

UNITED STATES MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
NEW YORK

EXEC 2017-50

The United States Mission to the United Nations presents its compliments to your government and has the honor to **invite**, in collaboration with the Permanent Missions of the United Kingdom and the Kingdom of the Netherlands, your Head of Delegation to attend a **High-Level Event on Human Rights Council Reform**.

The event will be held on **Tuesday, September 19, 2017**, from **3:30 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.** in United Nations Conference Room 5. It will be co-chaired by United States Vice President Michael R. Pence, British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson, and Dutch Foreign Minister Bert Koenders. Following their remarks, Member States will be afforded the opportunity to engage in roundtable dialogue, pending prompt notification of attendance.

Participating in this event will demonstrate a Member State's commitment to supporting the attached *Statement of Principles for Human Rights Council Reform*, including immediate and institutional reforms both in Geneva and in New York. The aim of this event is to convene a leadership group of Member States that are committed to achieving progress on meaningful reforms this year.

Member States attending the event must email [schimsar@state.gov](mailto:schimsar@state.gov) and convey the name and title of your attending official, as well as the name and title of one additional attendee, no later than 12:00 p.m. on Saturday, September 16, 2017.

The United States Mission to the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity to renew to your Permanent Mission the assurances of its highest consideration.



New York, September 13, 2017

Permanent Mission  
to the United Nations,  
New York, NY

DIPLOMATIC NOTE

## Statement of Principles for Human Rights Council Reform<sup>1</sup>

Member states should take action to reform the Human Rights Council as follows:

1. Strive to ensure competitive HRC membership elections, particularly by encouraging more candidates than seats within each regional group;
2. Engage in voting based on human rights considerations consistent with GA resolution 60/251, including by considering the degree to which candidates are cooperating with the Council and its mechanisms;
3. Participate actively in candidate pledging events in New York and Geneva;
4. Promote universal participation and diversity in the Human Rights Council by supporting and increasing the capacity of Small States to strengthen engagement with the Council and its mechanisms and, eventually, to become members. We note with concern that, to date, around 90 States have never held a seat on the HRC – including most Small Island Developing States;
5. Make candidate pledges in accordance with the framework elaborated by the OHCHR when seeking Council membership and publish them in good time;
6. Apply objective and human rights-based criteria, such as those elaborated in previous joint statements delivered at this Council (e.g. by Ireland at HRC 32 and by the Maldives at HRC 20), in determining whether and how the Council should respond to a situation of concern, and take leadership and responsibility in initiating action when such criteria are met;
7. Recognize that no State has a perfect human rights record, engage in the work of this Council in a spirit of self-reflection with a view to improvement of our own human rights situation, and address human rights concerns on their merits;
8. Cooperate fully, substantively and in good faith with the OHCHR, the Council and its mechanisms, including responding in a timely manner to Special Procedures' communications, urgent appeals and country visit requests;
9. Avoid procedural tactics, such as “no action” motions, to block debate and prevent the Council from considering human rights issues on their merits;
10. Work in close cooperation and consult with civil society in relation to our candidacies and general engagement with the Council, strive to create a safe and enabling environment for civil society, and engage robustly to prevent and address acts of intimidation and reprisals, speaking up to address such incidents when they occur;
11. Plan to make progress in the promotion, protection and realization of human rights at the national level, including through implementation of recommendations and resolutions of the Council and its mechanisms;
12. Consolidate multiple standing agenda items into one category for country-specific resolutions to bring greater efficiency and fairness to the Council's work;
13. Strengthen voting procedures by requiring a super-majority (two-thirds) of those present and voting for election, a simple majority (half) of those present and voting for suspension, and a set deadline for declarations of candidacy.

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<sup>1</sup> Items (1)-(11) were included in the Dutch-led Joint Statement on HRC Reform signed June 23, 2017 in Geneva, Switzerland by 48 member states.