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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 15 October 2019 from the Permanent Mission of Namibia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Namibia to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretariat and, pursuant to General Assembly resolution [60/251](#), has the honour to inform the Secretariat that the Government of Namibia has submitted its candidature to the Human Rights Council for the period 2020–2022 at the elections to be held on 17 October 2019 during the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly.

The candidature of Namibia was endorsed by the African Union.

The Permanent Mission of Namibia has the honour to transmit herewith the voluntary commitments and pledges of Namibia during its tenure with respect to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of all universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms, in accordance with General Assembly resolution [60/251](#) (see annex).

The Permanent Mission of Namibia would appreciate the circulation of the present note verbale and the annex thereto as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 114 (c).



**Annex to the note verbale dated 15 October 2019 from the
Permanent Mission of Namibia to the United Nations addressed to
the President of the General Assembly**

Candidature of Namibia to the Human Rights Council, 2020–2022

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

Introduction

1. Namibia was elected as a member of the Human Rights Council during the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly, in 2013, for the period 2014–2016.
2. During its tenure as member of the Human Rights Council, Namibia actively participated in all activities of the Council and engaged with Member and Observer States as well as non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations. The tenure was marked by a positive contribution to the debates and discussions on the programme of the Council during and outside of its ordinary sessions as well as an unwavering commitment and participation during the universal periodic review sessions. Namibia, despite having had a very small team on the ground to execute this mandate, has always delivered on its pledges made in pursuance of its candidacy in 2013. Namibia is a member of the core group of sponsors of the resolutions on the right to adequate housing and the right to social security. Namibia is also a strong proponent of abolishing the death penalty and has co-sponsored several thematic resolutions which cover areas of concern, such as the rights of women and children, among others.
3. Namibia is a State party to seven of the nine core human rights instruments and the eight fundamental conventions of the International Labour Organization, and a party to three of the regional instruments of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. Namibia is currently up to date with most of its reporting obligations on all instruments ratified by Namibia, and periodic reports on the next reports due are completed and ready for approval by Cabinet before submission to the treaty body committees.
4. Namibia has always cooperated with special procedure mechanisms of the Council, despite the fact that it has no standing invitation to those mechanisms. To date, Namibia has had four visits from special procedures mandate holders, and is due to receive the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples in February 2020 and pledges its full support for the execution of that visit.
5. Namibia has accepted 191 of the 219 recommendations received during its last universal periodic review, in 2016. It has had constructive interactions with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the implementation of these recommendations and conducted several workshops on clustering and tracking implementation of the recommendations as recently as August 2018. Namibia has indicated its willingness to be selected as a pilot implementer of the recently developed software by the Office of the High Commissioner for this purpose and is looking forward to that development. Namibia also actively participates during the sessions of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review and, during its previous term on the Council, Namibia always constructively intervened during the reviews of all States under review.
6. The Namibian Cabinet has approved the establishment of a formal interministerial committee on human rights and international humanitarian law, which is two-tiered and consists of technical officials as well as executive directors of all

offices, ministries and agencies as listed. This committee is responsible for the compilation of State reports and is chaired by the Ministry of Justice.

Voluntary pledges and commitments

7. Namibia will continue to uphold the effective working of the Human Rights Council in the execution of its mandate and, therefore, pledges to continue working with other Member States to cultivate a more positive and constructive environment in the Council, where countries can share best experiences and learn from one another.

8. Namibia is committed to contributing positively towards the streamlining of the work of the Human Rights Council and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, with specific emphasis on the programme of work and equal geographical representation.

9. Namibia, as a strong proponent of the universal periodic review since its inception in 2006, will continue to support the most successful mechanism of the Council, being the universal periodic review. Namibia values the distinct universal and peer review nature of this mechanism, which has proven to be a very effective one, supported by most and participated in by all members of the United Nations thus far. This peer review mechanism is the most conducive platform for States to raise human rights issues among each other.

10. Namibia will continue its strong engagement in the Third Committee of the General Assembly, the only United Nations body with universal membership responsible for addressing human rights issues, in order to promote the work of the Council.

11. Namibia firmly believes in the role of civil society in holding Governments accountable, ensuring good governance and promoting all human rights, and will, therefore, continue to support the work of non-governmental and civil society organizations at both the State and international levels.

