



General Assembly

Distr.: General
10 August 2021

Original: English

Seventy-sixth session

Item 117 (d) 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 21 July 2021 from the Permanent Mission of Cameroon to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Cameroon 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 Cameroon to the Human Rights Council for the term 2022–2024, at the elections to be held in October 2021 in New York.

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

The Permanent Mission of Cameroon 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.

* [A/76/150](#).



Annex to the note verbale dated 21 July 2021 from the Permanent Mission of Cameroon to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

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

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

1. Cameroon, deeply committed to promoting and protecting human rights at the national, regional and international levels, has been a member of the Human Rights Commission and played an active role in the setting up of the Human Rights Council.
2. The commitment of Cameroon to human rights is evident in the establishment of a relevant legal and institutional framework and the adoption of measures which guarantee compliance with said framework. It is in this regard that fundamental rights are incorporated into the constitutional instrument and that the Constitution guarantees and facilitates the integration of international conventions into domestic laws by ensuring their pre-eminence over national standards. The same applies to the major international conventions on human rights and related protocols, to which Cameroon is a party at both regional and international levels.
3. At the international level, these include the:
 - International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
 - International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
 - Convention on the Rights of the Child
 - International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
 - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms Discrimination against Women
 - Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
 - Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict
 - Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights on individual communications
 - Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, etc.
4. At the regional level, Cameroon is party, amongst others, to the:
 - African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights
 - African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
 - Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Establishment of an African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights
 - African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa of 23 October 2009
 - Organization of African Unity Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism of 1999
5. At the institutional level, Cameroon has an independent Judiciary and an operational Constitutional Council. The National Committee on Human Rights and

Freedoms set up in 1990 was transformed into the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms in July 2004, then into the Cameroon Human Rights Commission in July 2019. With this progress, the Cameroon legislature has taken great pride in ensuring the independence and autonomy of this institution, through the consolidation of its human and financial resources.

6. It is also worth noting that the framework and the terms, as well as the conditions, for the exercise of civil and political rights are gradually improving, with greater emphasis on the fight against impunity and regular capacity-building of law enforcement personnel.

7. Cameroon is a co-initiator of the United Nations Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa, whose headquarters is also in Cameroon. Moreover, Cameroon cooperates with this Centre in promoting human rights in the subregion.

I. Cameroon as part of the United Nations human rights institutions

8. Cameroon's accession to the Charter of the United Nations on 20 September 1960 ensured its membership in all the main bodies of the United Nations, as well as in its subsidiary organs. It is in this connection that Cameroon takes part in the sessions of all United Nations institutions in charge of human rights issues, especially the former Commission on Human Rights and its mechanisms, the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms and other United Nations bodies responsible for promoting and protecting human rights.

A. Human Rights Council and its mechanisms

9. Cameroon is one of the United Nations Member States that adopted the resolution setting up the Human Rights Council on 15 March 2006.

10. On 9 May 2006, Cameroon also became one of the first 47 Member States to join the new Council. As a result, our nation contributed to the drafting and implementation of its new mechanisms, as well as the amendment of all special procedures.

B. Universal periodic review

11. Since the inception of the Human Rights Council mechanism, Cameroon, member of the Human Rights Council and the Working Group, has supported several countries during their universal periodic review within the framework of its different cycles.

12. Cameroon, for its part, underwent this review on 5 February 2009, 1 May 2013 and 16 May 2018 as part of the first, second and third cycles of the universal periodic review, respectively.

13. Cameroon endorsed 156 out of the 196 recommendations and took note of 23 recommendations made during the third cycle of the universal periodic review, held on 16 May 2018.

14. These recommendations mainly concern ratifying conventions whose membership principle had already been adopted during the second cycle of the universal periodic review, particularly: promoting and protecting the rights of women, children, disabled persons and other vulnerable groups; guaranteeing economic, social and cultural rights, as well as international cooperation in the field of human rights.

15. An interministerial mechanism for following up on the implementation of the recommendations was established on 15 April 2011, under the coordination of the Prime Minister. This Committee receives the recommendations endorsed by Cameroon and sends them to the various competent Ministries for their implementation and organizes sessions to assess this implementation.

C. Cooperation with the special procedures

16. Cameroon has extended a standing invitation to all special procedures of the Human Rights Council, which confirms its openness and commitment to strengthening cooperation with the Human Rights Council.

