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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 6 September 2019 from the Permanent Mission of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The Permanent Mission of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations presents its compliments to the President of the General Assembly and takes this opportunity to refer to the decision of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to present its candidature to the Human Rights Council for the period 2020–2022 at the elections to be held in New York on 16 October 2019.

In this connection, the Permanent Mission of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations is pleased to transmit, pursuant to General Assembly resolution [60/251](#), the voluntary pledges and commitments of the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela with regard to the promotion and protection of human rights (see annex) and respectfully requests the good offices of the Office of the President of the General Assembly of the United Nations to have the present note and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

* [A/74/150](#).



Annex to the note verbale dated 6 September 2019 from the Permanent Mission of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Candidature of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the Human Rights Council, 2020–2022

Voluntary pledges and commitments with regard to the promotion and protection of human rights, pursuant to General Assembly resolution [60/251](#)

Introduction

1. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is a democratic and social State of law and justice. Its Political Constitution is a recent innovation and has been recognized as one of the most advanced constitutions in the world. The Venezuelan Constitution provides full guarantees of human rights. Through its participative and proactive democracy, which promotes a broad-based and pluralistic exchange of ideas, the State has been implementing policies to achieve social, economic and cultural equality as well as the exercise of civil and political rights. Thus, through its domestic laws and practical actions, the State is working to ensure that the fact that human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated is understood, respected and promoted.

2. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela welcomes the establishment of the Human Rights Council and the introduction of the universal periodic review mechanism into its innovative institutional practices. The State was reviewed under that mechanism during the first two cycles, on 7 October 2011 and 1 November 2016, as part of a thorough, pluralistic and continuous process.

3. In Venezuela, the universal periodic review was and is a fundamentally grass-roots effort to put human rights in their rightful place. It has become a cross-cutting element of public policy and a means of continuous evaluation and monitoring by the people that enables them to ensure that human rights are respected, promoted and realized.

4. An intra- and inter-institutional working group, which included representatives of all Government bodies, was convened to draft the first and second national reports under the universal periodic review. The universal periodic review process involved extensive social consultations, which led to the establishment of permanent national agencies for human rights training, an initiative that included the participation of civil society organizations, community councils and non-governmental organizations. That in turn resulted in the creation of the web portal www.epuvenezuela.gob.ve to provide transparent information on human rights in Venezuela. The outcome of the country's universal periodic review and the various periodic reports submitted to the human rights treaty bodies pertaining to the treaties to which Venezuela is a party are available on the portal.

5. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has made great strides in the area of development and quality of life; over the past 19 years, poverty and inequality levels in the country have decreased. The implementation of public policies aimed at eradicating poverty is based on the principles of universality, free access, equality, inclusiveness, solidarity, equity and social justice. Public programmes have resoundingly manifested those principles by ensuring dignity for girls, boys, adolescents, women, persons with disabilities, older persons and other vulnerable sectors of the population.

6. In that context, the Venezuelan Government is part of an international trend of ensuring constitutional recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples and people of African descent as specific and original rights, taking into account the multi-ethnic, pluricultural and multilingual nature of our society. In addition, a system that genuinely protects indigenous peoples and people of African descent has been developed. It recognizes and values their contributions, as indigenous Venezuelans and Afro-Venezuelans, to shaping our identity, as well as the contributions of their basic social institutions. This system is complemented by mechanisms for political participation at every level that guarantee that indigenous peoples will always be represented, including in all of the country's parliamentary and legislative bodies.

7. It is also worth noting that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has less inequality in terms of distribution of wealth than any other country in Latin America and the Caribbean. The country's Gini coefficient was 0.381 in 2017, according to the United Nations Development Programme, and its human development index has reached 0.76 per cent, having passed from medium to high in less than 15 years. Enormous steps are being made towards achieving equity, equality and, as our liberator Simón Bolívar put it almost 200 years ago, the "supreme happiness" of our people. The exercise of civil rights, such as the right to vote, has been enhanced. Since 1999, a total of 25 electoral processes have taken place, with full guarantees for citizens, who have consistently exercised their universal right to a free, direct and secret vote. The relevant political actors were involved in those processes, and audits were conducted to ensure that the elections were transparent.

