



# General Assembly

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## Seventy-seventh session

Item 118 (c) of the provisional agenda\*

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

### **Note verbale dated 3 August 2022 from the Permanent Mission of Costa Rica to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly**

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Costa Rica to the United Nations has the honour to refer to the candidature of the Republic of Costa Rica to the Human Rights Council for the term 2023–25, at the elections to be held during the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly in New York, in October 2022.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution [60/251](#), the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Costa Rica to the United Nations has the further honour to transmit herewith the voluntary pledges and commitments reaffirming the commitment of Costa Rica with the promotion and protection of human rights.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Costa Rica 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 item 118 (c) of the provisional agenda.

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\* [A/77/150](#).



**Annex to the note verbale dated 3 August 2022 from the  
Permanent Mission of Costa Rica to the United Nations addressed  
to the President of the General Assembly**

[Original: Spanish]

**Candidature of Costa Rica to the Human Rights Council,  
2023–2025**

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

**Introduction**

1. Costa Rica hereby presents its candidature to the Human Rights Council for the period 2023–2025 as part of its ongoing commitment to respecting and promoting international human rights law.
2. Costa Rica has developed a State model grounded in a human rights approach by which it seeks to meet national challenges with responses focused on the well-being and dignity of persons. This vision has, in turn, underpinned the country's firm and long-standing support for the universal system for the protection and promotion of rights, which, through solidarity and cooperation among nations, is aimed at improving the living conditions of all people throughout the world.
3. With awareness of, and great concern for, the serious and interconnected global challenges posed by the triple environmental crisis, inequality and poverty, polarization, hate speech and shrinking democratic spaces, as well as by the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and by armed conflicts, Costa Rica is presenting its candidature to the Human Rights Council with the aim of making a constructive contribution to the work of the Council and all its mechanisms and supporting efforts to promote the highest standards of rights protection in order to prevent conflicts, violence and discrimination.
4. Firmly committed to the Charter of the United Nations and to international humanitarian and human rights law, Costa Rica has always considered dialogue, consensus-building and the peaceful settlement of disputes to be the means for advancing the multilateral agenda.
5. The country has a long history of engagement with the international human rights system. It works closely and continuously with the various human rights protection and monitoring mechanisms, including the treaty body system, special procedures and the universal periodic review.
6. Costa Rica has also demonstrated its commitment to being involved in the processes that broaden the range of rights recognized and protected at the national and international levels, the defence of the rule of law at all levels and the promotion of proposals in all spheres of multilateralism. The country is working on and supporting initiatives aimed at upholding all human rights, for all people, with a special emphasis on those in vulnerable situations.

**Historical and ongoing commitment**

7. At the national level, the country's historical commitment to respecting, protecting and promoting human rights is reflected in the design and operation of its State structure and legal framework, with an avowedly rights-based approach that provides multiple mechanisms and institutions for prevention and protection in respect of momentous decisions such as the abolition of the death penalty and the

provision of free and compulsory primary education, achieved since the nineteenth century; as well as, significantly, the abolition of the army and the consolidation of a legal system under which the international human rights instruments ratified by Costa Rica are equal to or take precedence over its Political Constitution. Recently, and in response to one of the greatest threats facing humanity, this commitment has been reflected in the country's dedication to promoting recognition of the human right to live in a healthy, clean and sustainable environment.

8. All of the above has been the result of widely participatory democratic processes, nourished by the perspectives of a dynamic and independent civil society, including academia and a broad range of community organizations; worker, trade union, private and professional organizations; and social movements, which interact with the State at different levels and form a vital part of its social fabric and the operation of its political system.

9. Costa Rica has a robust, fully autonomous and independent judiciary, which has established and promoted participatory, inclusive and free mechanisms for access to justice, remedies and the enforceability of rights. It also has a national human rights institution, the Office of the Ombudsperson ("Defensoría de los Habitantes") in full conformity with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles).

10. Costa Rica has allocated significant and sustained public investment to giving effect to, promoting and respecting human rights, including economic, social, cultural and environmental rights, through public policies that seek to broaden the concept of respect and protection through the equitable distribution of the benefits of development. It provides constitutional recognition of the right of all its inhabitants to a healthy and ecologically balanced environment, an obligation that it continually seeks to satisfy. The country's high rankings on the Human Development Index, and in terms of health coverage, social protection and education, as well as nature conservation, are a concrete expression of the results of its institutional framework and human-centred policies.

