

# Easier Said Than Done

Pursuing promises at the United Nations Human Rights Council

## Namibia



The Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) is an independent, non-partisan, international non-governmental organisation, mandated to ensure the *practical* realisation of human rights in the countries of the Commonwealth. In 1987, several Commonwealth professional associations founded CHRI. They believed that while the Commonwealth provided member countries a shared set of values and legal principles from which to work and provided a forum within which to promote human rights, there was little focus on the issues of human rights within the Commonwealth.

CHRI's objectives are to promote awareness of and adherence to the Commonwealth Harare Principles, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other internationally recognised human rights instruments, as well as domestic instruments supporting human rights in Commonwealth Member States.

Through its reports and periodic investigations, CHRI continually draws attention to progress and setbacks to human rights in Commonwealth countries. In advocating for approaches and measures to prevent human rights abuses, CHRI addresses the Commonwealth Secretariat, Member Governments and civil society associations. Through its public education programmes, policy dialogues, comparative research, advocacy and networking, CHRI's approach throughout is to act as a catalyst around its priority issues.

CHRI is based in New Delhi, India, and has offices in London, UK and Accra, Ghana.

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# INTRODUCTION

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## WHAT IS THE *EASIER SAID THAN DONE* SERIES OF REPORTS?

The Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) has been monitoring the behaviour of Commonwealth countries at the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) since the Council's inception in 2006. CHRI has used the *Easier Said than Done (ESTD)* series to report on the performance of Commonwealth members of the UN Human Rights Council, in the context of their domestic and international human rights obligations.

The benchmark for countries' behaviour is their own pre-election pledges, made while standing for election to the Council. These pledges frequently include commitments to promote and protect human rights internationally, domestically and, specifically, at the Council. *ESTD* uses voting records, statements, and information on engagement with the UNHRC special procedures and compliance with the UN treaty bodies to document the extent to which Commonwealth members of the Council comply with these pre-election pledges.

The *ESTD* reports are principally published for an audience of diplomats, government officials, civil society organisations and international policymakers. They are designed to be of use in formulating policy and advocating for greater respect for human rights, both domestically and internationally.

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## WHY DO THE *EASIER SAID THAN DONE* REPORTS FOCUS ON COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES?

The Commonwealth as a block is an under-assessed component of the Council. During any particular year, about a quarter of the UN Human Rights Council is comprised of Commonwealth States. The Commonwealth has a diverse membership which spans the entire globe. All Commonwealth Members have made a commitment to fundamental principles of human rights on numerous occasions through a variety of organisational documents and communiqués. Most notably, this commitment was demonstrated in 2013 with the signing of the Commonwealth Charter. The Charter makes a specific commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights:

“We are committed to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant human rights covenants and international instruments. We are committed to equality and respect for the protection and promotion of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right

to development, for all without discrimination on any grounds as the foundations of peaceful, just and stable societies.

We note that these rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated and cannot be implemented selectively. We are implacably opposed to all forms of discrimination, whether rooted in gender, race, colour, creed, political belief or other grounds.”

With this foundation, the Commonwealth should be a force to further the mandate of the UN Human Rights Council. However, taken as a whole, the Commonwealth block often fails to live up to these principles. Failure to comply with this fundamental organisational commitment jeopardises the integrity of the Commonwealth and has the potential to negatively impact the work of the UN Human Rights Council.

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## HOW IS THIS REPORT STRUCTURED?

Each report begins with an examination of the Commonwealth’s performance as an intergovernmental body and as a grouping within the Council.

Pages 19-23 present data on three important measures of a country’s involvement in the UN human rights system: ratification of the core UN human rights treaties, compliance with treaty reporting obligations, and cooperation with the UN Human Rights Council’s special procedure mandate holders. These metrics are presented for all Commonwealth countries present on the Council during the reporting period.

Pages 24-47 detail the country’s performance and voting patterns at all the Council sessions that occurred during the reporting period. It also compares the performance of each State with its pre-election pledges regarding engagement with the Council, special procedures and treaty bodies. This section may also mention a domestic pledge if it is highly specific (e.g. a pledge to pass a particular law or create an institution).

The reports also have two annexes. One lists the links to the countries’ pledges, while the other is a table that sets out Commonwealth voting patterns during the review period.

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## WHAT IS THE REPORTING PERIOD AND WHICH COUNTRIES ARE UNDER CONSIDERATION?

Each report in the 2016 series focuses on one Commonwealth Member of the Council during the 2014, 2015, and January 2016 sessions (Session 25-Session 31). Though usually an annual production, no ESTD reports were published in 2015, necessitating a longer reporting period.

The five countries this edition of ESTD focuses on are Botswana, India, Namibia, Pakistan, and Sierra Leone. These countries were selected because they share many traits common to Commonwealth countries: they are in Asia and Africa (home to the preponderance of Commonwealth countries), they are developing countries whose foreign and domestic policies are often necessarily shaped by resource and capacity constraints and global inequities, and they are electoral democracies whose constitutional principles are to greater or lesser degrees in tension with on-going issues with inequality, corruption and rule of law. On the other hand, these countries often differ in key ways—including, as will be seen in these reports, in their orientation towards the Council and international human rights generally.

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#### WHAT SOURCES OF INFORMATION WERE USED TO COMPILE THESE REPORTS?

These reports use research based exclusively on secondary sources. All the information regarding Council statements, voting activity, engagement with the Special Procedures, treaty ratification and reporting obligation compliance came from the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR) and is publicly available on its website (access to statements to the Council requires registering an account with the Council's extranet). Pledge documents, as mentioned above, are linked in the annex, and are quoted at length in the pre-election pledge section (pages 22-23).

# THE COMMONWEALTH AND THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

## Q & A ON THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

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### WHAT IS THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL?

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC or the Council) is an intergovernmental body within the UN system comprising 47 elected Member States. The Council was established in June 2006 to replace the former UN Commission on Human Rights. The Council has the primary responsibility for the promotion and protection of human rights at the UN. The Council holds three regular sessions annually and special sessions as required by human rights situations that require urgent attention. Unlike its predecessor, which was a subsidiary body to the Economic and Social Council, the Human Rights Council is a subsidiary organ of the UN General Assembly. The Council has absorbed mechanisms of the former Commission, such as the Special Procedures and Complaints Procedure, while including new mechanisms: the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and the Advisory Committee. In another departure from the practices of its predecessor, the Council has a re-formulated regional division of seats that provides for greater representation of Southern States. Its election process is also different; states may release pre-election pledges and then must secure an absolute majority of votes in the General Assembly (held by secret ballot) to be elected.

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### WHY WAS THE COUNCIL ESTABLISHED?