8. Furthermore, 9 out of 10 older persons in Venezuela received a pension in 2019. As at May 2018, more than 4 million older persons were receiving a pension equivalent to the minimum wage, while in 1998 barely 300,000 such persons were receiving a pension. Social investment accounts for 73 per cent of the national budget. Thirty-four universities have been established, and universal primary education was achieved in 2018.

9. As a State member of the Human Rights Council until 2018, Venezuela played a leading and effective role in the institutional strengthening of that body, with proposals aimed at consolidating the Council as a forum for genuine dialogue and honest and transparent cooperation, thus avoiding the political, selective and biased application of double standards and subjectivity which led to the abolition of the Human Rights Commission. The latter body served primarily to carry out politically motivated actions against countries that were defending their sovereignty and their right to self-determination and were making serious efforts to ensure that all human rights were guaranteed, respected, promoted and realized, including the rights of peoples in relation to international solidarity, peace and development, in the context of their legitimate aspiration of achieving a truly democratic and equitable international order.

10. Venezuela considers the special procedures of the Human Rights Council to be the cornerstone of the universal system for the promotion and protection of human rights. It is open to genuine and constructive dialogue with the special rapporteurs, independent experts, special representatives, working groups and thematic special procedures that adhere to the principles of impartiality and objectivity rather than engaging in coercion or acting outside the mandates given to them by States. Venezuela values the excellent work that they do and the cooperation efforts they undertake to help overcome shortcomings or difficult situations in relation to the promotion and protection of human rights, as necessary, with the utmost respect for the sovereignty and independence of States.

11. It should be noted that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is a party to the large majority of international human rights instruments, which demonstrates its

unequivocal commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights. Instruments to which it is a party include the following:

- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict
- Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families

12. Venezuela has also contributed to the recognition of Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace free of weapons of mass destruction, the promotion of the peaceful settlement of disputes, and respect for the sovereignty of States and the right of peoples to self-determination. It fights for the elimination of the danger of war and the threat of force, and against interference in the internal affairs of States.

13. In April 2014, the President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Nicolás Maduro Moros, established the National Human Rights Council with a view to strengthening public policy as a cross-cutting pillar of the activities of the Venezuelan State in the area of human rights. The Council was established to coordinate the vast institutional framework that exists to guarantee, promote, respect and realize human rights, and to support and promote State policies aimed at ensuring the free exercise of human rights for all who live within the jurisdiction of the State, with special emphasis on the most vulnerable and socially at-risk groups. It was also established to systematize progress, monitor compliance with national and international commitments, detect challenges promptly and promote the necessary efforts to strengthen human rights actions.

14. As part of the institutional strengthening of the promotion and protection of human rights, in July 2015 the National Human Rights Council presented the first national human rights plan, which had the fundamental aim of establishing the structural conditions for continuing to progressively increase respect for, guarantees for and the enjoyment of the human rights of all persons within the jurisdiction of the

State. The plan is also aimed at achieving and consolidating supreme social happiness and *buen vivir* (good living). To achieve these objectives, the plan established a set of programme actions focused on five structural pillars: (i) building an emancipatory human rights culture; (ii) strengthening the institutional framework for ensuring the rights of all; (iii) having the people play a leading role in ensuring the full enjoyment of human rights; (iv) strengthening relationships with international human rights bodies and systems through a transformative vision; and (v) enhancing the human rights-based approach in the legislation, policy and actions of the State.

15. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, committed to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and to the universal system for the promotion and protection of human rights, has the honour to share its voluntary pledges and commitments in respect of its candidature for membership in the Human Rights Council for the period 2020–2022, pursuant to the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolution [60/251](#). These pledges and commitments are in line with the international treaties and conventions to which the State is a party and with its national plan for the period 2019–2025.

