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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 27 September 2021 from the Permanent Mission of the United States to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The United States Mission to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Office of the President of the General Assembly and has the honour to refer to the candidature of the United States to the Human Rights Council for the term 2022–2024 (see annex), at the elections to be held, tentatively, on 14 October 2021 in New York.

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



Annex to the note verbale dated 27 September 2021 from the Permanent Mission of the United States to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Candidature of the United States of America to the Human Rights Council, 2022–2024

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

Pledges and commitments of the United States of America

1. The deep dedication of the United States to championing the values and commitments enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is driven by the founding values of our nation and the conviction that international peace, security, and prosperity are strengthened when human rights and fundamental freedoms are respected and protected. As the United States seeks to advance respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms around the world, we do so cognizant of our own commitment to address challenges and to live up to our ideals and obligations at home.
2. The United States was pleased to participate in the third cycle of the universal periodic review in November 2020. We carefully reviewed the 347 recommendations we received and accepted over 80 per cent of them. We are proud to have worked closely with civil society and Member States during the universal periodic review process. Our responses to these recommendations reflect our continuing endeavour to create, in the words of the United States Constitution, “a more perfect union”.
3. We, therefore, make the following pledges in support of our candidacy to the United Nations Human Rights Council:

Commitment to advancing and supporting human rights in the United Nations system

4. The United States is committed to continuing its efforts in the United Nations system to be a strong advocate for all people around the world who suffer from discrimination, abuse, and oppression, and to be a stalwart defender of courageous individuals across the globe who work, to protect and defend the human rights of every person, often at great personal risk and on behalf of the rights of others.
5. As part of our commitment to the principle of the universality of human rights, the United States is committed to working with our international partners in the spirit of openness, consultation, and respect, and reaffirms that expressions of concern about the human rights situation in any country, including our own, are appropriate matters for international discussion. Furthermore, the United States commits to serving as a fair and reliable partner within the United Nations system. We will work with a broad array of Member States and other stakeholders to ensure that the Human Rights Council and other United Nations entities address the needs of people across the globe. We will always endeavour to work cross-regionally and to be sensitive to different perspectives. We believe that the Human Rights Council, and indeed the United Nations as a whole, is most effective when it values diverse viewpoints, so long as these viewpoints promote respect for the dignity of every individual, their human rights and fundamental freedoms.
6. The United States is committed to continue working with determination for a balanced, credible, and effective United Nations Human Rights Council to advance the purpose and principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In partnership with the international community, we will continue to promote

universality, transparency, and objectivity in all of the Council's endeavours. The United States is proud of its partnerships with numerous countries from every region that seek to increase the Council's credibility, strengthen the Council as an institution, and create mechanisms to promote and protect human rights. During our prior three terms on the Council, we were pleased to see broad support for such important cross-regional initiatives as the creation of two Special Rapporteurs, one on freedom of association and peaceful assembly and another on the human rights situation in Iran; the creation of the Independent Expert on sexual orientation and gender identity; a resolution on women's equal nationality rights; resolutions on the human rights situation in Sri Lanka; the creation of a Working Group on discrimination against women and girls; as well as resolutions focusing on important issues such as child, early, and forced marriage, and female genital mutilation. Similarly, we were pleased that the Council took urgent action to address crisis situations in countries including Belarus, Burundi, the Central African Republic, Iran, Libya, and Syria.

7. The United States looks forward to the opportunity to work with civil society on the implementation of the most recent round of recommendations from the third universal periodic review cycle. As we demonstrated during our extensive consultations with civil society during the first and second cycles of the universal periodic review process, the United States recognizes and supports the vital role and expert views of civil society, human rights defenders, and those who have experienced human rights abuses in the promotion and protection of human rights. We remain committed to promoting the full participation of non-governmental organizations in the work of the United Nations and other international organizations, as evidenced by our active engagement as a member of the United Nations Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations.

