



# General Assembly

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## Sixty-eighth session

Agenda item 115 (c)

### **Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of fourteen members of the Human Rights Council**

## **Note verbale dated 28 October 2013 from the Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly**

The Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations presents its compliments to the President of the General Assembly and has the honour to state that France has decided to submit its candidature for the elections to the Human Rights Council (2014-2016) to be held on 12 November 2013, during the sixty-eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly, in New York.

Human rights are part of the founding values of the French Republic and a priority of its foreign policy. Through its action at the bilateral level and in multilateral forums, France aims to promote the universality of human rights and to combat their violations throughout the world.

France is a State party to the main international human rights instruments and recognizes the competence of the treaty bodies to consider individual complaints. This ongoing commitment of France has been recognized by the United Nations General Assembly, which allowed it to serve two terms on the Human Rights Council, between 2006 and 2011. Based on this record and on these commitments, France intends in the Human Rights Council to work for the promotion of the highest standards of protection of human rights.

The Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations would be grateful if the attached aide-memoire from France could be circulated to all Permanent Missions to the United Nations (see annex).



**Annex to the note verbale dated 28 October 2013 from the Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly**

**Candidature of France to the Human Rights Council (2014-2016)**

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

1. Human rights are part of the founding values of the French Republic and of its foreign policy.
2. With the goal of promoting the highest standards of protection of human rights, France is submitting its candidature for the Human Rights Council.

**I. France's action in the Human Rights Council**

3. France pursues a policy of active engagement in the Human Rights Council. It aims to ensure that the human rights mechanisms are working and opposes any questioning of the universality of human rights.
4. It has pledged itself to the creation of a Human Rights Council capable of reacting effectively to all violations of human rights in the world. It confirmed this pledge by actively contributing to work to strengthen the Council. France also pledges to share with other States its experience with the Universal Periodic Review and to actively promote this mechanism.
5. Each year France sponsors or co-sponsors resolutions in the Human Rights Council. It was thus the initiator of several special procedures of the Council: the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights. More recently, it supported the adoption by the Council of guiding principles on extreme poverty and human rights.
6. Together with its European partners, France is also the originator of resolutions drawing the attention of the international community to the most critical human rights situations. It played a decisive role in the convening of several special sessions.
7. As it did during its previous terms of membership on the Human Rights Council, France pledges to promote dialogue and cooperation among all the regional and political groups. It will continue to defend the independence of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and to contribute to the enhancement of the special procedures.

**II. Human rights at the heart of French diplomacy**

8. France is strongly committed to the promotion of all human rights, which are universal, indissociable, interdependent and closely linked.

**Women's rights**

9. France is mobilizing to end violence and discrimination against women.

10. It contributed to the adoption of the Security Council resolutions on women and peace and security and is working to achieve their implementation.

11. In 2010, France adopted a national action plan for the implementation of those resolutions. It supports the activities of the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice, which it helped to establish. France supports the work of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), with which it is cooperating in several activities.

### **Children's rights**

12. France is in the vanguard of the campaign against the recruitment and use of child soldiers.

13. It was behind the convening of the international conference on children associated with armed forces or armed groups, "Free Children from War", organized jointly with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), which led to the adoption of the Guiding Principles on children associated with armed forces or armed groups (Paris Principles) and the Paris Commitments. A forum to follow up the Paris Commitments is held each year in order to sustain and strengthen the political commitment of States.

14. So far, over 100 States have endorsed these Commitments.

### **Civil and political rights**

15. France has a special commitment to freedom of opinion and expression, including on the Internet. In particular, it was behind the adoption of Security Council resolution [1738 \(2006\)](#) on protection of journalists in armed conflicts and is working for its effective implementation. It also supported the resolution on the safety of journalists adopted in the Human Rights Council.

16. It promotes freedom of assembly and peaceful demonstration, as well as freedom of religion or belief. France contributed to the adoption of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, which was signed in Paris in February 2007 and entered into force in December 2010. It has since been working to promote its universalization.

17. It has submitted resolutions on arbitrary detention to the Human Rights Council.

### **Economic, social and cultural rights**

18. France is working for the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals and for equitable and monitored globalization.

19. It is especially involved in the elimination of extreme poverty, recognition and promotion of the right to clean water and sanitation, and promotion of the right to education and of the right to health.

20. In connection with corporate social responsibility, it actively supported the adoption by the Human Rights Council of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

#### **International criminal justice and transitional justice**

21. France is working to achieve universality for the Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court and is in favour of the right to the truth and the right to reparation for victims of human rights violations.

22. It has pledged to support the work of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence.

#### **Efforts to combat racial discrimination and xenophobia**

23. France is firmly committed to eliminating all forms of discrimination and participates actively in all the mechanisms of the Human Rights Council designed to combat racism and xenophobia.

#### **Rights of the most vulnerable persons**

24. France is working to ensure that the rights of these persons are respected, within the framework of international human rights law and within the framework of international humanitarian law. Promotion of the protection of civilians in armed conflicts is a top priority for France.

25. France is striving to promote an ongoing dialogue with non-governmental organizations and national institutions concerned with the protection of human rights.

### **III. France as a candidate for membership in the Human Rights Council**

26. France pledges:

- To ensure the promotion and protection of all human rights and to play a key role in efforts to combat all forms of discrimination.
- To support the progressive attainment of the right to education, the right to health, the right to food, and the right to water and sanitation and to promote the Guiding Principles on extreme poverty and human rights.
- To intensify international mobilization in support of respect for the rights of women, elimination of all types of violence against women and of discrimination against them, and to work for effective implementation of the resolutions on women and peace and security.
- To continue its work to promote children's rights and to oppose the use of children in armed conflicts.
- To promote freedom of opinion and expression and to support the actions of the champions of human rights and of civil society, particularly in the context of peaceful demonstrations.
- To encourage States to oppose arbitrary detentions, torture and enforced disappearances and to continue to work for universal ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.
- To redouble efforts to end impunity and to promote the right to the truth and justice, particularly through support for international criminal justice.

- To promote the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and to support their implementation.
  - To continue its active and constructive participation in all organs and mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights, including the special procedures, treaty bodies and monitoring or fact-finding arrangements concerning the situation of human rights in the world.
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