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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 2021 from the Permanent Mission of Lithuania to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The Permanent Mission of Lithuania to the United Nations has the honour to inform you that the Government of Lithuania has decided to present its candidature to the Human Rights Council for the period 2022–2024 at the elections to be held in October 2021 in New York.

In accordance with paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution [60/251](#), please find attached herewith the voluntary pledges and commitments of Lithuania for the promotion and protection of human rights (see annex). The pledges and commitments set out in the annex to the present note detail the strong and unequivocal dedication of Lithuania to the promotion of multilateralism, effective cooperation and the rule of law and to strengthening the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Permanent Mission of Lithuania to the United Nations would be grateful if the present note and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 118 (d).

* [A/76/50](#).



Annex to the note verbale dated 31 May 2021 from the Permanent Mission of Lithuania to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Candidature of Lithuania to the Human Rights Council, 2022–2024

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

1. The aspiration of Lithuania for membership of the Human Rights Council rests on experience of reforms based on respect for human rights, the human rights policy of the European Union, a foreign policy based on the principles of freedom, democracy, human rights, the rule of law and multilateral decision-making and a close dialogue with civil society. The agenda of freedom and democracy is one of the basic principles of the foreign policy of Lithuania. Lithuania, as a member of the Human Rights Council, will follow the principle of the universality and indivisibility of human rights and continue to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms.
2. Lithuania will pay particular attention to the international human rights agreements and the implementation of the commitments arising from them, actively support and urge other States to cooperate with the United Nations human rights institutions and mechanisms, including special procedures of the Human Rights Council and seek to strengthen them in the future.
3. Lithuania will make use of its experience of membership of the United Nations bodies, first and foremost of the Security Council, the Executive Board of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). It will also draw on the knowledge and experience of Lithuanian experts gained while on the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission and other institutions. By active engagement in the United Nations system, Lithuania will contribute to strengthening the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law as a necessary precondition for ensuring human rights and for managing crises that pose a threat to them.
4. Lithuania will continue to promote multilateralism and effective cooperation in addressing essential issues related to climate change and global health emergencies and the emerging challenges related to human rights, in resolving tasks related to the human rights dimension of global cybersecurity and conflict prevention. Lithuania will be guided by the principles of multilateralism and the rules-based international order.
5. Lithuania actively contributes toward the aims of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which are directly related to the protection of human rights at the national and international levels. Lithuania is convinced that only the sustainable stability of societies and States, as well as the democratic involvement of citizens themselves, can ensure the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
6. Lithuania is active in international development cooperation and, together with partner States, endeavours for democracy promotion, a strong civil society, respect for human rights, good governance and the rule of law. Lithuania emphasizes that development cooperation undoubtedly contributes to upholding the protection of human rights. One of the core principles of the Lithuanian development cooperation policy is a partnership with recipient States, the international donor community, international organizations, financial institutions, local and regional public authorities

and civil society, including non-governmental organizations and private business in the country and abroad.

7. Lithuania pledges to pay special attention to fighting corruption as a violation of human rights and the principle of the rule of law. Lithuania pledges to encourage United Nations institutions and programmes to share good practices seeking to harmonize, and achieve synergy between, the activities carried out by the United Nations in all its pillars: human rights, peace and security, and development cooperation.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic exacerbated the already existing inequalities and produced new ones. The social and economic consequences of the pandemic exert a negative impact on all human rights, democracy and the rule of law, deepen the existing disparities and increase pressure on people in vulnerable situations. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the working methods of all international institutions. At present, it is necessary to monitor and ensure that actions of Governments do not infringe human rights during the pandemic or violate international rules and principles of democracy. Human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as the rule of law, should form the basis of our response to, and strategies for, global building back. Lithuania will seek to ensure that economic difficulties arising from the pandemic do not cause a human rights crisis.

Thematic priorities of candidacy to and membership of the Human Rights Council

8. In formulating the thematic priorities of its membership of the Human Rights Council, Lithuania follows the principle that “No one should be left behind, and no human right ignored”.