The Council was established to replace the discontinued and largely discredited United Nations Commission on Human Rights (the Commission) that was established in 1946. Despite several contributions and decades of setting international standards on human rights, the Commission was criticised for being an overly political and selective body. Numerous states with poor human rights records were able to sit on the Commission and, once there, work to block meaningful action on serious human rights abuses.

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### HOW ARE COUNTRIES ELECTED TO THE COUNCIL?

The Council's 47 seats are allocated by regional grouping (13 for Asian States, 13 for African States, six for Eastern European States, eight for Latin American and Caribbean States and seven for Western European and Other States) for three-year terms. Every year new countries vie for seats within each regional grouping – the number of seats available depends on the number of

countries from each grouping departing the Council. Countries may only run for two consecutive terms. A country must obtain an absolute majority of votes from the UN General Assembly to be elected to the Council. If no country within a regional grouping receives an absolute majority of votes, then a second round of voting takes place between high-scoring candidates. Recently, however, there has been a trend of regional groupings running closed slates – with the number of countries running matching the number of open seats – to avoid embarrassing countries that lose out to other countries from the same region.

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## WHAT IS A PLEDGE AND WHAT DOES A PLEDGE USUALLY ENTAIL?

A country running for election to the Council can submit pre-election pledges while presenting their candidature. Ideally, the pledge document is intended to be used by voting countries to determine which candidate best fits the criteria for election to the Council, i.e. which country has made the greatest contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights and is willing and capable of playing an effective role at the Council. Pledges usually list a country's past contributions to the promotion and protection of human rights, and future voluntary commitments towards the same. The commitments made in each country's pre-election pledge are also intended to be used as a partial basis for that country's Universal Period Review. For reference, electronic links to these pledges can be found in Annex 1 of this report.

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## IS THE PLEDGE-MAKING PROCESS REGULATED?

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has published a document that outlines suggested elements for voluntary pledges and commitments, but these guidelines are not binding; nor are they exhaustive. The suggested elements include national and international human rights contributions, pledges and commitments.<sup>1</sup> Because the pledge-making process is neither regulated nor standardised, there is little consistency between countries, although pledges to support the work of the Council and its subsidiary mechanisms are common, as are pledges to uphold the highest standards of human rights domestically. Unfortunately, pledges also tend to be vague and unquantifiable, making the measurement of achievements and benchmarking especially difficult.

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## ARE COUNTRIES BOUND BY THEIR PRE-ELECTION PLEDGES?

There is currently no accountability mechanism to ensure compliance with pre-election pledges.

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Suggested Elements for Voluntary Pledges and Commitments for Candidates for Election to the Human Rights Council," n.d., <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/Pledges.pdf>.

That being said, the General Assembly does have the ability to suspend Council Members who have seriously and consistently breached their international human rights obligations. Libya was suspended from the Council in March 2011 as a result of a violent crackdown on anti- government protestors; however Libya had not made any specific pledges regarding its domestic human rights situation before its election to the Council. There is therefore no example of a State's membership of the Council being affected as a direct result of violating an election pledge.

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#### WHAT IS THE POSITION OF THE COMMONWEALTH AT THE COUNCIL?

Since the establishment of the Council in 2006, the share of sitting members who are also Commonwealth states has generally been 20-25% in any given year. The Commonwealth, through its Secretariat, has undertaken several initiatives with respect to technical assistance on the UPR. The Commonwealth has also established a "Small States" office in Geneva in order to provide subsidized office space to its smaller Members who do not have a permanent presence in Geneva, thereby facilitating their participation at the Council.

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#### IS THE COUNCIL AN EFFECTIVE MECHANISM TO PROMOTE RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND TO ADDRESS MAJOR ABUSES?

To date, the Council appears to be battling issues similar to the ones that plagued the Commission. During a speech at the celebrations for the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in December 2008, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon urged the Council to "rise above partisan posturing and regional divides" and to "address human rights abuses wherever they occur". For the most part, this plea has not been borne out. Many members continue to vote on the basis of regional groupings and/or political alliances. Major human rights abusers still sit on the Council, and the responses to several serious abuses have been undermined by politicization. Though many Commonwealth countries voluntarily pledged to promote and work positively to support the Council before their election, Commonwealth Members tend to be a part of the negative patterns identified above.

Voting on controversial country-specific and thematic resolutions continues to be divided along regional voting lines and/or dictated by political alliances. A number of Commonwealth countries are openly opposed to country-specific scrutiny at the Council and frequently either abstain or vote no when such resolutions come to a vote

Despite these issues, the Council has achieved a degree of success in providing a forum for debate on global human rights issues. It has facilitated significant engagement of civil society in its processes. It has also managed to unite its Members around several key concerns, passing resolutions calling for action or expressing commitment to a range of issues from the protection of

human rights defenders to holding perpetrators to account for human rights abuses.

## THE COMMONWEALTH AT THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL: AN ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY BEHAVIOR

This round of reports, which cover 2014 and 2015 as well as the first session of 2016, continue to demonstrate the discouraging picture highlighted by their predecessors regarding the performance of Commonwealth members as a whole at the Council. The potential for Commonwealth countries to actively contribute to the promotion, protection and realisation of human rights, both at home and at the Council has still not been fulfilled. At the same time, a more mixed picture emerges when the record is examined on a country-by-country basis, with some delegations acting more constructively than others.

These reports demonstrate the following important patterns in the behaviour of Commonwealth countries at the Council:

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### SHARP DIVISIONS ON COUNTRY-SPECIFIC SITUATIONS

It was evident that several Commonwealth countries remained reluctant to take positions on individual country situations. This approach significantly impeded the Council from effectively responding to the most egregious human rights violations.

Of particular concern was the position taken by the Commonwealth bloc when the situation of one of its Members came under the scrutiny of the Council. In March, 2014, Resolution 25/01, "Promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka," was supported by only three Commonwealth countries; Botswana, Sierra Leone and the United Kingdom. India, Namibia and South Africa abstained from the vote, while Kenya, Maldives and Pakistan voted no. This voting pattern mirrored the Commonwealth's unwillingness to aggressively speak out on the dire human rights situation in the country, emblemized by the Secretariat's decision to hold the 2013 CHOGM in Sri Lanka despite widespread outcry and the boycott of several Heads of Government.

Commonwealth members consistently rendered split decisions voting on other countries as well. In Session 31 alone, Commonwealth countries disagreed significantly on resolutions concerning Syria (31/17; 4 yes, 6 abstentions), Iran (31/19; 2 yes, 4 no, 4 abstentions), and Palestine (31/34; 8 yes, 2 abstentions). In addition to further splits on other votes concerning these three countries of perennial concern, in the prior year (2015) Commonwealth members also failed to find consensus on Belarus (29/17; 4 yes, 1 no, 7 abstentions), Ukraine (29/23; 6 yes, 6 abstentions), and North Korea (28/22; 5 yes, 7 abstentions).

