

**Candidacy of the Russian Federation for election
to the United Nations Human Rights Council for 2017-2019
(Aide-Memoire)**

The Russian Federation was actively involved in the creation of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) and significantly contributed to the review of its work and status conducted after the first five years of the Council's work.

During the three terms of its membership in the HRC (2006-2009, 2009-2012, and 2013–2016) and a year-long observer status (2013), Russia has been steadily working to make the Council an efficient and effective tool for promoting and protecting human rights throughout the world. The Russian Federation intends to take further steps to incorporate in the work of the Council the fundamental principles of universality, non-selectivity, objectivity, equal treatment of all categories of human rights and respect for diversity of cultures and civilizations. Russia's decision to present its candidacy for the HRC election for the term 2017–2019 is based on the intent to continue the pursuit of a fair, mutually respectful and equal dialogue on ensuring human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Russian Federation firmly adheres to such fundamental values as freedom, justice, life, well-being and human dignity, family traditions, political equality, integrity of the court system, responsibility of leadership, social guarantees, eradicating poverty and combating corruption, as well as to its international commitments in the field of human rights. We continue to pursue a policy of further consolidation of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Our efforts at the domestic level are aimed particularly at the following:

- realization of social guarantees provided for by the Constitution;
- ensuring broad participation of citizens, political parties and other social institutions in the formation of state policy, including decision-making;
- improving the legal system and promoting integrity of the court system in order to combat corruption and ensure the rule of law;
- further expanding the economic and entrepreneurial freedom;
- supporting national traditions and cultures of the peoples of Russia as a principal factor in ensuring social accord, unity of the nation and stable development of the country.

At the international level, we see our tasks as follows:

- to seek worldwide respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms through constructive international dialogue on the basis of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, making use of other instruments, including at the regional level, in the human rights field, rejecting double standards, and respecting the national and historical peculiarities of each State in the process of democratic transformations without imposing borrowed value systems;
- to promote the strengthening of international legality, which consists of the States' compliance with their national constitutions and adherence to international agreements and treaties;
- to strongly oppose manifestations of racism, xenophobia, aggressive nationalism, anti-Semitism, religious and ethnic intolerance, neo-Nazism and other radical ideologies;
- to develop, inter alia, by utilizing resources, potential and initiatives of the civil society, the institutions in the sphere of public diplomacy, international cultural and humanitarian cooperation as a means of establishing a dialogue among civilizations, achieving harmony and ensuring mutual understanding among peoples while paying special attention to interreligious dialogue;
- to enhance cooperation with international and non-governmental human rights organizations in order to strengthen the universal norms of human rights protection, coupling them with the responsibility of individuals for their actions, primarily in terms of preventing insult of religious feelings of believers, to foster mutual understanding and respect, and to consolidate moral principles in the human rights dialogue;
- to expand participation in international human rights conventions and treaties, and bring the legislation of the Russian Federation in line with them.

The Russian Federation is convinced that the standards and principles embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenants on human rights must be consistently implemented throughout the world. In order to attain this objective, all actors of international relations need to focus their efforts on strengthening dialogue and cooperation and engaging parties concerned in a collective process of elaborating and adopting decisions. The United Nations, particularly the Human Rights Council, should become the driving force of this process.

The Russian Federation proposed, organized and funded a high-level thematic discussion at the 31st session of the UN Human Rights Council, dedicated to the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the International Covenants on human rights. This event was our country's contribution to the strengthening of the international framework for human rights promotion and protection, and emphasized the historical significance of the Covenants as fundamental and universal international human rights instruments. Russia will continue to provide financial and other necessary support to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in holding events dedicated to the anniversary of the adoption of the International Covenants celebrated in Geneva.

The Russian Federation is convinced that Council's activities should promote the development of constructive inter-State cooperation on human rights protection, and consolidation of the international framework to ensure respect for human rights on the basis of justice and equality of rights in accordance with the purposes and principles embodied in the UN Charter. The Russian Federation firmly believes that human rights have a role to play in the rapprochement of different States and groups of States, and also in strengthening the climate of confidence and mutual respect in international relations.