Taking into consideration Lithuania’s international expertise and experience in the field of human rights, the priorities of our foreign policy, the human rights policy of the European Union, global developments in the protection of human rights and the provisions of the programme of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, Lithuania as a candidate in the elections to the Human Rights Council will attach particular importance to the protection of human rights defenders, the rights of the child, the rights of persons with disabilities and human rights in conflict areas. In particular:

- Lithuania will endeavour to achieve that human rights defenders and all those who defend freedoms and rights may carry out their activities unimpeded. Lithuania pledges to encourage Governments to fulfil their international commitments to protect and promote human rights and to defend victims of human rights violations and abuses.
- Lithuania pledges to encourage better implementation of the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocols thereto, seeking to achieve that the rights of the child are comprehensively protected and that children are safe in all circumstances of their lives and do not experience violence, bullying or abuse.
- Lithuania will endeavour to achieve the full enjoyment by persons with disabilities of all human rights and freedoms, to ensure respect for their inherent dignity and to create conditions enabling their full social integration.
- Given that human rights are most severely violated during times of armed conflict, Lithuania will endeavour not only to address existing violations of human rights in a timely manner, but also to support the prevention of such conflicts, in close cooperation with human rights defenders.

9. Lithuania pledges to continue its activities in defending the rights of women and girls, freedom of expression, including the safety of journalists, freedom of peaceful assembly and association and freedom of religion and belief.

Being a non-permanent member of the Security Council in 2014 and 2015, Lithuania placed particular emphasis on the contribution of women to maintaining peace and security and the protection of children and spoke firmly in favour of providing protection to civilians in armed conflict, the protection of journalists and the fight against impunity for the crimes committed against journalists. This was reflected in Council resolution [2222 \(2015\)](#) on the protection of civilians and journalists in armed conflict, initiated by Lithuania and adopted by consensus. These objectives will remain a priority during Lithuania's membership of the Human Rights Council.

10. Lithuania will actively respond to emerging threats to human rights in the areas of digitalization, data protection, artificial intelligence, climate change, global health emergencies, migration and other areas. We will engage with other States in looking for joint solutions to overcome these challenges.

11. Lithuania also undertakes to further improve the human rights situation in the country. In 2018, a national human rights institution was accredited in Lithuania. The programme of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania for the period 2021–2024 envisages measures for ensuring political, economic, social, civil and cultural rights, based on the principle of “no one left behind”. We will continue to cherish the values of human rights and dignity, taking into consideration the expectations of every individual and making appropriate decisions. A lot of attention will be given to progress on the implementation of the recommendations addressed to Lithuania in the context of the universal periodic review of the Human Rights Council and other United Nations human rights protection mechanisms. Another assessment of the human rights situation in Lithuania under the universal periodic review process is planned for 2022.

Commitments with regard to the working methods of the Human Rights Council

12. Lithuania will pursue the mainstreaming and deeper integration of human rights into all areas of work of the United Nations and will actively promote and defend the rules-based international order, including the protection of human rights. We will contribute to strengthening the efficiency of the Human Rights Council, underlining that coherence of actions in Geneva and New York is the responsibility of the States Members of the United Nations.

13. Making use of the existing instruments to respond to human rights crises, we will strive for a more effective and efficient response of the Human Rights Council to the emerging threats to human rights and fundamental freedoms in the world, the deteriorating security situation, the worsening situation of the media and the restrictions on the civil society space and activities of the human rights defenders all over the world.

14. Lithuania pledges to support the activities and mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and her Office. Lithuania will cooperate with, and seek to strengthen, the United Nations human rights special procedures and other mechanisms of the Human Rights Council, respecting their independence, and will encourage all Member States to cooperate with them closely and ensure their adequate funding.

15. Lithuania will endeavour to strengthen the contribution of the Human Rights Council to the prevention of human rights violations as an indispensable element in avoiding violations of human rights and international conflicts.

16. Lithuania pledges to cooperate with non-governmental organizations actively on the issues of human rights and to encourage a regular dialogue of Governments and the Human Rights Council with civil society and human rights defenders, providing them with the possibility to become engaged more actively in its activities.

17. Lithuania pledges to cooperate in an open and transparent manner with all members of the Human Rights Council. Seeking to fully implement the mandate of the Human Rights Council, Lithuania will encourage the cooperation of States from all regions on issues related to human rights.