In oral statements, several Commonwealth countries also called for the Council to diminish or end its focus on individual countries and raised concerns about the use of the forum for “particular agendas,” which could be construed as an attempt to block scrutiny of politically sensitive human rights situations.

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#### LACK OF CONSENSUS ON FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

Among the more disturbing patterns in the behaviour of Commonwealth countries was a failure to achieve unanimity on the most basic human rights and civil liberties issues. Resolution 25/38, “The promotion and protection of human rights in the context of peaceful protests,” garnered no votes from Kenya, India, South Africa and Pakistan, as well as an abstention from Namibia. Two countries (Nigeria and South Africa) abstained from voting on Resolution 28/14, “Human rights, democracy and the rule of law.” Resolution 31/32, “Protecting human rights defenders, whether individuals, groups or organs of society, addressing economic, social and cultural rights,” earned a no vote from Nigeria and abstentions from Kenya and Namibia.

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#### CONTINUING CONTROVERSY OVER THE DEATH PENALTY AND LGBT RIGHTS

Two major policy divisions in the Commonwealth that were visible at the Council were over the death penalty and LGBT rights. During the period covered in these reports, two votes were held on the “The question of the death penalty,” (26/02 and 30/05) and each produced split results (4 yes, 3 no, 2 abstentions on the former; 4 yes, 5 no, 3 abstentions on the latter).

In terms of LGBT rights, Resolution 27/32, “Human rights, sexual orientation and gender identity,” divided Commonwealth members (2 yes, 4 no, 3 abstentions). Two “Protection of the Family” resolutions, which could be construed as exclusionary to LGBT persons, earned significant support (26/11; 8 yes, 1 no) (29/22; 10 yes, 2 no).

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#### EMPHASIS ON THE NEEDS OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT

Many Commonwealth countries were active in advocating for a greater focus on the right to development and the interrelation between civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights. While the attention to development appears at times to be an attempt to distract from the more politically sensitive political and civil rights issues, it also adds an important, holistic human rights perspective from the developing world. Commonwealth countries also repeatedly raised points about the need for greater financial contributions to the Council and continued support for its technical assistance efforts.

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## PARTICIPATION

Commonwealth countries have room to improve when it comes to participation in Council activities. Universal Rights Group recorded the following level of participation, defined as the proportion of meetings to which a country submitted an individual or joint statement, for the five countries covered in this report series during Sessions 23-31 (June 2013-March 2016)<sup>2</sup>:

<b>Country</b>	<b>Panels</b>	<b>Interactive Dialogues</b>	<b>General Debates</b>	<b>Average</b>
Botswana	7%	37%	26%	23%
India	42%	24%	44%	37%
Namibia	41%	15%	16%	24%
Pakistan	36%	14%	26%	25%
Sierra Leone	56%	40%	32%	43%

It is difficult to set a benchmark for what constitutes a “good” level of participation, given the wide variance in resources among the Council members. However, it is worth noting that of these five countries it was Sierra Leone, by far the poorest in terms of GDP/capita, that sustained the highest level of participation. The Council would benefit if members sought to participate more in its proceedings, even given current constraints of time, personnel and finances.

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## A LACK OF COMMITMENT TO PROMOTING COMMONWEALTH VALUES AT THE COUNCIL

The Commonwealth Charter, signed in 2013, sets out the values of the association, committing its members to the principles of peace, democracy, justice, development, equality, human rights and inclusivity. Unfortunately, the record suggests their actions are sometimes dictated more by political expediency and indifference to or unwillingness to deal with human rights abuses than a thorough commitment to these values. It exemplifies the need for the Secretariat to work proactively to ensure adherence to the Charter, rather than acquiesce to members’ lack of regard for the Commonwealth’s fundamental ideals.

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<sup>2</sup> Entries for each country can be found at <http://yourhrc.org/interactive-map/>.

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### ENGAGEMENT

The Commonwealth mandate to engage with the Council was initiated at the 2007 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). As a result of lobbying by the Commonwealth Human Rights Forum, a meeting of civil society groups, the Heads of Government decided that the Commonwealth Secretariat could, through the Council, play a facilitating role in strengthening dialogue on, and raising awareness of, human rights in Commonwealth countries. Since the Human Rights Council began operating in 2006, CHRI has urged the Commonwealth and its members to actively support the Council in the fulfilment of its mandate. The earlier reports in the *Easier Said Than Done* series have noted that the Council should be considered one of the most important global fora for the Commonwealth, and to this end identified two important avenues through which the Commonwealth could make a serious impact at the Council:

1. By providing technical assistance to Commonwealth countries that wish to engage with the Council and its mechanisms.
2. By building consensus among like-minded countries during deliberations at the Council.

To date, Commonwealth engagement with the Council has largely focused on the first avenue, with a predominant emphasis on providing technical assistance to Commonwealth countries as they engage with the Universal Periodic Review mechanism. Since early 2008, the Human Rights Unit of the Commonwealth Secretariat has run several UPR capacity-building training sessions across the Commonwealth for governments, parliamentarians, national human rights institutions and civil society. These meetings have primarily been a forum to share best practices and experiences. Best practices taken from a selection of these meetings were compiled into two volumes by the Human Rights Unit: *Universal Periodic Review of Human Rights: Towards Best Practice*, which shared early experiences with the UPR; and *Universal Periodic Review: Lessons, Hopes and Expectations*, which provided an update half-way through the first cycle.

Work to further contribute to the UPR continued during the second cycle of reviews. Notably, the Mahé Declaration of 2014, the Pipitea Declaration of 2015 and the Kotte Declaration of 2016 expressed the commitment of Commonwealth parliamentarians in Africa, the Pacific, and Asia, respectively, to increase engagement with the UPR and other international human rights mechanisms.<sup>3</sup> The most recent capacity-building workshop to this end was held in January 2016 in

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<sup>3</sup> Commonwealth Secretariat, "Commonwealth Asia MPs Join Forces on Human Rights," February 4, 2016, <http://thecommonwealth.org/media/news/commonwealth-asia-mps-join-forces-human-rights>.