11. Like all States, Costa Rica faces ongoing challenges that require joint effort to build a culture of peace and non-discrimination, overcome development gaps and uphold its irrevocable commitment to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Costa Rica is aware that only through responses based on a human rights approach will it be possible to meet those challenges, combat poverty, inequality and inequity, and increase the participation in development and public and political life of populations that have traditionally suffered from discrimination and vulnerability.

#### **International human rights system**

12. Costa Rica is a State party to the principal international and inter-American human rights instruments. The country was the first to sign and ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in 1966, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in the same year.

13. Costa Rica is also party to nine international human rights treaties, has ratified nine optional protocols and has accepted seven of the individual petitions procedures. The country has declared full openness to international scrutiny and maintains a standing invitation allowing visits by the special procedures of the Human Rights Council.

14. Throughout its history, Costa Rica has had the honour of serving at various times as a member of the former Commission on Human Rights. During those periods, it has exercised important leadership in constructive initiatives such as human rights

education. It was one of the main advocates for the establishment of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, beginning at the 1965 session of the General Assembly until its creation in 1995. It also resolutely promoted the adoption of an Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

15. Costa Rica has defended the promotion of the recognition of and respect for human rights as a cross-cutting pillar in the work and decisions of the United Nations. During its most recent term as a non-permanent member of the Security Council (2008–2009), Costa Rica promoted, among other issues, the protection of civilians in armed conflict, the safeguarding of human rights while countering terrorism, efforts to combat impunity, and the attainment of international justice. Recently it successfully promoted universal recognition of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment within the Human Rights Council, through the adoption of resolution [48/13](#).

16. The country has led and contributed to various regional processes to guarantee individuals' rights and full compliance with inter-American standards, through action including a request for an advisory opinion to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights on the interpretation and scope of the American Convention on Human Rights with respect to civil, political and property rights derived from sexual orientation and gender identity.

#### **Costa Rica in the Human Rights Council**

17. Costa Rica firmly believes in the role of the Human Rights Council in furthering constructive international dialogue and cooperation for the promotion and defence of human rights around the world, as founding principles of the United Nations.

18. The Human Rights Council has made significant achievements since its establishment in 2006, and Costa Rica considers it essential to develop a systemic vision that promotes better connection between policy and institutional processes among the various United Nations bodies, based on action guided by the principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity, non-selectivity, non-politicization and the cross-cutting nature of human rights and the mechanisms for their implementation.

19. Costa Rica considers it of great importance for the Council, through its mechanisms and deliberations, to promote the development of national capacities with regard to respecting and promoting all human rights. The Council should also help to develop early warning arrangements, encourage dialogue between the parties and assist countries in their efforts to improve their performance in this area.

20. Similarly, the Council of which Costa Rica aspires to be a part has acquired the role of a forum to which the international community gravitates to develop effective responses to emerging issues or historic gaps, addressing issues including gender equality, the human rights implications of emerging digital technologies (big data, social networks, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity) and transboundary phenomena such as the triple environmental crisis (climate change, pollution and the loss of biodiversity), population displacement and the use of cyberspace. Looking towards the future, the Council must also reflect on its working methods in a way that enables it to remain a dynamic entity that responds appropriately and in a timely manner to its institutional mandate and to the new challenges facing humanity.

21. Costa Rica was a member of the Human Rights Council from 2012 to 2014, during which time it worked actively, decisively and constructively, in permanent dialogue with all members of the Council. It contributed to the development of new areas of protection, in the fields of peace, the connection between human rights and climate change and the environment, and the strengthening of education on human

rights, in order to build inclusive and peaceful societies, and promote a culture of prevention.

22. During periods when it has not been a member, including the present, Costa Rica has played an active role in providing leadership and support for the deliberations and work of the Council, whose concerns it has always considered to be its own.

23. Costa Rica has worked unstintingly on the issue of the abolition of the death penalty; the promotion of respect for the right to peaceful protest; topics relating to efforts to combat xenophobia, racism and racial discrimination; the eradication of violence based on sexual orientation; and the economic empowerment of women. It has also participated actively and constructively in the discussions on the operation of the Human Rights Council.

### **Our commitments**

24. In pursuit of the objectives proposed for the period 2023–2025, and in order to reinforce the work already being carried out in the Council pursuant to General Assembly resolution [60/251](#), Costa Rica is making the following commitments:

#### *At the national level*

(a) To strengthen protection mechanisms for human rights defenders, particularly environmental defenders; and to ensure that existing mechanisms on protection and access to justice strengthen protection so that human rights defenders can carry out their activities without being subjected to threats or violence.