8. The United States is committed to continuing its support for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and remains one of its largest donors. In 2020, the United States provided nearly \$28 million to OHCHR and its efforts to promote respect for human rights worldwide, including \$1.15 million to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights and \$8 million to the Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture.

9. The United States is also committed to working with our Congress to continue its support of other United Nations bodies whose work contributes to the promotion of respect for human rights. In 2020, in addition to our assessed contributions to United Nations organizations, the United States contributed voluntary funding to support a range of human rights efforts, such as through the United Nations Democracy Fund (\$3.5 million) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) (\$10 million), among others.

10. The United States is committed to supporting the seventh review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the Secretary General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, which support respect for human rights and the rule of law.

11. The United States remains committed to the promotion and protection of the interests and welfare of indigenous peoples in the work of the United Nations, including through continued attention to indigenous issues at the Human Rights Council, General Assembly, and United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

Commitment to advancing human rights, fundamental freedoms, and human dignity and prosperity internationally

12. The United States is committed to continue supporting States in their implementation of their international human rights obligations, including through

human rights dialogue, exchange of experts, technical and interregional cooperation, and programmatic support of the work of governmental and non-governmental organizations.

13. The United States is committed to continue its efforts to strengthen mechanisms in the international system to advance the rights, protection, and empowerment of women, including through support for UN-Women; the implementation of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) and all subsequent resolutions related to women, peace and security, and all relevant Human Rights Council and General Assembly resolutions related to elimination of all forms of violence against women and women's political participation; the work of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women; and the work of the Inter-American Commission of Women.

14. The United States is committed to continuing to address stigma and discrimination in laws and policies and promote the human rights of persons regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity and is pleased to support the efforts of the United Nations Independent Expert on sexual orientation and gender identity, and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Trans and Intersex (LGBTI) Persons to place greater regional focus on this area as well as the efforts undertaken to include sexual orientation and gender identity in the work of various multilateral bodies.

15. The United States is committed to continuing to promote the human rights of persons with disabilities, including by: working directly with Governments and civil society organizations on relevant laws, regulations, guidelines, and implementing legislation; partnering with private sector allies to make the business case for hiring, promoting, and retaining persons with disabilities; providing grants and technical assistance to organizations to build their capacity to promote non-discrimination, inclusion, individual autonomy, equality of treatment, and accessibility; and serving as a model to other countries just beginning their path toward an inclusive society.

16. The United States is dedicated to countering all forms of racism, xenophobia, and racial and ethnic discrimination domestically and internationally. We welcome the efforts of United Nations entities, such as the special procedures and OHCHR, as well as the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, to address the issue of racism and racial discrimination, including police brutality against racial and ethnic minorities, people of African descent, and the effects of racial discrimination in propagating inequality. The United States is party to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and is committed to seeing the goals of this Convention fully realized and the obligations fully implemented by States parties. Particular emphasis should be placed not only on eliminating any remaining legal barriers to equal rights and opportunities, but also on confronting the reality of continuing and systemic discrimination and inequality within institutions and societies.

17. The United States is committed to continuing its work to advance respect for workers' rights worldwide, including by: working with other Governments, the International Labour Organization, and the International Organization for Migration, among others; promoting the adoption and implementation of policies, regulations, and laws to achieve respect for internationally recognized worker rights and safe workplaces; drawing attention to, condemning, and ending State-sanctioned forced labour; and providing funding for technical assistance projects to combat forced labour and other forms of human trafficking, advance the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining, address workplace discrimination and exploitative working conditions, combat child labour, and build the capacity of worker organizations, employers, and Governments to address labour issues.

18. The United States is committed to promoting the ratification and effective implementation of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children; supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, including by promoting the meaningful involvement of non-governmental organizations and experts with lived experience of human trafficking in expert and treaty body meetings related to implementation of the Convention and Protocol; as well as continuing to advocate a victim-centred, survivor-and trauma-informed, culturally-relevant, gender-responsive, and multi-disciplinary approach to combating all forms of trafficking in persons and to promoting the dignity, human rights, and fundamental freedoms of trafficking victims.

