



# General Assembly

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## Seventy-fourth session

Item 116 (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 10 May 2019 from the Permanent Mission of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly**

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Armenia to the United Nations presents its compliments to the President of the General Assembly and has the honour to refer to Armenia's candidature for the Human Rights Council for the term 2020–2022, at the elections to be held during the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly.

The Permanent Mission of Armenia to the United Nations also has the honour to transmit herewith the voluntary pledges and commitments of the Government of Armenia for the promotion and protection of human rights pursuant to General Assembly resolution [60/251](#) (see annex).

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Armenia to the United Nations would like to request that the present note verbale and its annex be circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

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\* [A/74/50](#).



## **Annex to the note verbale dated 10 May 2019 from the Permanent Mission of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly**

### **Candidature of Armenia to the Human Rights Council, 2020–2022**

#### **Voluntary pledges and commitments pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/251**

1. Armenia is committed to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The country has consistently demonstrated firm determination in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights for all and respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, peace, justice and the rule of law.
2. Armenia is a strong supporter of the universality of human rights and their equal, non-discriminative and non-selective applicability.
3. The fight against racism and racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance is the key to building healthy societies and a peaceful world order. In a world where the roots of conflicts are increasingly associated with religious and ethnic belonging, an essential component of equilibrium is interreligious and inter-ethnic dialogue.
4. Armenia attaches paramount importance to equality between men and women, which is one of the key factors for the promotion of human rights, respect for the rule of law and democracy. Safe and dignified families and work environments, as well as the full and equal participation of women in political, economic, social and cultural life, are considered essential for economic growth and the prosperity of society as a whole.
5. The Armenian Government recognizes the vital role of non-governmental organizations in the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms and will guarantee their inclusive participation in the national reform discourse in all areas.

#### **National contribution**

6. Armenia experienced dramatic events and changes in its political system and life in April and May 2018, through a peaceful, non-violent Velvet Revolution. It brought a change of the country's government, drastic transformations in the fields of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, created a favourable atmosphere and gave fresh impetus to reform efforts in the country.
7. Early parliamentary elections were held in December 2018. All observation missions underlined the presence of broad public trust towards the electoral process and its results and the full respect for fundamental freedoms, and underscored full compliance with international standards and procedures for free and fair elections.
8. Earlier, in December 2015, through a referendum, Armenia enacted a constitutional transition from a semi-presidential to a parliamentary political system.
9. The Institute of the Human Rights Defender was established in March 2004 and was accredited with A status by the International Coordinating Committee of National Human Rights Institutions in 2013, indicating full compliance with the Paris Principles of 1993.
10. The national strategy on human rights protection (2012) and its plan of action for 2017–2019 are central tools in ensuring the implementation of a comprehensive national policy in the sphere of human rights protection. Reflecting the

recommendations of United Nations mechanisms and regional monitoring bodies, the plan of action includes 96 measures aimed at the protection of civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights, the rights of vulnerable groups, human rights in the armed forces, etc.

11. Armenia has acceded to all relevant international and regional legal instruments and has recorded sound achievements in the fight against trafficking in and exploitation of human beings, including through the activities of the National Anti-Trafficking Council and the implementation of the fifth national action plan, for the period 2016–2018.

12. The Government remains resolute in its fight against corruption and seeks to promote an independent, impartial and effective judiciary and the equality of citizens before the law.

13. The Council on Women's Issues in the Prime Minister's Office has been coordinating activities for the solution of key issues relating to the promotion and protection of women's rights in Armenia since 2000.

14. With absolute acknowledgement of the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding, Armenia consistently implements Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security to ensure the representation and more active involvement of women in the decision-making process at all levels. In February 2019, the national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) was adopted by the Government.

15. Armenia undertakes all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect and promote the rights of the child. The National Commission for the Protection of the Rights of the Child, involving State and civil society actors, has been functioning since 2005.