Sri Lanka for Commonwealth parliamentarians in Asia.<sup>4</sup>

The level of commitment by the Heads of Government to Commonwealth engagement with the international human rights mechanisms and the Council, particularly the UPR, has fluctuated somewhat. The Heads at the 2009 CHOGM in Trinidad and Tobago reaffirmed support for the capacity-building work of the Human Rights Unit.<sup>5</sup> However, at the 2011 CHOGM in Australia, the Heads merely noted that Commonwealth Members should share best practices and lessons learned from the Universal Periodic Review Process, without establishing a way forward for the Commonwealth to deliver further technical assistance.<sup>6</sup> The trend of diminishing focus in the CHOGM communiqué continued in 2013, where no reference to the Council or the UPR was made. The UN human rights mechanisms only received a sweeping mention wherein Members were encouraged to accelerate efforts towards the ratification of all major international human rights instruments to strengthen the implementation of rights and freedoms as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.<sup>7</sup> The 2015 CHOGM communiqué briefly noted the UPR as one source of best practices. It also ventured only mildly towards encouraging involvement in other international instruments, inviting States who “wished to do so” to ratify the Arms Trade Treaty and the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.<sup>8</sup>

The Commonwealth Secretary-General traditionally makes a speech during the opening of the Council, which can serve as a window onto the Secretariat’s approach to engagement with that body. The Secretary-General in office from 2008 to early 2016, Kamallesh Sharma, delivered speeches that—while they at times defended fundamental human rights and liberties—differed markedly from those of his predecessor in their view of the proper role of the Council. Whereas Secretary-General Don McKinnon noted in his 2007 address that if the Council “shields just one jurisdiction which displays a blatant abuse of human rights, it will discredit itself forever”<sup>9</sup>, Secretary-General Sharma’s speeches seem to suggest that naming and shaming rights-abusive

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<sup>4</sup> Commonwealth Secretariat, “Sri Lanka Hosts Commonwealth Regional Human Rights Seminar for Parliamentarians,” January 29, 2016, <http://thecommonwealth.org/media/press-release/sri-lanka-hosts-commonwealth-regional-human-rights-seminar-parliamentarians#sthash.dG7OqD6a.dpuf>.

<sup>5</sup> Commonwealth Heads of Government, “Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting Communique, Trinidad and Tobago 2009,” November 29, 2009, <http://thecommonwealth.org/sites/default/files/news-items/documents/TrinidadandTobagoCHOGMCommunique2009.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Commonwealth Heads of Government, “Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting Communique, Australia 2011,” October 30, 2011, <http://thecommonwealth.org/media/news/commonwealth-leaders-release-chogm-2011-communiqu%C3%A9>.

<sup>7</sup> Commonwealth Heads of Government, “Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting Communique, Sri Lanka 2013,” November 17, 2013, [http://thecommonwealth.org/sites/default/files/events/documents/CHOGM%202013%20Communique\\_0.pdf](http://thecommonwealth.org/sites/default/files/events/documents/CHOGM%202013%20Communique_0.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> Commonwealth Heads of Government, “Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting Communique, Malta 2015,” November 29, 2015, <http://thecommonwealth.org/sites/default/files/news-items/documents/CHOGM%202015%20Communique.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> Don McKinnon, “Statement by the Commonwealth Secretary-General Rt Hon Don McKinnon to the High Level Segment of the UN Human Rights Council,” March 14, 2007, <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/RegularSession/Session4/HLS/Commonwealth.pdf>.

regimes should be avoided. In 2010, for example, he said that there was “greater value in raising a helping hand, than in raising a wagging finger”<sup>10</sup>; in 2012, he stated that the “Commonwealth approach is not to chide or rebuke, but to agree to shared goals”<sup>11</sup>. In 2015, in a welcome move, his speech noted the Secretariat’s concern over the safety of human rights defenders and threats to freedom of association and assembly.<sup>12</sup> His farewell speech to the Council, in 2016, focused heavily on networking and capacity-building efforts by the Commonwealth, but largely avoided sensitive civil and political rights issues and omitted mention of specific countries.<sup>13</sup> These statements largely mirrored the non-confrontational approach taken by the Secretariat in responding to human rights violations within member states. A notable exception to this pattern was in the Secretary-General’s frequent call to end discrimination on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation, a laudable action given that the majority of Commonwealth countries continue to criminalise homosexuality.

Beyond these speeches, the institutional contacts between the Commonwealth and the Human Rights Council are relatively shallow—which should be a cause for concern. The Commonwealth considers itself a values-based organisation, defined by the principles of democracy, human rights, peace, tolerance and respect for the rule of law. If Commonwealth countries do not uphold these values, domestically or during their international engagements, the Commonwealth should be aware of this and take appropriate action. It is therefore essential that the Commonwealth monitor action at the Council and work towards increasing the positive impact made by Commonwealth States at the Council. A significant initial move in that direction was completed in January 2011, when the Commonwealth opened an office in Geneva that offers space and a business centre at subsidised rates for Commonwealth missions and visiting delegations that participate in international deliberations, including at the Council.

In 2013, the Commonwealth took the step of contributing to a specific thematic panel discussion held at the Council on the role of parliamentarians in the work of the Council. Moreover, the staff of the Commonwealth contributed to specific thematic reports prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The reports, to which the Commonwealth contributed, included the policing of peaceful protests; strengthening judicial systems and the administration of justice; the right to development; and the protection of journalists. The Secretary-General in his 2016 statement underlined the association’s on-going objective of assisting Commonwealth States participation in the UPR process and furthering the goals of the Council; however, the only specific

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<sup>10</sup> COMSEC/PACNEWS, “Commonwealth Secretary-General Addresses UN Human Rights Council,” February 3, 2010, <http://www.pina.com.fj/print.php?print=news&o=15361361914b8c7dcf54906a3a8e6a>.

<sup>11</sup> Kamallesh Sharma, “Commonwealth Secretary-General Speech to UN Human Rights Council – High Level Segment,” February 29, 2012, <http://thecommonwealth.org/media/news/commonwealth-secretary-general-speech-un-human-rights-council-%E2%80%93-high-level-segment>.

<sup>12</sup> Kamallesh Sharma, “Secretary-General Addresses UN Human Rights Council,” March 3, 2015, <http://thecommonwealth.org/media/news/secretary-general-un-human-rights-council>.

<sup>13</sup> Kamallesh Sharma, “Secretary-General to Address High-Level Segment of UN Human Rights Council,” March 2, 2016, <http://thecommonwealth.org/media/news/secretary-general-address-high-level-segment-un-human-rights-council#sthash.5uO1TB4d.dpuf>.

pledge made in terms of direct participation at the Council was for Commonwealth involvement in a forthcoming panel on the contribution of parliaments to the work of the Council during the 32<sup>nd</sup> Session.<sup>14</sup>

There have been no visible moves by the Commonwealth, or any of its members, to work towards building a consensus among Commonwealth countries at the Council on interventions designed to advance human rights objectives. It is, of course, questionable whether a “Commonwealth consensus” at the Council could be achieved, given the wide variance in the human rights situations and political commitments of its members. Yet given the pro-human rights values at the heart of the Commonwealth, and the significant share of seats on the Council held by Commonwealth countries, working towards greater coordination would have significant potential benefits. An active Commonwealth group at the Council could both promote the Commonwealth’s principles and help give it a higher international profile.

