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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 31 May 2023 from the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the United Nations has the honour to refer to the candidature of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Human Rights Council for the term 2024–2026, at the elections to be held in October 2023 in New York.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution [60/251](#), the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands 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 Kingdom of the Netherlands (see annex).

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands 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 117 (c) of the preliminary list.

* [A/78/50](#).



Annex to the note verbale dated 31 May 2023 from the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Candidature of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Human Rights Council, 2024–2026

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

1. The Kingdom of the Netherlands is proud to present its candidacy to become a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council for the term 2024–2026.
2. The Kingdom of the Netherlands is a staunch supporter of the Human Rights Council, which plays a crucial role in defending human rights around the world. It is the United Nations forum dedicated to multilateral cooperation for the purpose of securing human rights for all people, everywhere.
3. This year in particular, when we will celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Kingdom of the Netherlands aims to underscore the importance of such a forum as a beacon for the promotion and protection of all human rights.
4. The Kingdom of the Netherlands is a firm believer in and supporter of the fundamental, universal and intrinsic value of all human rights, civil and political, economic, social and cultural rights, for every individual, worldwide. The Kingdom of the Netherlands strongly believes that human rights are the foundation of human dignity, liberty and open, free societies around the world. All its efforts in this regard are rooted in its firm conviction that the observance of human rights will lead to more stable, prosperous and resilient societies worldwide.
5. As a member of the Human Rights Council, the Kingdom of the Netherlands will be your partner in promoting and protecting human rights. The Kingdom of the Netherlands is willing to cooperate with all stakeholders through equal partnerships and constructive dialogue, to uphold the principles of equality and non-discrimination for all.
6. Membership in the Human Rights Council serves as a constant reminder of the need to advance universal human rights for all, both at home and abroad.
7. Its bid to join the Human Rights Council reflects the long-standing, ongoing commitment of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the rules-based international order.
8. The Kingdom of the Netherlands is pleased to publish this pledge and commitments in line with General Assembly resolution [60/251](#).
9. The Kingdom of the Netherlands: your partner to promote and protect human rights.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands – human rights at home

10. The Kingdom of the Netherlands pledges to uphold the indivisibility, interdependence and universality of human rights in its national policies and interventions.
11. Acknowledging that no country, including itself, has a perfect human rights track record, the Kingdom of the Netherlands is continuously working to ensure that national laws and policies comply with the most stringent human rights standards and

strives to continuously improve and galvanize its independent institutions and democratic processes.

12. As an important example, the Kingdom of the Netherlands pledges to fight discrimination and racism, both through policy and through the implementation of that policy. In that regard, in 2021 the Kingdom of the Netherlands appointed the National Coordinator against Racism and Discrimination, who launched a national programme against discrimination and racism in 2022.

13. In this vein, the Kingdom of the Netherlands pledges to continue to work on the universal periodic review process and on the implementation of the universal periodic review recommendations in a spirit of self-reflection and with a view to improving the implementation of human rights.

14. The Kingdom of the Netherlands will continue to actively engage with the national human rights institution, the College voor de Rechten van de Mens, and civil society organizations, to discuss human rights issues and challenges in the Netherlands.

15. Importantly, the Kingdom of the Netherlands views the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals before 2030 as an integral part of its efforts to protect and strengthen human rights and has twice (2017, 2022) participated in the voluntary national review of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals within the framework of the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands as a member of the Human Rights Council

16. The Kingdom of the Netherlands underscores the responsibility of members elected to the Human Rights Council to meet the highest standards for promoting and protecting human rights, to respect the independence of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and to fully cooperate with the Council and its mechanisms.

17. The Kingdom of the Netherlands pledges to invest in a responsive, effective, efficient and inclusive Human Rights Council. The Kingdom of the Netherlands will proactively reflect on the working methods of the Human Rights Council and its efficiency and ability to implement meaningful reforms.

18. The Kingdom of the Netherlands will continue to play a leading role, together with its partners, in interregional discussions on strengthening the Human Rights Council. Broadening and deepening partnerships and dialogue with all countries that contribute to the Human Rights Council's work will be a key feature of its membership.

19. The Kingdom of the Netherlands pledges to promote universal participation and diversity in the Human Rights Council. In particular, the Kingdom of the Netherlands encourages countries that have not previously sat on the Human Rights Council to consider a bid for membership.

20. The Kingdom of the Netherlands continues to work together with the Membership Contact Group to ensure that small island developing States can participate in the Human Rights Council. Therefore the Kingdom of the Netherlands pledges to continue its contribution to the OHCHR trust fund for small island developing States.

21. The Kingdom of the Netherlands will be independent, open to criticism and committed to open dialogue. Building mutual understanding with respect to the kind of challenges faced in pursuing the highest human rights standards at home and abroad is key to promote cooperation and therefore essential for the effectiveness of the Human Rights Council.