To advance all human rights

12. Namibia recognizes the importance of promoting and protecting all fundamental human rights, including civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development, in order to realize the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

(a) Right to development

13. Namibia firmly supports all initiatives to make the right to development a reality. This right places people at the centre of the development process and is, therefore, essential to ensure that no one is left behind in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The promotion of this right is essential for poverty eradication in developing countries and Namibia pledges to partner with those who acknowledge this right and to work with others to eliminate any adverse impressions or connotations to this right.

(b) Right to food

14. Namibia will continue to support international action to end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture and thereby contribute towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 2 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

(c) Right to education

15. Namibia firmly believes that education is essential for the realization of all Sustainable Development Goals. As a strong proponent of the right to education, Namibia has implemented free primary and secondary education in all State/public schools. Namibia will continue to support international efforts aimed at ensuring equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal 4 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

(d) Human rights and climate change

16. As a country that is currently experiencing one of the worst droughts in recent years, Namibia fully appreciates the impact of climate change and global warming on the enjoyment of all human rights. Namibia will, therefore, continue to support all international efforts aimed at addressing the global effects of climate change on the enjoyment of human rights around the world in a manner that emphasizes climate justice and equity. Namibia will also continue to promote the right to a healthy environment as all human beings depend on a safe, clean and sustainable environment, which is essential for the full enjoyment of a wide range of human rights, including the rights to life, health, food, water and sanitation.

(e) Right to health

17. The Government of Namibia continues to prioritize the provision of health and social services to all Namibians, ensuring equity of access to health-care services for all, with special provisions for those most vulnerable, such as the rural poor, women, children and the elderly. As a country, Namibia prides itself for having made good progress in reducing HIV and AIDS infection rates; improvement in access to treatment; and an increase in life expectancy. Namibia is committed to international efforts to fight communicable and non-communicable diseases and will continue to support national and international efforts to combat malaria, tuberculosis and HIV and AIDS.

(f) Rights and welfare of children

18. Namibia continues to place great emphasis on the rights and welfare of children. To this effect, Parliament promulgated the Child Care and Protection Act in 2015, which deals with aspects of juvenile justice, adoption and protection from harmful cultural practices, to mention but a few. The first Children's Advocate in Namibia was also appointed in the Office of the Ombudsman. Namibia will continue to support international efforts aimed at consolidating awareness, understanding and the actual realization of children's rights globally.

(g) Combating discrimination and gender-based violence

19. Over the course of the Millennium Development Goals period and the period transiting into the Sustainable Development Goals to date, Namibia has performed well with respect to gender equity and equality in the spheres of education, political representation and land rights, including policy and legislation. Women's access to economic and productive resources has improved since independence. Namibia, therefore, pledges to play a full role in all international efforts to combat all forms of discrimination and to promote gender equality.

20. Namibia will also continue to play its part in ensuring that women play a greater role in peace processes. In an effort to strengthen regional and international innovation to advance the implementation of the women and peace and security

agenda, the Republic of Namibia, as the initiator of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and an active international and regional stakeholder, will establish an International Women's Peace Centre, which will coincide with the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) in 2020. The Peace Centre is intended to become an institute of excellence for more mediation, enhance new conceptual thinking and develop applicable frameworks to measure women's influence, beyond numeric participation and representation in peace processes, to support and ensure women's contributions within Namibia, Southern Africa, Africa and globally, to advance women, representing more than half of the global population, and to ensure that they are given adequate influence to contribute to humanity's fate.

(h) Strengthening the human rights treaty body system

21. Namibia firmly believes that the treaty monitoring bodies are central to the functioning of the international human rights protection system and will, therefore, continue to work with Member States and other stakeholders to help strengthen the treaty bodies.

(i) To uphold and strengthen human rights at the national level

22. Namibia will continue to strengthen existing national mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights, as well as complying with its obligations under the various international human rights treaties it has ratified.

23. Namibia will also continue to fully cooperate with the human rights treaty bodies, including the special procedures, by responding promptly and substantively to all their communications and by facilitating their requests for country visits.

Conclusion

24. Given its previous experience on the Council and commitment to promote fundamental human rights and freedoms globally, Namibia believes that it would make a positive contribution to the work of the Council, which is essential for realizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.