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<sup>14</sup> Kamallesh Sharma, “Secretary-General to Address High-Level Segment of UN Human Rights Council,” March 2, 2016, <http://thecommonwealth.org/media/news/secretary-general-address-high-level-segment-un-human-rights-council#sthash.5uO1TB4d.dpuf>.

## THE COMMONWEALTH MEMBERS OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL AND THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS

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### DO COMMONWEALTH MEMBERS OF THE HRC COMPLY WITH MAJOR UN HUMAN RIGHTS INSTRUMENTS?

The tables below are designed to illustrate the extent to which the Commonwealth Members who sat on the Human Rights Council during the reporting period comply with core UN human rights instruments, mechanisms and processes. The tables focus on the ratification status of international human rights treaties (Table I); compliance with respect to reporting obligations under the UN human rights treaties (Table II); and engagement with the special procedures (Table III). Adherence to such instruments and mechanisms varies, demonstrating that the international framework established for the promotion and protection of human rights is not uniformly implemented across the Commonwealth Members of the Human Rights Council.

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### LIST OF CORE UN HUMAN RIGHTS TREATIES

The core UN human rights treaties and their optional protocols that this section covers are:

- CERD - International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- CCPR - International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- CCPR-OP1 - Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- CCPR-OP2-DP - Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights aiming to the abolition of the death penalty.
- CESCR - International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- CESCR-OP - Optional protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- CEDAW - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- CEDAW-OP - Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- CAT - Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- CAT-OP - Optional Protocol of the Convention against Torture
- CRC - Convention on the Rights of the Child
- CRC-OP-AC - Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the

involvement of children in armed conflict

- CRC-OP-SC - Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children child prostitution and child pornography
- CRC-OP-CP- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure
- CMW - International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
- CED - Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance
- CRPD - Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- CRPD-OP - Optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

TABLE 1: ADHERENCE OF COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES TO THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS TREATIES (RATIFICATION STATUS)

	Bangladesh	Botswana	Ghana	India	Kenya	Maldives	Namibia	Nigeria	Pakistan	Sierra Leone	South Africa	United Kingdom
CERD	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
CCPR	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
CCPR-OP1	-	-	P	-	-	P	P	-	-	P	P	-
CCPR-OP2	-	-	-	-	-	-	P	-	-	-	P	P
CESCR	P	-	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
CESCR-OP	-	-	S	-	-	S	-	-	-	-	-	-
CEDAW	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
CEDAW-OP	P	P	P	-	-	P	P	P	-	S	P	P
CAT	P	P	P	S	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
CAT-OP	-	-	S	-	-	P	-	P	-	S	S	P
CRC	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
CRC-AC	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	S	P	P	P
CRC-SC	P	P	S	P	S	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
CRC-CP	-	-	S	-	-	S	-	-	-	-	-	-
CMW	P	-	P	-	-	-	-	P	-	S	-	-
CED	-	-	S	S	S	S	-	P	-	S	-	-
CRPD	P	-	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
CRPD-OP	P	-	P	-	-	-	P	P	-	-	P	P

KEY  
P State Party  
S Signatory  
- No action

TABLE 2: COMPLIANCE OF COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES WITH REPORTING OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS TREATIES

	Bangladesh	Botswana	Ghana	India	Kenya	Maldives	Namibia	Nigeria	Pakistan	Sierra Leone	South Africa	United Kingdom
CERD	OD (2002)	OD (2009)	OD (2006)	OD (2010)	UTD	UTD	UTD	OD (2008)	UTD	OD (2006)	UTD	UTD
CCPR	UTD	OD (2012)	UTD	OD (2001)	OD (2015)	OD (2015)	UTD	OD (1999)	UTD	UTD	UTD	UTD
CESCR	OD (2000)	-	OD (2003)	OD (2011)	UTD	OD (2008)	UTD	OD (2000)	UTD	OD (1998)	-	UTD
CEDAW	UTD	OD (2014)	UTD	OD (2014)	UTD							
CAT	OD (1999)	OD (2001)	OD (2015)	-	UTD	OD (2005)	UTD	OD (2002)	UTD	UTD	OD (2009)	UTD
GRC	UTD	OD (2007)	UTD	UTD	UTD							
CRC-AC	UTD	OD (2006)	-	UTD	OD (2004)	UTD	OD (2004)	OD (2014)	-	UTD	OD (2011)	UTD
CRC-SC	UTD	OD (2005)	-	UTD	-	UTD	OD (2004)	OD (2012)	OD (2013)	UTD	UTD	UTD
CMW	UTD	-	UTD	-	-	-	-	UTD	-	-	-	-
CED	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	OD (2013)	-	-	-	-
CRPD	OD (2010)	-	OD (2014)	UTD	UTD	OD (2012)	OD (2010)	OD (2012)	OD (2013)	OD (2012)	UTD	UTD

KEY      UTD      Up to date  
             OD (2002)      Overdue (report due date)  
             -      N/A

TABLE 3: SPECIAL PROCEDURES: STANDING INVITATIONS, VISITS AND PENDING REQUESTS

	Bangladesh	Botswana	Ghana	India	Kenya	Maldives	Namibia	Nigeria	Pakistan	Sierra Leone	South Africa	United Kingdom
Standing invitation?	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
Visits, 2014-mid-2016	Freedom of Religion	Cultural rights Water and sanitation	Torture	NONE	Internally displaced persons Water and sanitation	NONE	NONE	Minority issues	NONE	NONE	Violence against women	Violence against women Eritrea Promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence
Pending requests	Minority issues Extrajudicial executions	Racism	Migrants Education	Torture Racism	Human rights defenders Promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence Extreme poverty	Human rights defenders	Transnational corporations Human rights defenders	Freedom of assembly and association Counter terrorism Water and sanitation Violence against women	Human rights defenders Extrajudicial executions	Internally displaced persons Arbitrary detention	Environment Water and sanitation Hazardous substances and waste Extreme poverty	NONE
	Independence of judges and lawyers Contemporary forms of slavery Racism		Housing	Enforced disappearances Indigenous people Water and sanitation	Enforced disappearances Hazardous substances and waste			Freedom of religion Counter terrorism Housing	Racism Freedom of expression	Freedom of expression		
	Internally displaced persons International solidarity			Extrajudicial executions Independence of judges and lawyers				Torture	Torture			
	Migrants Freedom of assembly and association			Human rights defenders Freedom of assembly and association				Food Internally displaced persons	Food Internally displaced persons			
	Freedom of expression			Sale of children				Freedom of assembly and association	Freedom of assembly and association			
	Hazardous substances and waste			People of African descent Hazardous substances and waste Extreme poverty				Minority issues Discrimination against women Contemporary forms of slavery Cultural rights	Minority issues Discrimination against women Contemporary forms of slavery Cultural rights			
				Contemporary forms of slavery Cultural rights								

# NAMIBIA AT THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

## BACKGROUND

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### ELECTION TO THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Namibia was one of five African countries that contested the November 2013 elections for the four seats vacant among the 13 reserved for Africa. Namibia will serve on the council from 2014 until 2016.