22. The Kingdom of the Netherlands pledges to be a bridge-builder to all non-governmental stakeholders, to work closely with civil society organizations, including human rights defenders, and to promote participation of civil society and individual human rights defenders within the Human Rights Council.
23. The Kingdom of the Netherlands continues its efforts to support meaningful youth participation at the Human Rights Council through cooperation and consultation with youth organizations and youth representatives.
24. The Kingdom of the Netherlands pledges to respect, promote and defend the independence of the High Commissioner and the Office at all times and to cooperate fully with OHCHR, the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms, and to continue paying its substantial annual voluntary contribution to OHCHR.
25. The Kingdom of the Netherlands pledges to cooperate fully with the United Nations human rights treaty body system and protect and promote its independence.
26. The Kingdom of the Netherlands pledges to continue to extend a standing invitation to all mandate holders falling under special procedures of the Human Rights Council and to facilitate country visit requests as effectively as possible and to respond in a timely manner to special procedures communications and urgent appeals.
27. The Kingdom of the Netherlands reaffirms its continued support to the universal periodic review mechanism and will continue to participate actively in all universal periodic review sessions. The Kingdom of the Netherlands underscores the importance of the universal periodic review as a truly egalitarian and transparent review process, which has proven an invaluable tool for promoting and protecting human rights. The Kingdom of the Netherlands pledges to make at least two measurable and implementable recommendations to each State under review.
28. The Kingdom of the Netherlands pledges to continue its efforts to promote human rights through all appropriate multilateral forums and United Nations specialized agencies, including international financial institutions, to which the Kingdom of the Netherlands is a leading donor.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands – your partner to promote and protect human rights

29. Promoting and protecting human rights are the cornerstone of Dutch foreign policy.
30. The Kingdom of the Netherlands pursues a feminist foreign policy and mainstreams human rights in policy and implementation. The Kingdom of the Netherlands is investing in global opportunity through poverty reduction and pursuing sustainable, inclusive growth and climate action worldwide, contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and to further a human rights-based approach to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
31. The Kingdom of the Netherlands will advance the position of women and girls in all their diversity.
32. The Kingdom of the Netherlands will apply a gender perspective and promote women's rights and gender equality at all times.
33. The Kingdom of the Netherlands pledges to advance the inclusion and interests of future generations.
34. The Kingdom of the Netherlands pledges to continue the promotion of universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights.

35. The Kingdom of the Netherlands pledges zero tolerance for sexual and gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, and sexual harassment.
36. The Kingdom of the Netherlands pledges to continue to engage constructively with all national and international human rights monitoring systems, to honour its international obligations and uphold its respect for human rights.
37. The Kingdom of the Netherlands will advance the right to freedom of expression, both online and offline. The Kingdom of the Netherlands will promote press freedom worldwide and condemn violence against and intimidation of journalists and media workers. The Kingdom of the Netherlands will work to increase the safety of journalists and media workers and fight impunity for crimes against journalists worldwide. The Kingdom of the Netherlands continues to support the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression and is a committed member of the Media Freedom Coalition and Freedom Online Coalition.
38. The Kingdom of the Netherlands will promote the right to freedom of religion and belief, including the freedom to change one's religion and the right not to believe, and will protect religious minorities and work together with faith-based organizations, also in its foreign and development policies. The Kingdom of the Netherlands continues to support the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief. Furthermore, the Kingdom of the Netherlands is a committed member of the International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance.
39. The Kingdom of the Netherlands will advance the capacity of the Human Rights Council to promote and protect equal rights for LGBTIQ+ persons. The Kingdom of the Netherlands pledges to continue its support for the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Furthermore, the Kingdom of the Netherlands is a committed member of the Equal Rights Coalition.
40. The Kingdom of the Netherlands will strive to create a safe and enabling environment for civil society. The Kingdom of the Netherlands pledges to respond to and prevent attacks and reprisals on or intimidation of human rights defenders and to threats to civil society space, both offline and online. Efforts will focus particularly on the most vulnerable groups of human rights defenders and their intersecting vulnerabilities, such as women human rights defenders, LGBTIQ+ human rights defenders and environmental human rights defenders. The Kingdom of the Netherlands continues its support for the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders and the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association.
41. The Kingdom of the Netherlands continues to actively pursue its bilateral development cooperation and human rights policies, which emphasize dialogue, partnership and technical cooperation through the exchange of experiences, financial assistance and the implementation of a rights-based approach. Its specialized ambassadors and special envoys travel the world in support of these goals.
42. The Kingdom of the Netherlands pledges to contribute to a more responsive and credible Human Rights Council by strengthening its ability to respond to human rights violations on a national and local level.
43. The Kingdom of the Netherlands will remind the Council of its mandate to address human rights violations, including gross and systematic violations. In determining whether and how the Council should respond to a situation of concern, the Kingdom of the Netherlands pledges to apply objective and human rights-based criteria, and to take leadership and responsibility and shoulder its responsibility in initiating when a situation meets those criteria.

44. The Kingdom of the Netherlands pledges to actively engage in Human Rights Council efforts aimed at preventing human right violations, and will initiate or encourage early action in the Human Rights Council on country situations and broad human rights concerns that could lead to human rights crises.
 45. The Kingdom of the Netherlands pledges to strengthen accountability for perpetrators of human rights violations, war crimes and aggression and to enhance access to remedy and justice for their victims.
 46. The Kingdom of the Netherlands pledges to remain committed to combating impunity for the most serious crimes under international law, by means of national or international criminal proceedings.
 47. The Kingdom of the Netherlands pledges to promote international tribunals and the authority and universality of the International Criminal Court and will continue to call upon the Security Council to refer cases to the International Criminal Court as appropriate.
 48. Where necessary, the Kingdom of the Netherlands supports ad hoc mechanisms to collect, preserve and analyse evidence of human rights violations and to prepare files to facilitate and expedite fair and independent criminal proceedings.
 49. The Kingdom of the Netherlands: your partner to promote and protect human rights.
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