



सत्यमेव जयते

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The Permanent Mission of India presents its compliments to the Secretariat of the United Nations and has the honour to refer to its letter of even number dated 5 April 2006 announcing India's candidature to the Human Rights Council, and to forward a document detailing India's voluntary pledges and commitments for promotion and protection of human rights.

2. The Government of India is committed to make a positive contribution to make the Human Rights Council a strong, effective and efficient body capable of promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms for all.
3. The Permanent Mission of India avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Secretariat of the United Nations the assurances of its highest consideration.

The Secretariat of the United Nations
General Assembly Affairs Branch [Room No. 2925]
New York



VOLUNTARY PLEDGES AND COMMITMENTS BY INDIA

India is seeking election to the Human Rights Council at the elections to be held at the United Nations in New York on 9 May 2006.

India has a long tradition of promoting and protecting human rights. It was privileged to be in the forefront of the struggle against apartheid since even before India's independence. India's commitment to promoting and protecting human rights flows from the realization that in a truly pluralistic society, the growth and well being of citizens can only be guaranteed through a culture of protection and promotion of human rights.

The Indian Constitution enshrines India's commitment to human rights by guaranteeing to its citizens fundamental political and civil rights. Special provisions for the progressive realization and enforcement of economic, social and cultural rights have also been provided for constitutionally. India has taken an important initiative for the empowerment of women by reserving one-third of all seats for women in urban and local self-government, thus bringing over one million women at the grassroots level into political decision making. With the launch of the National Rural Employment Guarantee programme on February 1, 2006, the right to work has been operationalised in India.

The independent and impartial Indian judiciary has delivered far-reaching pronouncements on the protection and promotion of human rights. The National Human Rights Commission, a powerful and independent body, monitors human rights developments in India and shares its experience and expertise with its counterparts in other countries. The free and independent media in India plays a crucial role in promoting respect for and monitoring of human rights. Civil society in India is among the most vibrant anywhere the world.

India is a committed supporter of the UN human rights system and the promotion and protection of human rights is ingrained in its domestic and foreign policy. It has been active in deliberations on

human rights in international fora and in the development of widely accepted international norms. India is a large, democratic, multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multi-lingual, and multi-cultural society, whose presence on the new Human Rights Council would bring a perspective of straddling all divides of pluralism, moderation and balance from a country that has consistently demonstrated in practice its commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Against this backdrop, India voluntarily makes the following pledges and commitments:

- India will continue to abide by its national mechanisms and procedures to promote and protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all its citizens.
- India will maintain the independence, autonomy as well as genuine powers of investigation of national human rights bodies, including the National Human Rights Commission, National Commission for Women, National Commission for Minorities, National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and National Commission for Backward Classes, as mandated by Indian constitution and laws.
- India will continue to foster a culture of transparency, openness and accountability in the functioning of the Government, as enacted in the path-breaking Right to Information Act.
- India will continue to encourage efforts by civil society seeking to protect and promote human rights.
- India will continue to work towards progressive realisation of the right to work.
- India will be expanding the implementation of its recently instituted Rural Employment Guarantee Programme, which provides for 100 days of assured employment annually to every rural household in the country.

- India will continue to promote the social, economic and political empowerment of women in India by affirmative actions, gender mainstreaming in national planning, gender budgeting and formation of women self-help groups. India will work towards elimination of discrimination and violence against women through legislative measures as well as effective implementation of existing policies.
- India, having actively and constructively participated in the multilateral negotiations that led to the establishment of the new Human Rights Council, will work to make the Human Rights Council a strong, effective and efficient body capable of promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms for all.
- India will engage constructively in the evolution of modalities and mandates of the Human Rights Council as envisaged in UNGA Resolution A/RES/60/251, and in the reform of the United Nations human rights machinery.
- India will participate actively in the work of the Human Rights Council in norm-setting in the field of human rights.
- India will participate constructively in developing modalities for universal periodic review by the Human Rights Council and in reviewing and strengthening the system of Special Procedures and other expert mechanisms of the Council.
- India will continue to support the Office of the UN High Commissioner of Human Rights, including through making regular voluntary contributions, so as to strengthen the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide.
- India will strive for the full realisation of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development.

- India will continue to support UN bodies such as UNICEF, UNIFEM, UNFPA, UN Democracy Fund, etc. that have a role in contributing to the protection and promotion of human rights. India recently contributed US \$ 0.9 million to UNICEF and US \$ 10 million to the UN Democracy Fund.
- India will work actively with other UN Member States and relevant UN bodies for renewal and reform of the UN treaty-body system;
- India will work towards promotion and protection of human rights based on the principles of cooperation and genuine dialogue.
- India will cooperate with States, upon request, in their implementation of human rights obligations through capacity building by way of technical cooperation, human rights dialogues and exchange of experts.
- India will continue to actively support domestic and international processes that seek to advance empowerment of women and women's rights and gender equality.
- India will continue to actively support domestic and international processes that advance the rights of the child.
- India will work for the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, the Copenhagen Declaration and Plan of Action, and other outcomes of the major UN international Conferences.
- India will continue to actively participate in and support the negotiations for a new UN Convention for Persons with Disabilities.
