

AIDE MEMOIRE**Voluntary Pledges and Commitments on Human Rights of the Republic of Armenia**

As a country strongly committed to the promotion and protection of human rights, the Government of the Republic of Armenia has decided to present its candidature for the elections to the newly established Human Rights Council.

The Republic of Armenia has worked consistently and constructively towards the promotion and protection of human rights at national, regional and international levels. The Government of Armenia has over the past years developed sound legal and operational human rights machinery at the national level. A continuous reform process has paved the way for Armenia's accession to the Council of Europe and implementation of the commitments undertaken upon membership.

Armenia has been successfully delivering on its national and international obligations to improve protection systems in Armenia. Over a short period of time Armenia reformed its penitentiary system, abolished death penalty and devised an appropriate legal framework to promote the rights of conscientious objectors. The institute of the Human Rights Defender was established in March 2004. The legal and institutional framework for promoting all major rights and freedoms of individuals and groups was fundamentally expanded.

With the amendment of its Constitution at a referendum in November 2005, Armenia further entrenched the human rights in Armenia's legal framework by expanding the human rights provisions and streamlining them with international norms and standards, as well as Armenia's obligations under respective international legal instruments. The right to appeal to the Constitutional Court on matters of human rights has been extended to individual persons.

Armenia is a party to all major universal human rights and humanitarian instruments¹ as well as to regional human rights treaties, specifically those of the Council of Europe², inter alia accepting the jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights. Armenia constantly delivers on its obligation under those instruments and extensively co-operates with all human rights bodies and procedures (UN system, Council of Europe, OSCE).

Armenia has been equally committed to comprehensive and universal promotion and protection of all human rights at global and regional levels. In due recognition of Armenia's efforts the international community has extended its support by electing Armenia to the UN Commission on Human Rights in 2002 and subsequently re-electing it in 2005. During the

¹ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) and its Optional Protocol; International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966); International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1966); Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979); Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984); Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the two Optional Protocols; Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948); the four Geneva Conventions (1949) and the two Additional Protocols; Convention on the non-applicability of statutory limitations to war crimes and crimes against humanity (1968); International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid (1973).

² Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950) and its Protocols 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12 and 14; European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1987) and its Protocols 1 and 2; European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1992); Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1995); European Social Charter (revised) (1996).

60th and 61st sessions of the Commission Armenia served as Coordinator of the Eastern European Group and member of the Expanded Bureau. In acknowledgement of the constructive work done by the Armenian delegation, Armenia was elected Vice-Chairman of the last session of the Commission.

In presenting its candidature to the Human Rights Council, the Government of Armenia makes the following pledges and commitments:

- Armenia firmly believes that peace, security, development and human rights are strongly interlinked and mutually reinforcing. Promotion of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development is crucial in this regard. Armenia is determined to contribute to further enhancing co-operation and dialogue among nations and regions in order to promote tolerance, respect and understanding among civilizations, cultures and religions, as well as to eliminating all forms of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia.
- Armenia will actively participate in the work of the Council with a view to building on past positive experience and providing forum for active interactions and interlinkages between Governments, national institutions and civil society within the new body. Armenia will actively support the efforts to make the Council open, transparent and productive, to ensure that the Council upholds the principle of universality, impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity, constructive international dialogue and co-operation in the field of human rights.
- Firmly supporting the objective of undertaking universal periodic review of the fulfilment of human rights obligations and commitments by each state, Armenia will contribute to the establishment of such review mechanism. Putting forward its candidature for the Human Rights Council, Armenia is open for an early review of its own human rights obligations and record of promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms.
- Armenia is committed to enhancing the international human rights promotion and protection systems by strengthening its machinery and improving special procedures and mechanisms.
- Armenia will continue its cooperation with special procedures through responding to their communications and facilitating all the necessary arrangements for their visits. In confirmation of its commitments, Armenia extends a standing invitation to all special procedures transferred to the Human Rights Council.
- Armenia is at the final stage of its accession to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment by having submitted them to the National Assembly for ratification.
- Armenia will continue its cooperation with treaty monitoring bodies by striving to clear the backlog in submission of reports and by acting promptly and in good faith on treaty bodies' concluding observations and recommendations.

- Armenia will also contribute to the ongoing global reform of the treaty body system and in particular to the efforts to create a unified treaty body mechanism.
- Armenia will remain fully supportive of further strengthening the operational capacity and mandates of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and will further support the Office through voluntary contributions.
- Armenia will further promote the cooperation of the UN human rights machinery with regional human rights bodies, inter alia, with the Council of Europe and OSCE;
- Armenia will continue to improve the promotion and protection of human rights at the national level by further developing legal and operational human rights machinery, inter alia by broadening the reform of administrative and judicial system and by strengthening the institute of Human Rights Defender;
- Armenia will further promote the economic and social rights at the national level through the implementation of the government programs, including the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and the Anti-Corruption Strategy and Implementation Action Plan;
- Armenia will continue to improve the protection of the rights of the child and women, inter alia by implementing the 2004-2015 National Plan of Action for the Protection of the Rights of the Child, as well as the recommendations of the universal and regional human rights mechanisms;
- Armenia will take further measures to uproot the trafficking in human beings by continuing to implement the 2004-2006 National Action Plan for Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Persons.

The Republic of Armenia is Party to the following UN human rights multilateral treaties:

1. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, New York, 9 December 1948
2. International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, New York, 7 March 1966
3. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, New York, 16 December 1966
4. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, New York, 16 December 1966
5. Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, New York, 16 December 1966
6. Convention on the non-applicability of statutory limitations to war crimes and crimes against humanity, New York, 26 November 1968
7. International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, New York, 30 November 1973

8. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, New York, 18 December 1979
9. Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, New York, 10 December 1984
10. Convention on the Rights of the Child, New York, 20 November 1989
11. Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, New York, 25 May 2000
12. Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, New York, 25 May 2000

The Republic of Armenia intends to become Party also the following UN human rights multilateral treaties:

1. Optional Protocol to the Conventional on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, New York, 6 October 1999
2. Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, New York, 18 December 2002

The Republic of Armenia is Party to the following Council of Europe human rights multilateral treaties:

1. Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, 4 November 1950
2. Protocol to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, 20 March 1952
3. Protocol No. 2 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, conferring upon the European Court of Human Rights competence to give advisory opinions, 6 May, 1963
4. Protocol No. 3 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, amending Articles 29, 30 and 34 of the Convention, 6 May 1963
5. Protocol No. 4 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, securing certain rights and freedoms other than those already included in the Convention and in the first Protocol thereto, 16 September 1963
6. Protocol No. 5 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, amending Articles 22 and 40 of the Convention, 20 January 1966
7. Protocol No. 6 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms concerning the Abolition of the Death Penalty, 28 April 1983
8. Protocol No. 7 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, 22 November 1984
9. Protocol No. 8 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, 19 March 1985

10. European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 26 November 1987
11. European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, 5 November 1992
12. Protocol No. 1 to the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 4 November 1993
13. Protocol No. 2 to the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 4 November 1993
14. Protocol No. 11 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, restructuring the control machinery established thereby, 11 May 1994
15. Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, 1 February 1995
16. Sixth Protocol to the General Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Council of Europe, 5 March 1996
17. European Social Charter (revised), 3 May 1996
18. Protocol No. 12 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, 4 November 2000
19. Protocol No. 14 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, amending the control system of the Convention, 13 May 2004