16. The National Commission for Persons with Disabilities (established in 2008) involves State and civil society representatives on the basis of the right of equal participation. In 2010, Armenia ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which led to corresponding legislative amendments and fostered efforts in the provision of relevant health services.

17. The National Minority Coordinating Council, which has been operating since 2000, aims at promoting and protecting national minority rights and freedoms, boosting their intercommunity relations, discussing and preparing recommendations for legislative initiatives, as well as promoting the effectiveness of State support for the educational, cultural, legal and other needs of these communities. The four biggest minority groups (Yezidis, Russians, Assyrians/Syriacs and Kurds, as of March 2019) are allocated seats in the National Assembly of Armenia in conformity with the Constitution.

18. Remaining one of the largest recipients of Syrian refugees on a per capita basis and also hosting refugees from Iraq, Ukraine and African and Asian States, Armenia attaches great importance to providing favourable conditions for their rapid integration into society, including their full and equal access to the educational system and the labour market. The amendments to the Law on Refugees and Asylum (December 2015) enable refugees and migrants to practice their right to education in the same form as prescribed for the citizens of Armenia.

### **International cooperation**

19. Armenia has signed and/or ratified almost all of the United Nations and regional human rights instruments.

20. In 2006, Armenia extended a standing invitation to all United Nations special rapporteurs and independent experts to visit the country. Under the special procedures, the following visits to Armenia were conducted:

- (a) Representative of the Secretary-General on the human rights of internally displaced persons, 18 and 19 May 2000;
- (b) Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, 12–18 June 2010;
- (c) Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, 6–15 September 2010;
- (d) Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children, including child prostitution, child pornography and other child sexual abuse material, 12–18 May 2015;
- (e) Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, 25 September–5 October 2017;
- (f) Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, 7–16 November 2018.

21. Armenia efficiently cooperates with the United Nations treaty bodies and other mechanisms, inter alia through the submission of periodic reports and participation in interactive dialogues with experts. In 2018, Armenia submitted its third periodic report on the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. In 2019, Armenia will submit its periodic reports on the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocols thereto on the involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

22. Armenia is a strong supporter of the universal periodic review mechanism, viewing it as an effective instrument for the assessment of positive developments and challenges pertaining to the human rights situation in Member States. The Government of Armenia has carefully considered the recommendations of the second cycle of the periodic review, of January 2015, and has consistently implemented them ever since. In 2018, Armenia, on a voluntary basis, submitted a midterm report on the implementation/fulfilment of the accepted recommendations, and this practice will be continued.

23. Armenia is one of the strongest advocates of the prevention of the crime of genocide and has traditionally presented resolutions relating to this issue. Introducing its first resolution in 1998 to the Commission on Human Rights and, in the same year, to the General Assembly, Armenia aimed to draw the attention of the international community to the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Subsequently, the scope and the substance of the resolutions introduced at the Human Rights Council were fundamentally modified and enriched. The most recent resolution, “Prevention of genocide”, unanimously adopted by the Human Rights Council in March 2018, conveyed new quality to the policy implemented by the international community for the prevention of genocide. The resolutions draw the attention of the international community to the issue of early warning in situations that can lead to genocide, and they cover such areas as genocide education, regional and subregional cooperation for genocide prevention, the accountability of perpetrators, and the role of justice in the process of the protection and promotion of human rights.

24. Armenia initiated the resolution “International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of This Crime”, adopted by consensus by the General Assembly in September 2015. During the same year, in order to encourage international discourse on the issue of prevention, Armenia initiated and hosted the first Global Forum against the Crime of Genocide, bringing

together a list of prominent scholars and practitioners of genocide prevention, thereby taking the lead in building a global community against the crime of genocide. The third Global Forum took place from 9 to 11 December 2018 and was organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia with the support of the Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect and in cooperation with the International Association of Genocide Scholars.