19. The United States is committed to continuing to promote freedom of religion or belief for all individuals, particularly members of minority and vulnerable groups, through dedicated outreach, advocacy, training, and programmatic efforts, and to promote religious tolerance. The United States was pleased to support United Nations Human Rights Council resolution 16/18 (“Combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against, persons based on religion or belief”) and its subsequent resolutions, and played an important role in implementation meetings, such as the Istanbul Process, and related work. The United States works to implement United Nations Human Rights Council resolution 16/18 through a series of dialogues among experts sharing best practices, such as legal frameworks for promoting religious tolerance, enforcing non-discrimination laws, and community engagement, including case studies and outreach exercises.

20. The United States commits to continuing to engage on, and support, economic, social, and cultural rights in terms consistent with human rights instruments we have accepted, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We are committed to expanding opportunity and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms through our support for efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and to continuing to support the fundamental values that support sustainable development, including the protection and promotion of human rights, transparency and the rule of law, inclusive economic growth, the empowerment of women and girls, and access to information, among others. We also commit to continue to support bilateral and multilateral international assistance programmes that bolster food security, education, access to non-discriminatory health care services and programmes, safe drinking water, inclusive economic growth, and other economic and social goods and services.

21. The United States is committed to continuing its leadership role in promoting business and human rights globally through multilateral forums, the National Action Plan on Responsible Business Conduct, and support of and engagement in multi-stakeholder initiatives. The United States continues to work to implement its procurement policies, advocate for greater risk assessments into United States Government contracts to identify those of highest risk, work to build extra protections into those contracts, and encourage the private sector to enhance due diligence in their global supply chains. The United States takes a leading role in promoting accountability, transparency, and engagement on security and human rights through multi-stakeholder initiatives. The United States is a founding member of the Open Government Partnership, the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights Initiative, the International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers’ Association, the Montreux Document Forum, and the Centre for Sport and Human Rights. As part of its commitments in its Open Government Partnership National Action Plan, the United States is working toward implementation of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative domestically.

22. The United States is also committed to the promotion and protection of human rights through regional organizations. Through our membership in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Organization of American States, the United States commits to continuing efforts to advance respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and to strengthening and developing institutions and mechanisms for their protection. The United States strongly supports the work of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights as its largest donor, with \$5 million contributed in 2020, and engages actively in proceedings on individual petitions filed against the United States, in thematic hearings, and with respect to the Commission's thematic and country reports.

23. Recognizing the essential contributions of independent media to promoting the right to freedom of expression, exposing human rights violations and abuses, and promoting accountability and transparency in governance, the United States commits to continuing to champion freedom of expression both online and offline, and to promote a free media and the protection of journalists worldwide. Promoting freedom of expression and combating online censorship and arbitrary and unlawful surveillance are essential components of the United States Government's approach to protecting and promoting respect for human rights. To this end, the United States leads and supports efforts at the Human Rights Council, the United Nations General Assembly, and the Freedom Online Coalition to protect and promote freedom of expression both online and offline.

24. The United States is committed to supporting the work of the Group of Friends on the Responsibility to Protect in advancing effective prevention of genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and ethnic cleansing. We were pleased to see the adoption in 2020 of the resolution on the contribution of the Human Rights Council to the prevention of human rights violations.

Commitment to advancing human rights, fundamental freedoms, and human dignity and prosperity in the United States

25. The United States executive branch is committed to working with the United States Senate to consider the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and International Labour Organization Convention 111, among other treaties.

26. The United States is committed to meeting its human rights treaty obligations and participating in a meaningful dialogue with treaty bodies.

27. The United States is committed to expanding cooperation with the United Nations human rights mechanisms, as well as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and other regional human rights bodies. This will include broader engagement through regular communications with mandate holders, such as formal dialogues, written correspondence, and official visits.