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### PRE-ELECTION PLEDGES

Prior to its election in 2013, Namibia made both general and country-specific pledges.

- “To work for a strong and effective Human Rights Council, and to reinforce the mainstreaming of human rights throughout the United Nations system.
- Namibia is committed to robust and effective Human Rights Council at the heart of international endeavours in the promotion and protection of human rights. If elected, Namibia will seek clear and strong action by the Council in promoting, protecting and upholding human rights for all. Namibia will work with other Member States to cultivate a more positive and constructive environment in the Council, where countries can share best experiences and learn from one another. Namibia will work to facilitate open and transparent dialogue among Member States, building on shared goals and priorities in order to achieve meaningful progress.
- Recognizing that the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process has opened up an important space for dialogue on human rights efforts at the national level and can make a real difference on the ground, Namibia will continue to participate actively in the review mechanism and work to ensure that each review is focused on the improvement of the situation of human rights in the State concerned.
- Namibia will continue its strong engagement in the Third Committee of the General Assembly, the only United Nations body with universal membership responsible for addressing human rights issues, in order to promote the work of the Council.
- Namibia will support the work of an independent and properly resourced Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, including by promoting the mainstreaming of human rights throughout the United Nations system.
- Namibia will continue its support for the valuable role of non-governmental organizations and civil society in the promotion and protection of human rights at both the State and international levels.

- Investing in development is investing in human rights. Namibia recognizes that the enjoyment of all human rights — civil, cultural, economic, political and social — is essential for development. Equally, development is essential to make the full enjoyment of those rights possible.
- Namibia has made the fight against poverty and hunger a priority of its development programme, which is central to its foreign policy. Namibia continues to support international action to combat maternal and infant undernutrition.
- Namibia recognizes the right to education as a fundamental human right. A large amount of the national budget is spent on the provision of education. The State education policy is based on the premise that all children should have access to free primary education. Namibia is committed to support international efforts to achieve Millennium Development Goal 2 on universal education.
- The Government of Namibia has prioritized the provision of health and social services to all Namibians, ensuring equity of access to health-care services to all, with special provisions for those most vulnerable, such as the rural poor, women, children and the elderly. Namibia is committed to international efforts to fight communicable and non-communicable diseases, and will continue to support national and international efforts to combat malaria, tuberculosis and HIV and AIDS.
- Namibia pledges to play a full role in efforts to combat all forms of discrimination and to promote gender equality.
- Namibia has a strong track record in addressing gender inequality. At home, gender equality has the full force of the law, and there is very visible improvement in women's representation in politics, government and the private sector. The National Gender Policy was officially launched in 1997 and adopted by Parliament in 1999 as a legal instrument aimed at achieving gender equality.
- The Namibian Defence Forces have a workplace policy on human rights and dignity designed to raise awareness of their role and obligations with regard to gender-based violence and human rights. The Defence Forces ensure that personnel deploying on active service to United Nations and African Union peacekeeping missions around the world receive detailed instructions on upholding human rights, especially for minorities and women, cultural awareness issues and codes of conduct and behaviour for both the conduct of their mission and their individual behaviour.
- Namibia was instrumental in the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on, inter alia, the promotion of the participation of women in United Nations peacekeeping missions. Namibia also played an important role at the Fourth World Conference on Women, at which the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was adopted. Furthermore, Namibia supports the Secretary-General's campaign UNiTE to End Violence against Women.

- Namibia firmly believes that the treaty monitoring bodies are central to the functioning of the international human rights protection system. The growth in the number of treaty bodies and in the number of ratifications of international human rights instruments poses challenges for the coherence and functioning of these institutions. Namibia will therefore continue to work with Member States and other stakeholders to help to strengthen the treaty bodies.
- Namibia will continue to enhance its efforts and strengthen existing national mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights, including the development of a national plan of action on human rights.
- Namibia will cooperate fully with the mechanisms of the Human Rights Council, including the special procedures, by responding promptly and substantively to all their communications and by facilitating their requests for country visits.
- Namibia remains committed to implementing the more than 80 per cent of the recommendations that enjoyed its support during the first cycle of the universal periodic review, which include, inter alia, enhancing efforts to enact legislation on human trafficking and increasing efforts to combat violence against women. Namibia therefore looks forward to participating in the second cycle of the universal periodic review in an open and constructive manner, to report on progress made in these and other areas.
- Namibia has ratified core United Nations human rights treaties, and is firmly committed to complying with its obligations, including, inter alia, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- Human rights issues are addressed at both the secondary and university levels of education. Human rights also feature prominently in the training of the police and defence forces, at all levels. Namibia is committed to continuing to provide support for human rights education and training domestically, across all sectors of society, in order to raise awareness and respect for human rights.
- Namibia is fully committed to a pluralistic democratic society. The importance that Namibia places upon this crucial role is enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia.”

### COMPLIANCE WITH PRE-ELECTION PLEDGES

In its pre-election pledge, Namibia voiced a commitment to strengthening the functioning of the Council, UPR and the treaty bodies, to making the environment of the Council more constructive to facilitate the sharing of best practices, to advancing human rights including non-discrimination and the right to development, and to cooperating with the Special Procedures.

Namibia was not the most active member of the Council. Among the focus countries of this series, Namibia had the second-lowest average participation level of participation as measured by the Universal Rights Group during Sessions 23-31. Its participation rate was particularly low in general debates and interactive dialogues; it maintained a relatively higher level of participation in panels, taking part in over 40% of them.

Namibia was disappointingly unwilling to take a stand when it came to country-specific resolutions, with the exception of votes related to Israel and Palestine. Namibia abstained from voting on resolutions concerning Iran, Syria, North Korea, Ukraine, Sri Lanka and Belarus. It also failed to express a consistent commitment to fundamental human rights, abstaining from resolutions concerning the right to peaceful protest and protecting human rights defenders.

There were some thematic areas in which Namibia took a more prominent role. In its statements to the Council, the country was particularly active in advocating for social and economic rights, for the rights and empowerment of women, and for strengthening the international frameworks for combatting racism and ensuring transnational corporations respect human rights. It often raised the importance of a gender perspective in considering issues ranging from HIV/AIDS to the right to food, and identified the empowerment of women as critical for sustainable development. It noted in its pledge the country's history with colonialism and discrimination, which seemed to inform its call for greater efforts against racism, including through the implementation of Council Decision 3/103 to create complementary standards to ICERD and provide normative standards for combatting racism.

