endured immense suffering.

9. Reaffirming its dedication to human rights inclusivity, Kenya pledges to continue fostering gender equality and safeguarding the rights of children, people with disabilities, elderly persons and marginalized groups. This unwavering commitment ensures that every individual, regardless of background or circumstance, has the opportunity to thrive.

Kenya's commitment to international human rights standards

10. Kenya's strong adherence to human rights is evident by its membership in most of the key international human rights instruments. The Government remains dedicated to their full and effective implementation, which entails both regular reporting to treaty bodies and constructive engagement in dialogue with them. A thorough assessment of the remaining instruments is being undertaken to pave the way for future ratifications, ensuring Kenya's full alignment with international human rights standards. In the interim, Kenya has implemented various legal, policy, judicial and other mechanisms to safeguard the enjoyment of these rights by all citizens.

11. Kenya affirms its commitment to collaborating with human rights treaty bodies. This includes actively addressing their recommendations to strengthen cooperation and ensure the effective implementation of each human rights instrument it has ratified. Kenya's ongoing dedication is reflected in its continued nomination of qualified personnel to serve on these critical bodies.

12. Recognizing the valuable contributions of civil society organizations, the public and national human rights commissions, Kenya actively engages with them through various forums and incorporates their perspectives into its periodic reports.

Kenya's involvement with the Human Rights Council

13. Kenya remains a steadfast champion of the Human Rights Council and its vital mechanisms. Kenya's previous membership on the Council for the terms 2013–2015, 2016–2019 and 2021–2022 stands as a testament to its unwavering dedication to advancing human rights globally. This valuable experience not only bolstered its domestic human rights framework, but also empowered Kenya to be a proactive contributor on the international stage.

14. Kenya, if elected to the Council, understands the gravity of the responsibility entrusted to its members. The Government is committed to upholding the highest standards in promoting and protecting human rights globally. This includes respect for the independence of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and complete cooperation with the Council and its mechanisms.

15. Kenya champions a Human Rights Council that is impactful and embraces diverse voices. It will be a driving force in deliberations on improving its operations, maximizing its effectiveness, and implementing reforms that make a real difference.

16. Kenya is a staunch advocate for open dialogue and constructive feedback. Fostering mutual understanding of the challenges in upholding human rights, both within its own borders and on the global stage, is the cornerstone of effective collaboration within the Council.

17. Kenya fosters a vibrant and collaborative partnership with civil society organizations. This commitment extends to the Human Rights Council, where Kenya commits to working tirelessly to ensure these organizations are included and have a voice within the Council.

18. Kenya remains a steadfast champion for the independence of the High Commissioner and the vital work of OHCHR. It will continue its collaboration with both OHCHR and the Human Rights Council, actively engaging with its mechanisms.

19. Kenya is deeply committed to a robust and independent United Nations human rights treaty body system. It pledges full cooperation with these bodies to ensure their effectiveness in protecting and promoting human rights globally.

20. Kenya pledges to sponsor and support crucial human rights issues and connected themes at the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council. These include actively advocating for and sponsoring resolutions addressing challenges such as poverty, the fight against impunity and climate change.

21. Kenya strongly supports the universal periodic review mechanism and actively participates in all review sessions. It recognizes the review's value as an equal and transparent process for promoting and protecting human rights. Indeed, over the years the review's recommendations have led to the development of various domestic laws, policies and administrative action for the promotion and protection of human rights in Kenya.

Global advocacy

22. Kenya actively engages in international human rights forums, influencing global discussions and policies through participation and presentations. Its recent tenure on the Security Council (2021–2022) exemplifies this commitment. Kenya championed a human rights-centred approach to global security, prioritizing the plight of women and children during its presidency.

23. President William Samoei Ruto's address at the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly challenged outdated norms and advocated for a more equitable world that respects human rights. He highlighted the connection between security, peace and human rights.

Regional champions

24. Kenya plays a vital role in fostering regional stability by actively contributing to peacekeeping efforts. These efforts not only promote peace and security but also create an environment where human rights can flourish and development can take root.

25. Kenya's leadership in hosting the inaugural Africa Climate Summit in September 2023 demonstrates its understanding and appreciation of the interconnectedness between environmental sustainability and the fundamental rights of its citizens and the continent as a whole. The forum prioritized immediate action, focusing on building resilience and adaptation strategies to safeguard vulnerable communities' livelihoods and well-being.

26. Kenya's participation in the African Union Peace and Security Council signifies its unwavering dedication to safeguarding human rights across Africa. Through its active role in the Council, Kenya works collaboratively to address regional security threats and ensure the protection of human rights for all Africans.

Kenya: from aspiration to action – realizing human rights for all

27. Kenya's commitment to human rights transcend rhetoric; it is action! Kenya commits to prioritizing concrete steps that ensure all Kenyans can truly enjoy their fundamental rights. This translates to integrating human rights principles into every aspect of governance, including policy development, legislation, judicial decisions and all actions.

28. Kenya fully recognizes the indivisibility, universality and interdependence of human rights. Kenya pledges to respect all rights – civil, political, economic, social and cultural – as equally important, applicable to everyone and interconnected.

29. Kenya's Constitution (2010) is a powerful framework for promoting and protecting human rights. It recognizes the fundamental importance of human dignity, fairness, equal opportunities for all and safeguarding marginalized groups from discrimination.