If elected to the Council, Russia will actively work to make it an efficient and effective tool for promoting and protecting human rights throughout the world, and to incorporate in its work the fundamental principles of universality, non-selectivity, objectivity, equal treatment of all categories of human rights and respect for the diversity of cultures and civilizations.

Russia engages constructively with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), making annual contributions of USD two million to its budget. The OHCHR Framework for Cooperation with the Russian Federation continues to be implemented in such areas as the rule of law, promotion of equality and tolerance, and the development of the human rights education system.

Major attention has been placed on collaboration with the system of Special Procedures of the UN Human Rights Council. During its membership in the HRC, Russia has been visited by a number of mandate holders under that system, in particular by the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples, the Special

Representative of the Secretary-General on human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on violence against children and the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights.

We appropriately respond to requests from Special Procedures of the HRC and seek to provide any detailed information that may be relevant to the Special Procedures.

Russia's voluntary pledges to the OHCHR budget include funds earmarked for Special Procedures operational costs.

The Russian Federation is actively collaborating with regional human rights institutions and mechanisms, particularly those within the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and the Council of the Baltic Sea States.

The Russian Federation was twice reviewed under the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process, in 2009 and 2013. Work is currently underway to follow up on the recommendations of the second cycle of the UPR accepted by the Russian side.

Russian leadership is consistently working on enhancing its law enforcement, judiciary and penitentiary systems, countering corruption and expanding the dialogue between authorities and the civil society. Russia attaches great significance to the development and strengthening of national human rights institutions – the Presidential Council for Civil Society and Human Rights and the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation viewed as important tools for enhancing State policy in the human rights sphere as well as for ensuring governmental protection of people's rights and freedoms. Russia allocates four billion rubles from its national budget for social and human rights programs led by civil society organizations.

Russia is placing emphasis on fulfilling its international commitments with regard to economic, social and cultural rights, including in times of economic and financial crises. A set of measures has been carried out to facilitate employment and vocational training for different categories of unemployed population and those at risk of dismissal.

Measures continue to be taken in order to improve the national legislation and law enforcement practices on advancement of women and provide governmental support to family, maternity, parenting and children. Protection of children's rights is a national policy priority, as reflected in the National Children's Strategy for 2012–2017.

Other important objectives include reducing poverty among families with children, ensuring guaranteed minimum income and providing additional governmental support to families with disabled children. Providing care services to people with disabilities and the elderly has always been an integral part of our national social policy aiming to make sure they enjoy equal opportunities in the exercise of their rights and freedoms on a par with other citizens. We hope to draw upon our positive experience in this area in our work at the HRC.

The Russian Government has taken a set of measures to strengthen the legal framework for the protection of indigenous peoples' rights, enhancement of law enforcement practices, elaboration of effective economic mechanisms in this field, development of education for indigenous peoples and preservation of their cultural identities and heritage. A considerable number of international, nationwide and regional activities have been held.

Our country pays much attention to sport as a major promoter of human rights. The unifying power of sport and the affinity between human rights values and ideals and those of the Olympic Movement could and should be widely used to advance universally recognized human rights standards. We would continue to promote this agenda at the HRC, including the issue of creating a barrier-free environment for people with disabilities.

Russia is a party to seven key international human rights treaties: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Our country submits periodic reports on the implementation of the provisions of the above instruments to the relevant human rights treaty bodies in a timely manner.

Thus, in 2015, the Human Rights Committee reviewed the seventh periodic report of the Russian Federation on the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women reviewed the eighth periodic report of the Russian Federation on its implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. In 2016, Russia will submit its periodic reports to the Committee on

the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Committee against Torture.

In view of the above, we expect that our partners in the UN General Assembly will support the candidacy of the Russian Federation for re-election to the United Nations Human Rights Council for the term 2017–2019.