Namibia was also one of a minority of Commonwealth countries on the Council to vote in favour of resolutions urging the implementation of moratoriums on and eventual abolition of the death penalty. It backed up this vote with a statement noting its opposition to executions and calling on all countries to establish a moratorium. Namibia abstained from voting on a resolution concerning the rights of LGBT persons and in favour of two resolutions on the "protection of the family" that were not LGBT-inclusive.

Namibia pledged to continue to be an active participant in the UPR process, called it an "important space" for dialogue, and said it would work to ensure each review focused on improving human rights in the country involved. However, Namibia made almost no statements during sessions devoted to this area of the Council's work.

The country pledged to cooperate fully with the Special Procedures of the Council and described the treaty bodies as central to the international human rights system. Namibia is up to date on reporting for many of the core treaties, but is overdue on its reports for the optional protocols to the CRC and for the CRPD. It also is one of a minority of Commonwealth members of the Council that has not extended a standing invitation to the Special Procedures mandate holders. It had no visits from mandate holders during the reporting period, and two pending requests.

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## RATIFICATION

Namibia is a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), Option Protocol to the CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict, and the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

Namibia has not signed the Optional Protocol to CAT, the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (CED) and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (CMW).

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## REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

Namibia has fulfilled most of its reporting obligations, having submitted all the required reports under CAT, ICCPR, CEDAW, CERD, ICESCR, and CRC. The first round of reporting under CRPD has been overdue since 2010.

## VOTING PATTERNS AND PERFORMANCE AT THE COUNCIL

### 25<sup>TH</sup> REGULAR SESSION (3<sup>RD</sup> MARCH – 28<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2014)

On 3 March 2014, during a **High-level segment** Namibia's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Her Excellency. Ms. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, congratulated the President of the United Nations General Assembly on his election and thanked the Members States for electing Namibia to the Human Rights Council. Namibia stated that despite the painful history of suppression and conflict the people of Namibia the policy of equal and inalienable rights for all. Namibia committed itself to actively participate in the work of the council, highlighting that Namibia supports women's rights and is committed to tackling the challenge of violence against women and children, which it recognized as a problem in Namibia. It also reiterated the freedom of assembly and association should be safeguarded. Further, Namibia reminded the international community of its responsibility to ensure that the right of self-determination for the people of Western Sahara is respected and implemented.

On 4 March 2014 during a **High-level Panel on human rights mainstreaming and promotion and protection of the human rights of migrants** Namibia said that migration, when done as a choice, should be seen as the healthy flow and interaction of the citizens of the world. Namibia called on the panellists to share their views on how the UN can assist in addressing the unequal global economic and financial system so that developing nations can compete for the promotion and protection of human rights, in particular the right to development.

Also on 4 March 2014, during a **High-level dialogue with relevant United Nations entities on the promotion of preventive approaches within the UN system** Namibia praised the UPR is an important platform for States to engage cooperatively to identify and address short comings in their human rights frameworks. Namibia stated that as a result of its participation in the UPR process it was implementing a National Human Rights Action Plan, which includes preventative measures that compliment the existing human rights framework in Namibia.

On 5 March 2014, commenting on a **High-level Panel discussion on the question of death penalty**, Namibia reiterated its commitment on the right to life, noting it had abolished the death penalty at its independence in 1990. Namibia supported calls for a moratorium on the death penalty.

On 14 March 2014, during the **general debate** Namibia commended the UN and its various subsidiary bodies for fostering research and good practices in the areas of family policy, work-family balance, data collection and empowering intergenerational solidarity through strengthening of the family unit. Namibia urged the Human Rights Council to undertake more of a role in addressing mean and ways of protection entitled to family.

On 20 March 2014, on the **consideration of Central African Republic**, Namibia expressed solidarity with the CAR and concern at the current human rights and humanitarian situations in the country, stating that the situation was alarming and required the international community's urgent attention.

On 26 March 2014, during the general debate that followed the **OHCHR Report on promoting reconciliation and accountability in Sri Lanka**, Namibia recognized the efforts by the Government of Sri Lanka including the establishment of the Lessons Learned and Reconciliation Commission and emphasized the need for openness and transparency in the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission.

During the session, Namibia **voted in favour** of the following resolutions:

- Resolution on the integrity of the judicial system;
- Resolution on impact of non-repatriation of funds of illicit origin to countries of origin;
- Resolution on promotion of a democratic and equitable international order;
- Resolution on Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt on the full enjoyment of all human rights;
- Resolution of the Right of the Palestinian people to self-determination;
- Resolution on Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan;
- Resolution on Human rights situation in Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem;
- Resolution on the Follow-up to the report of the United Nations Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict;
- Resolution on Human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan;

Namibia did not **vote against** any resolutions.

Namibia **abstained** from voting on the following resolutions:

- Resolution on promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka;

- Resolution on continuing grave deterioration of the human rights and humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic;
- Resolution on situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran;
- Resolution on situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea;
- Resolution on promotion and protection of human rights in the context of peaceful protests;
- Resolution on ensuring use of remotely piloted aircraft in counter-terrorism in accordance with international law;

The following resolutions were **passed without a vote** during the Session as they did not face any opposition from any member of the Council:

- Resolution on Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression;
- Resolution on enhancement of international cooperation in the field of human rights;
- Resolution on Strengthening the technical cooperation and advisory services in Guinea;
- Resolution on mandate of the Independent Expert on minority issues;
- Resolution on access to justice for children;
- Resolution on protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism;
- Resolution on the role of good governance in the promotion and protection of human rights;
- Resolution on ending violence against Children - A global call to make the Invisible visible;
- Resolution on the question of the realisation in all countries of economic, social and cultural rights;

- Resolution on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living;
- Resolution on freedom of religion or belief;
- Resolution on situation of human rights in Myanmar;
- Resolution on Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;
- Resolution on the International Decade for People of African Descent;
- Resolution on Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders;
- Resolution on Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment;
- Resolution on the right to food;
- Resolution on Promotion of the enjoyment of the cultural rights of everyone and respect for cultural diversity;
- Resolution on the right to education of persons with disabilities;
- Resolution on Human Rights and the environment;
- Resolution on assistance to the Republic of Mali in the field of human rights;
- Resolution on technical assistance for Libya in the field of human rights;
- Resolution on intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization, discrimination against persons based on religion or belief.

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## 26<sup>TH</sup> REGULAR SESSION (10<sup>TH</sup> – 27<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2014)

On 11 June 2014, during a discussion following the statement on the **report by the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health**, Namibia acknowledged that States have a legal and moral obligation to strive towards full realisation of the highest attainable standards of health. It outlined the public health priorities in Namibia, and the legislative measures taken to combat such issues. Namibia supported the calls made to food and beverage industries to act more responsibly in the manufacturing of extremely processed foods.