25. Armenia remains assured that public denials or attempts to justify crimes of genocide and crimes against humanity should be declared as offences punishable by law, as recommended in general recommendation No. 35 of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Armenia advocates awareness-raising on the issues of intolerance, discrimination, xenophobia and mass atrocities against humanity and promotes the agenda to prevent these evil phenomena through educating people in a culture of peace and tolerance.

26. Since January 2019, Armenia has been a member of the Economic and Social Council, for a three-year term.

27. Reaffirming its willingness to contribute to international efforts towards the strengthening of the role of women in various areas of public life, Armenia was also elected as a member of the Commission on the Status of Women for the period 2019–2023.

28. In 2015, Armenia became a fully fledged member of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, reiterating its readiness to find adequate responses and meaningful solutions to the challenges and problems faced by refugees and to promote international efforts to that end.

29. Underlining the significance of combating and preventing racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, Armenia has consistently been fighting against such attitudes and behaviours, particularly those constituting hate speech and hate crimes. Combating racism and xenophobia in Europe and promoting European values through intercultural dialogue were among the priorities of Armenia during its presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in 2013.

30. Armenia is guided by the notions of dialogue, solidarity and a culture of peace in developing its relations with all its counterparts. It was with this in mind that Armenia hosted the seventeenth Summit of la Francophonie, attended by over 40 Heads of State and Government and 84 delegations, under the theme “Living together in solidarity, with shared humanistic values and respect for diversity: a source of peace and prosperity for the French-speaking community”.

### **Pledges and commitments**

31. The Republic of Armenia pledges to:

(a) Promote the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national, regional and international levels;

(b) Promote the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and implement the Sustainable Development Goals in their social, environmental and economic dimensions through the strengthening of the principle of non-discrimination, as reflected in our collective pledge of “leaving no one behind”;

(c) Continue to ensure that the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals is one of the essential instruments for delivering comprehensive internal reforms;

(d) Adopt a new national human rights action plan for 2020–2022 and in particular continue to strengthen the national human rights institutional framework machinery;

(e) Strengthen dialogue and cooperation with civil society organizations in the course of the implementation of international obligations and reporting processes;

(f) Continue active engagement with the universal periodic review mechanism and the submission of midterm reports;

(g) Establish an internal mechanism for reporting and coordinating the follow-up to all human rights recommendations. Armenia will continue pursuing its efforts to guarantee the fulfilment of the recommendations of the United Nations, as well as of other international monitoring bodies, particularly through ensuring the efficient performance of the internal follow-up mechanism;

(h) Foster human rights education, inter alia, through the inclusion of the rights of the child in school curricula and by making effective use of information and communications technology in teaching and learning processes;

(i) Ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence;

(j) Enhance and strengthen the mechanisms and partnerships aiming at the political, social and economic empowerment of women in different regions of Armenia, with the particular aim of promoting the participation of women and girls in community-building and decision-making processes and in taking on leadership roles across society;

(k) Implement the national action plan on the realization of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security in order to ensure the protection of the rights of women living in conflict areas and the active role of women in all stages of conflict resolution;

(l) Promote the further strengthening of refugee protection mechanisms, including for refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic, and contribute to their continuous integration into health-care, education, social and all other spheres at the national level;

(m) Continue to contribute to the international efforts aimed at the protection of religious and ethnic minorities in the Middle East;

(n) Promote cultural diversity and the principles enshrined in the Yerevan Declaration adopted at the seventeenth Summit of la Francophonie, on the theme "Living together" ("Vivre ensemble"), through different initiatives at the international level;

(o) Further promote the concept of tolerance as an essential step on the way to more inclusive societies and combat hate speech and hate crimes, particularly on the grounds of ethnic belonging, by addressing the issue at the national, regional and international levels;

(p) Promote the universal ratification and comprehensive observance of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and promote genocide education as a tool for contributing to awareness-raising of past genocides and promoting the right to know the truth;

(q) Foster cooperation aimed at the prevention of genocide and other mass atrocities and the further development of national and international early warning mechanisms and continue supporting the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, including through annual financial contributions.