30. It further incorporates the principles of the international human rights treaties, while also strengthening and expanding protection of fundamental freedoms of all Kenyan citizens. This comprehensive chapter provides the foundation for realizing these rights in practice.

31. In 2017 and 2020, Kenya participated in the voluntary national review of the Sustainable Development Goals. Kenya reported key progress in all Goals, including key efforts to reduce poverty, ensure universal health care, improve net enrolment rates in primary education and enhance access to clean water and sanitation.

32. Pioneering the first national action plan on business and human rights on the African continent in 2020, Kenya is unwavering in its commitment to the plan's continuous implementation and improvement, ensuring that businesses operating within its borders uphold the highest human rights standards.

33. Building on its groundbreaking achievement as the first African nation to enumerate intersex people in the 2019 census, Kenya commits to continue championing their rights, including ensuring that intersex persons are fully embraced within the Government's legal and policy framework.

34. Deeply aware of the hardships faced by stateless individuals, Kenya established a groundbreaking recognition programme. This programme continues to empower thousands to claim their rightful place within Kenyan society. By granting them citizenship, Kenya ensures their full participation in society and the ability to enjoy their fundamental rights.

35. Kenya's Children's Act of 2022 takes significant strides in safeguarding children. It recognizes a broader scope of children's rights, including protection from online dangers and a complete ban on corporal punishment. The Act prioritizes keeping children within families whenever possible, through alternative care options. Additionally, it raises the age of criminal culpability and emphasizes rehabilitation for children in conflict with the law. These measures create a more comprehensive framework for protecting children in Kenya.

36. Kenya is taking a zero-tolerance approach to sexual and gender-based violence through a comprehensive strategy. The National Police Service response (POLICARE) establishes a coordinated national network to effectively address cases of sexual and gender-based violence. Specialized gender-based violence courts in counties are leading the way by providing a more sensitive and efficient justice system for victims. Gender violence recovery centres and gender desks offer safe spaces for victims to report abuse and receive vital support services. Furthermore, the Protection against Domestic Violence Act and Rules (2022) prioritize prevention, intervention

and victim support. This critical legislation empowers victims to seek protection orders, providing a crucial tool for early detection and, ultimately, preventing violence before it occurs.

37. Kenya is making strong strides in its fight against poverty through a multipronged approach of social protection programmes. One such programme, Inua Jamii, provides a vital lifeline to vulnerable populations like the elderly, orphans and people with disabilities. There is a continued focus on ensuring the programme reaches a larger portion of the population in need. The Affirmative Action Fund disburses resources directly to youth, women and vulnerable groups. These funds provide them with the critical financial tools and opportunities they need to break the cycle of poverty and build a brighter future.

38. Kenya is committed to educational equity for all. This is evident through increased funding for public schools, with a focus on students with disabilities. Marginalized areas receive additional support through targeted projects like the Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project and school meal programmes. Recognizing the unique needs of groups like nomadic communities, Kenya has dedicated initiatives like the National Council for Nomadic Education in Kenya and the Girls' Education Challenge to ensure everyone has a chance to succeed in school.

39. Kenya boasts a robust system of independent commissions dedicated to human rights, equality and good governance. These commissions play a vital role in safeguarding citizens' rights, resolving conflicts peacefully and promoting fair elections. Their successes in controlling hate speech, promoting gender equality and ensuring transparent elections are testaments to their effectiveness.

40. Furthermore, Kenya openly acknowledges and discusses the challenges it faces in upholding human rights commitments. This transparency fosters trust and allows other States to offer targeted support and assistance.

Kenya: building a more just world

41. By joining the Human Rights Council, Kenya seeks to amplify its voice on the global stage and collaborate with international partners to further strengthen its national human rights framework. It is dedicated to upholding the highest standards of human rights for all and believes its active participation will contribute significantly to the Council's vital work.

42. Furthermore, Kenya pledges to actively participate in the Council's efforts to prevent human rights violations from happening in the first place. It will also propose or advocate for early intervention by the Council in situations that could escalate into full-blown crises.

43. Kenya reaffirms its commitment to working closely with all national and international human rights monitoring bodies. This demonstrates its dedication to honouring their international agreements and upholding the importance of human rights.

44. Kenya commits to ensuring the full and effective implementation of existing human rights commitments, guaranteeing their reach to all communities and individuals.

45. Kenya commits to continue safeguarding the rights of vulnerable groups, including women, children, minorities and marginalized communities, within all human rights efforts.

46. Kenya stands firmly against discrimination in all its forms. It commits to fostering a society that celebrates the inherent worth and dignity of all people. This

unwavering belief fuels national initiatives that promote inclusivity and equal opportunities for every Kenyan in line with constitutional principles.

47. Kenya pledges to foster open dialogue and engagement with civil society, human rights defenders and communities to identify and address challenges. Kenya firmly commits to safeguarding human rights defenders and civil society space.

48. Kenya will continue offering safe haven and essential support to refugees and asylum-seekers. This firm commitment exemplifies its dedication to upholding human rights for all.

49. Kenya's resolute commitment to upholding human rights, both domestically and internationally, positions it as a strong candidate for membership of the Human Rights Council. Kenya recognizes the journey towards stronger human rights requires ongoing collaboration. It stands ready to work together in the endeavour to achieve the common goal of defending human rights and to create a more equitable future for all.