28. The United States is strongly committed to combating discrimination based on race, colour, age, national origin, religion or belief, sex, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity, health status, and disability in various sectors in our society. Certain statutes also protect individuals who are members of language minority group or reside in institutions. We continue to fight the invidious discrimination that still exists in our country through enforcement of myriad federal civil rights statutes, including the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act, the Fair Housing Act, Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act, and in federal policy to advance racial equality and address systematic structural issues, such as through promoting environmental justice.

29. The United States also continues its work to combat all forms of human trafficking. The United States Congress reauthorized and supplemented the Trafficking Victims Protection Act – the cornerstone of comprehensive federal anti-trafficking efforts that has long exemplified bipartisan and legislative-executive cooperation to combat trafficking in persons – through four separate bills in 2017 and 2018 which further strengthen prevention, protection, and prosecution responses to human trafficking and other crimes. The United States recognizes human trafficking as an international peace and security and public health issue requiring a comprehensive response engaging the collaboration of criminal justice, health and social welfare, labour, and education systems and institutions.

30. The United States' commitment to continuing to promote human prosperity and human rights and fundamental freedoms of all persons within the United States also includes protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities through enforcement of legislation such as the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Rehabilitation Act, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

31. The United States commits to addressing systemic racism and the legacy of discrimination in our country. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has exposed and exacerbated many longstanding inequities and reminded us that the pursuit of racial justice and equality demands vigilance, not complacency. We are taking steps to end unequal provisions in housing policy that disproportionately affect persons of colour, and we are extending the duration of the nationwide eviction moratorium during COVID-19. The United States continues to enforce laws that ensure that persons of every race have equal access to housing and credit through various statutes, including the Fair Housing Act and Equal Credit Opportunity Act. We are committed to combating hate crimes, including those committed against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders spurred by the pandemic. Our federal hate crime statutes make it unlawful, among other things, to wilfully cause bodily injury, or to attempt to do so, because of a person's race, colour, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.

32. The United States is dedicated to eliminating racial discrimination and the use of excessive force in policing. The United States Department of Justice has issued guidance stating unequivocally that racial profiling is wrong, and it has prohibited racial profiling in federal law enforcement practices. Our Department of Justice prosecutes individual officers who violate civil rights and investigates police departments suspected of engaging in a pattern or practice of conduct that violates constitutional or federal rights. In resolving these pattern or practice investigations, we also seek to emphasize institutional reforms such as improving systems for supervising officers and holding them accountable for misconduct; ensuring officers have the policy guidance, training, equipment, and other resources necessary for constitutional and effective policing; creating and using data about police activity to identify and correct patterns of police misconduct; and institutionalizing law enforcement agencies' engagement with and accountability to the community.

33. The United States is committed to strengthening Government-to-Government relationships with federally recognized Tribes and furthering United States policy on indigenous issues. We continue to support the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as explained in the "Announcement of U.S. Support for the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples – Initiatives to Promote the Government-to-Government Relationship & Improve the Lives of Indigenous Peoples." While the Declaration is not legally binding or a statement of current international law, it carries considerable moral and political force and complements the Government's ongoing efforts to address historical inequities faced by indigenous communities in the United States.

34. The United States is working to implement an orderly, safe, and humane immigration system that protects the rights of all migrants, and migrant children in particular. We are committed to resetting policies and practices for enforcing immigration laws to align with Administration priorities, including protecting family unity and strengthening the protection of human rights of noncitizens in immigration detention, as well as appropriate use of alternatives to detention. The Biden Administration is working with the United States Congress to develop legislation that would create a potential pathway to citizenship for the millions of non-citizens living in and contributing to our country. The United States has rescinded the zero-tolerance policy and established an Interagency Task Force on the Reunification of Families that will make recommendations on how best to bring affected families back together and provide them the relief, resources, and services they need to heal, as appropriate and consistent with applicable law.