Visits to Cameroon

- May 1999: Sir Nigel Rodley, Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. The follow-up of the implementation of the recommendations contained in his report was done by Mr. Manfred Nowak, his successor
- 16–23 July 2012: Olivier De Schutter, Special Rapporteur on the right to food
- 2–11 September 2013: Rita Izsák-Ndiaye, Independent Expert on minority issues
- 1–4 May 2019: Michelle Bachelet Jeria, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
- 5–26 September 2019: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights human rights technical team
- The visit of the Special Rapporteur on minority issues is expected in 2021

D. Treaty bodies

17. Cameroon is up to date with its obligation of submitting periodic reports.

II. Implementing the 2018 statement of commitment

18. Concerning its re-election to the Human Rights Council, Cameroon has undertaken to comply with the obligations provided for in the constitutive resolution of the Human Rights Council and to:

- Strive for the effectiveness of civil, political, social and cultural rights, including the right to development.
- Cooperate, to this end, with regional organizations, national human rights bodies and civil society.
- Strive through dialogue and cooperation for the effective enjoyment and promotion of human rights.
- Continue its efforts to ensure full compliance with international human rights legal instruments.
- Cooperate forthrightly with the member States of the United Nations, especially with those of the Human Rights Council, to ensure that this body carries out its missions effectively and fully, while respecting the principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity.
- Strive continuously for the credibility of the Human Rights Council.

19. To this end, Cameroon is relentlessly striving towards strengthening the protection and promotion of civil and political rights: by organizing transparent and democratic elections, implementing decentralization, arresting and prosecuting law enforcement officials guilty of human rights violations, improving on detention conditions and organizing human rights awareness-raising campaigns.

20. Cameroon is also striving towards protecting and promoting economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development. Cameroon has initiated the recovery of the national economy, which is demonstrated in the adoption of budgetary measures for streamlining public finances with the main aim of improving on the living standards of the population. In this regard, the Government has placed particular emphasis on social sectors such as education, health and youth employment, with the aim of improving on the quality of services provided in these fields.

- Cameroon remains strongly committed to promoting and implementing the right to development which it considers, in accordance with the Vienna Declaration, of equal value to other rights.
- Cameroon has provided its support to the Human Rights Council to help the latter carry out its mission. Within this context, Cameroon has taken part in all Council regular and special sessions and in the deliberations of the Advisory Committee. Cameroon has been a member of the troika for several countries.

III. New commitments of Cameroon

21. As a member of the Human Rights Council, Cameroon undertakes to continue its action on the promotion and defence of human rights. Cameroon shall, therefore, strive towards achieving the following objectives:

(a) Being a party to the main international human rights instruments to which Cameroon is not yet a party and particularly a party to any convention ensuing from recommendations it accepted as part of its universal periodic review in May 2018, Amongst others, the:

- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol, as well as the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child regarding the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.
- International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.
- Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict.
- Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education.

(b) Promoting women's rights by:

- Strengthening programmes to improve upon the status of women.
- Combating female genital mutilation and organizing awareness-raising campaigns against this practice.
- Taking into account the relevant observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to enable women effectively enjoy all their rights.

- Carrying on with actions undertaken to fight all forms of discrimination against women.
- (c) Undertaking actions to strengthen the protection of children's rights by:
- Taking into account the rights of children in programmes aimed at improving on the living conditions of the population.
 - Implementing relevant recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child regarding homeless children.
 - Preventing child trafficking and child labour and improving on protection measures for victims.
 - Improving on the treatment of children in places of detention.
- (d) Strengthening ongoing efforts in the field of prison administration by:
- Improving on prison conditions, including the construction of new prisons.
 - Facilitating access to prisons for national and international humanitarian organizations.
 - Accelerating of prison reform systems.
 - Strengthening the independence and authority of the national judicial system.
- (e) Ensuring, in compliance with available resources, economic, social and cultural rights, namely:
- The right to health: strengthen programmes to fight HIV/AIDS, provide an effective response to coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and strengthen the health system as a whole.
 - The right to education: Cameroon is continuing efforts to improve on the quality of education, ensure free primary education and improve on the implementation of the plan of action for the World Programme for Human Rights Education.
 - The fight against corruption and improvement on governance.
- (f) Continuing actions on the respect of civil and political rights, especially the freedom of the press and transparency of elections;
- (g) Buttressing measures to guarantee and protect the rights of minorities, disabled persons and other vulnerable people;
- (h) Strengthening both its action for peace and the preservation of ecosystems at the subregional level through a greater involvement in peacekeeping operations and subregional structures for the protection of the environment and the promotion of sustainable development (Central African Forests Commission, Lake Chad Basin Commission, etc.);
- (i) Working hand-in-glove with the National Human Rights Commission and civil society to improve on the overall human rights situation in Cameroon and promote the human rights culture;
- (j) Strengthening its cooperation with treaty bodies and special procedures and the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa and continuing to work with other Member States for the credibility of the Human Rights Council.