At the national level

- Build an egalitarian and just society that guarantees social protection for the Venezuelan people.
- Provide, and ensure the continued provision of, basic universal social security benefits for older persons, survivors, persons with disabilities, and those experiencing redundancy or unemployment.
- Continue to strengthen the social protection systems developed by the State to ensure timely assistance and the provision of universal basic services.
- Enhance the network of innovators and technologists, and the development of businesses, with a view to the production of supplies and equipment that will improve the quality of life of vulnerable populations.
- Continue to ensure that Venezuelans are able to enjoy their human right to identity, both within and outside the country.
- Develop spaces for information-sharing, training and awareness-raising with regard to practices for achieving a work-life balance.
- Continue to advocate for the recognition of access to safe water as a human right at all levels.
- Consolidate the Hugo Chávez National System of Socialist Missions and Great Missions as an integrated set of policies and programmes that realize the rights and guarantees of the social State of law and justice and serve as a platform for the organization, coordination and management of social policies at the different territorial levels of the country, in order to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the social policies of the Bolivarian revolution.
- Promote the organization and mobilization of the people in establishing a new system of moral values, principles and practices consistent with the new socialist ethic, with a view to preventing violence in its various forms, including misdemeanours, crimes and accidents; promoting the peaceful resolution of conflicts; guaranteeing human rights; and taking appropriate action in response to emergencies and disasters, and ensure the recovery, construction, occupation and use of public spaces for coexistence in solidarity and for recreation.
- Continue to promote human rights mobilization in schools and universities.

- Continue to make progress towards transforming the penitentiary system to ensure that the service upholds the rights of persons deprived of liberty and fosters their productive integration into society.
- Contribute to the creation of an alternative human rights system that protects individuals and peoples rather than serving as an instrument to be adapted to the highly politicized interests of imperialism.
- Create forums for dialogue and the exchange of experiences with regard to the role of the missions, the great missions and the socialist vision of society in the construction and comprehensive defence of human rights.
- Continue to consolidate the National Human Rights Council as the body responsible for designing, planning, structuring and formulating public human rights policies and coordinating the participation of the bodies and agencies of the national civil service, businesses, social movements and non-governmental organizations in the defence and protection of human rights.
- Continue to strengthen the National Human Rights Council in order to allow it to process effectively and as quickly as possible allegations of human rights violations submitted by, inter alia, social movements and non-governmental organizations, and to enable it to coordinate with the bodies and agencies of the national civil service in relation to the information needed to achieve the goals and desired objectives in the area of human rights, with a view to enhancing the elements needed to achieve *buen vivir* (good living) among the population.

At the international level

- Cooperate with the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council and its special procedures, and mechanisms of the universal system for the promotion and protection of human rights. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is committed to enhancing cooperation, particularly with the Council, in order to strengthen the Council's role as a transparent, efficient and objective body that remains faithful to the true human rights principles that provide the foundation for contributions to the promotion and protection of all human rights, including the right to development. It further commits itself to providing broader access to United Nations special rapporteurs and independent experts.
- Contribute to international efforts to promote and protect human rights, through the provision of human resources and technical and financial support.
- Coordinate with the United Nations office in Venezuela and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.
- Continue the joint provision of technical assistance and advice by the United Nations Office in Venezuela and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. A human rights institution-building project is currently being implemented under an agreement on the promotion, protection and realization of all human rights, which has a focus in the medium term on promoting a comprehensive system for the ongoing and timely preparation of specific reports.
- Monitor commitments under the international human rights treaty bodies and the universal periodic review of the Human Rights Council, based on the recommendations received during the second universal periodic review of Venezuela in November 2016 and in preparation for the third universal periodic review cycle in 2020.
- Continue to meet its obligations under the international human rights covenants and conventions. In that regard, the State of Venezuela has designed a systematic

policy designed to respond efficiently to and follow up on the recommendations of the human rights treaty bodies and the universal periodic review through the implementation of a system of analysis and timely preparation of reports for submission to the treaty bodies.

- Continue to fulfil its commitments under the United Nations human rights treaty bodies. In that regard, its periodic reports under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families will be submitted by the end of 2019. Similarly, between 2019 and 2020, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela will submit its periodic reports under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Assess the scope and negative impact on the full enjoyment of human rights of the application of unilateral coercive measures of an extraterritorial nature by States and institutions.
- Develop an anti-imperialist doctrine on the interference of Governments and business groups in human rights, environmental and indigenous issues as an instrument for infiltrating States and infringing on their sovereignty.
