



General Assembly

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Human Rights Council

Twenty-fourth session

Agenda item 3

Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council*

24/8.

Equal political participation

The Human Rights Council,

Guided by the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and relevant international human rights treaties, in particular the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,

Recalling all relevant General Assembly and Human Rights Council resolutions on political participation,

Reaffirming that every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, without any of the distinctions stipulated in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and without unreasonable restrictions, to take part in the conduct of political and public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives, and to have access, on general terms of equality, to public service in his or her country,

Reaffirming also that the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government and that every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, without any of the distinctions stipulated in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and without unreasonable restrictions, to vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors,

Reaffirming further that no distinctions are permitted among citizens in the enjoyment of the right to participate in the conduct of political and public affairs on the grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, or on the basis of disability,

* The resolutions and decisions adopted by the Human Rights Council will be contained in the report of the Council on its twenty-fourth session (A/HRC/24/2), Part One.

Emphasizing the critical importance of equal political participation for democracy, the rule of law, social inclusion and economic development, and advancing gender equality, as well as for the realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Reaffirming that the active participation of women, on equal terms with men, at all levels of decision-making, is essential to the achievement of equality, sustainable development, peace and democracy,

Recognizing that the rights of everyone to freedom of expression, to peaceful assembly and to freedom of association are among the essential conditions for equal political participation and must be protected,

Recognizing also the need to intensify efforts to eliminate barriers in law and in practice and to actively facilitate equal political participation,

Welcoming the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the special procedures, the treaty bodies and other relevant human rights mechanisms on identifying and addressing obstacles to equal political participation,

1. *Expresses concern* that, despite the progress made in achieving equal political participation worldwide, many people continue to face obstacles, including discrimination, in the enjoyment of their right to participate in political and public affairs of their countries;

2. *Recognizes* that women, persons belonging to marginalized groups or to minorities, and persons in vulnerable situations are among the most affected by discrimination in political participation;

3. *Reaffirms* the obligation of States to take all appropriate measures to ensure that every citizen has an effective right and opportunity to participate in political and public affairs on an equal basis;

4. *Urges* all States to ensure the full and effective participation of all citizens in political and public affairs on an equal basis, including by, inter alia:

(a) Complying fully with their international human rights obligations and commitments with regard to equal political participation;

(b) Taking all necessary measures to eliminate laws, regulations and practices that, directly or indirectly, discriminate against citizens in their right to political participation on the grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, or on the basis of disability;

(c) Ensuring that no one's right to participate in political and public affairs of his or her country is suspended or conditioned, except on objective and reasonable grounds which are duly established by law and in conformity with international law;

(d) Taking proactive measures to eliminate all barriers in law and in practice that prevent or hinder citizens, in particular women, persons belonging to marginalized groups or minorities, and persons in vulnerable situations, from fully and effectively participating in political and public affairs;

(e) Taking appropriate measures to publicly encourage and promote the importance of equal political participation of all citizens, in particular women, persons belonging to marginalized groups or to minorities, and persons in vulnerable situations;

(f) Ensuring the right of everyone to freedom of expression, to peaceful assembly and to freedom of association, and facilitating equal and effective access to information, media and communication technologies in order to enable pluralistic debates fostering equal political participation;

(g) Providing full and effective access to justice and redress mechanisms to those citizens whose right to participate in political and public affairs has been violated;

5. *Encourages* the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the special procedures, the treaty bodies and other relevant international human rights mechanisms to continue to address, within their respective mandates, the promotion of equal political participation in their work;

6. *Requests* the Office of the High Commissioner to prepare a study on factors that impede equal political participation and on steps to overcome those challenges, while taking into account, inter alia, the relevant work of the special procedures, the treaty bodies and other relevant international human rights mechanisms, and to present the study to the Human Rights Council for consideration at its twenty-seventh session.

*34th meeting
26 September 2013*

[Adopted without a vote.]