(b) To maintain and strengthen the process of dialogue with indigenous peoples through the implementation of the General Mechanism for Consultation of Indigenous Peoples, which gives effect to the recognized right to free, prior and informed consultation to ensure participation of those peoples in decision-making regarding the issues that directly affect them; also, to continue the stage-by-stage implementation of the National Plan for the Recovery of Indigenous Territories of Costa Rica 2016–2022, with the aim of ending conflicts related to land tenure and the security of inhabitants.

(c) To implement the plan of action of the National Policy for a Society Free of Racism, Racial Discrimination and Xenophobia 2014–2025 and, within that framework, to continue implementing the National Integration Plan, whose action areas include the recognition of diversity, with the aim of promoting the recognition of cultural diversity in pursuit of coexistence and social cohesion.

(d) To continue implementation of the administrative measures adopted to combat discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and to recognize property rights, ensure non-discrimination in public institutions, and allow gender identity in public documents; and to continue the process for bringing legislation into conformity with the Advisory Opinion of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights concerning incompatibilities with the American Convention on Human Rights (Pact of San José).

(e) To continue to promote the national commitment to the right of women and girls to a life free of violence; to prevent, punish and eradicate violence against women; to work towards reducing the rates of femicide and violence against women; to provide resources and access to justice for victims of violence; and to promote the economic autonomy of women and their full and equal participation in social, political, economic, cultural and environmental life.

(f) To continue implementing the administrative and legal measures adopted to combat discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

(g) To advance in the implementation of the law on the personal autonomy of persons with disabilities, in order to ensure the full exercise of the legal capacity of such persons, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; and to work to ensure that the revision of the regulatory framework on mental health is in line with the Convention.

(h) To promote the use and development of frontier renewable technologies that, owing to their transformative potential, can have a positive impact with regard to the enjoyment of the right to a healthy, clean and sustainable environment, the reduction of carbon emissions and increased climate resilience and support the transition to a circular and inclusive economy, thereby fostering a just transition for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. A cross-cutting focus on respect for human rights should be present throughout.

*At the international level*

(a) Costa Rica pledges to work, as a full member of the Council, to strengthen, defend and improve the functioning of the human rights pillar of the United Nations, including the Human Rights Council itself and the treaty bodies, as well as the international institutional structure for the promotion and protection of human rights and the mechanisms created by the Council for that purpose, including the special procedures.

(b) It will maintain continuous support for the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

(c) It will continue to promote the implementation of the right to a healthy, clean and sustainable environment; collaborate in dialogue and negotiation processes to ensure that the international architecture responds effectively and in a timely manner to the effects of emerging situations resulting from the climate crisis, biodiversity loss and the declining state of the oceans on the enjoyment of human rights; and support the work of the Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment.

(d) It will ensure that discrimination against and the violation of the rights of women and girls are taken into consideration in a cross-cutting manner in all initiatives and support processes that promote equality, non-discrimination and the eradication of violence against women.

(e) It will support initiatives aimed at combating all forms of discrimination, including multiple and intersectional discrimination, paying particular attention to the situations faced by people of African descent, persons with disabilities, indigenous persons and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons.

(f) It will maintain its commitment to the process of strengthening the treaty body system.

(g) It will strengthen collaboration with the mechanisms established by the Human Rights Council, including the mandates of the special procedures, by following up on their recommendations, technical assistance and communications; maintain its standing invitation to those mechanisms to visit the country; and work to ensure that they can carry out their work independently and safely.

(h) It will continue and improve the implementation of the Human Rights Recommendations Monitoring System in order to strengthen the processes available to Costa Rica for complying with and following up on all of its international human rights obligations.

(i) It will promote a human rights approach to managing human mobility, be it that of refugees, migrants or internally displaced persons, placing particular emphasis on solidarity, cooperation, responsibility and burden-sharing.

(j) It will participate constructively and transparently in the universal periodic review mechanism, carry out follow-up and implement the ensuing recommendations through its universal periodic review implementation action plan and the Human Rights Recommendations Monitoring System.

(k) It will promote the right to the enjoyment of the highest standards of health, advocating equity in access to vaccines, treatment and health technologies, through voluntary pool mechanisms for access to technologies, innovation and intellectual property.

(l) It will generate synergies and establish alliances with States, the United Nations system and other relevant actors for the immediate action of incoming members and the follow-up, at the end of the mandate, to the issues that it will have addressed during its membership of the Council.

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