On 12 June 2014, at a dialogue with the **Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences**, Namibia noted that violence against women is both a cause and a consequence of discrimination, patriarchal dominance and control. Namibia recognised the primary role and responsibility of the States to eliminate violence against women and referred to policies it had implemented to reflect his.

On 13 June 2014, during a dialogue with the **Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers**, Namibia acknowledged the fact that judicial independence is one of the principle building blocks of the rule of law. It noted that the independence of the judiciary means independence from political and other influence and asserted that Namibia has a strong judiciary, which actively defends the constitutional rights of citizens and non-citizens.

On 16 June 2014, at a dialogue with the **Special Rapporteur on the right to education**, Namibia stated its belief that systems assessing education levels must be evaluated and revisited regularly in order to ensure the system applied within a specific country's means and ability, remains effective and relevant. Namibia outlined the programs it has implemented to promote the proliferation of education amongst its population.

Namibia **voted in favour** of the following resolutions:

- Resolution on the question of the death penalty;
- Resolution on the Mandate of the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity;
- Resolution on the Elaboration of an international legally binding instrument on transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights;
- Resolution on the Protection of the family;
- Resolution on Human rights and the regulation of civilian acquisition, possession and use of firearms;
- Resolution on the promotion and protection of the human rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas.

Namibia did not **vote against** any resolutions during this Session.

Namibia **abstained** from voting on the following resolutions:

- Resolution on the continuing grave deterioration in the human rights and humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic;

- Resolution on the situation of human rights in Belarus;
- Resolution on cooperation and assistance to Ukraine in the field of human rights.

The following resolutions were **passed without a vote** during the Session as they did not face any opposition from any member of the Council:

- Resolution on the implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent: draft programme of activities;
- Resolution on extreme poverty and human rights;
- Resolution on the protection of Roma;
- Resolution on the elimination of discrimination against women;
- Resolution on the Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers;
- Resolution on the Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children;
- Resolution on International Albinism Awareness Day;
- Resolution on the Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions;
- Resolution on the promotion, protection and enjoyment of human rights on the Internet;
- Resolution on human rights and arbitrary deprivation of nationality;
- Resolution on accelerating efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women: violence against women as a barrier to women's political and economic empowerment;
- Resolution on the right to education: follow-up to Human Rights Council resolution 8/4;
- Resolution on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health: sport and healthy lifestyles as contributing factors;
- Resolution on the human rights of migrants: mandate of the Special Rapporteur on

the human rights of migrants;

- Resolution on the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities;
- Resolution on the promotion of the right of migrants to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health;
- Resolution on Human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises;
- Resolution on the situation of human rights in Eritrea;
- Resolution on human rights and climate change;
- Resolution on the Social Forum;
- Resolution on the contribution of parliaments to the work of the Human Rights Council and its universal periodic review;
- Resolution on technical and capacity-building assistance for South Sudan in the field of human rights;
- Resolution on capacity-building and technical cooperation with Côte d'Ivoire in the field of human rights.

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## 27<sup>TH</sup> REGULAR SESSION (8<sup>TH</sup> – 26<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2014)

On 8 September 2014, at the **opening of the session**, Namibia congratulated the new High Commissioner for Human Rights on his appointment. It expressed its on-going concern about the suffering of people under foreign occupation, specifically Palestinians, and reminded the international community of its responsibility to ensure that the right to self-determination for the people of Western Sahara.

On 9 September 2014, during a **dialogue with the Independent Expert on older persons**, Namibia emphasised its belief that older persons are a valuable and indispensable source for the transfer of morals, customs, and also an institutional memory in a society. Namibia outlined the social pension and other measures it has implemented to support older persons.

On 15 September 2014, at a **Panel discussion on the protection of the family and its members**, Namibia expressed its full support for the need to strengthen the protection of families through a legal framework. Namibia noted the changing dynamic of the family unit, which has been affected by the HIV/AIDS phenomenon. It outlined how court decisions and legislation have supported the protection of all family units and not just the nuclear family or families that are married under civil

law.

On 15 September 2014, at the **Annual discussion on the integration of a gender perspective**, Namibia acknowledged that mainstreaming of a gender perspective is the process of assessing the consequences for women and men equally at all levels of planned action, including legislation, policies and programs. Namibia noted the on-going challenge of implementing policies which address gender inequality in the workplace.

On 23 September 2014, in a statement not delivered due to lack of time during a **Panel discussion on accelerating global efforts to end violence against children** Namibia asserted that children continue to be victims in the home, and within family, school, care and justice institutions. Namibia commented that while the legal obligation lies with States, all individuals share the responsibility of condemning and preventing violence.

On 25 September 2014, during **general debate on Sri Lanka**, Namibia noted that as a matter of principle, it usually abstains on country-specific Human Rights resolutions. It did not support the international community imposing solutions on Sri Lanka.

Namibia **voted in favour** of the following resolutions:

- Resolution the right to development;
- Resolution on the Mandate of the Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order;
- Resolution on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination;
- Resolution on the promotion of the right to peace;
- Resolution on human rights and unilateral coercive measures; and
- Resolution on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights: the activities of vulture funds.

Namibia did not **vote against** any resolutions during this Session.

Namibia **abstained** from voting on:

- Resolution on the continuing grave deterioration in the human rights and humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic;
- Resolution on human rights, sexual orientation and gender identity.

The following resolutions were **passed without a vote** during the Session as they did not face any opposition from any member of the Council:

- Resolution on enforced or involuntary disappearances;
- Resolution on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence;
- Resolution on local government and human rights;
- Resolution on the safety of journalists;
- Resolution on realizing the equal enjoyment of the right to education by every girl;
- Resolution on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation;
- Resolution on promoting human rights through sport and the Olympic ideal;
- Resolution on preventable maternal mortality and morbidity and human rights;
- Resolution on the World Programme for Human Rights Education: adoption of the plan of action for the third phase;
- Resolution on human rights and indigenous peoples;
- Resolution on preventable mortality and morbidity of children under 5 years of age as a human rights concern;
- Resolution on the right of the child to engage in play and recreational activities;
- Resolution on the National institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights;
- Resolution on technical assistance and capacity-building for Yemen in the field of human rights;
- Resolution on enhancement of technical cooperation and capacity-building in the field of human rights;
- Resolution on intensifying global efforts and sharing good practices to effectively eliminate female genital mutilation;
- Resolution on the Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the implications for human

rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes;

- Resolution on equal participation in political and public affairs;
- Resolution on the mandate of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent;
- Resolution on national policies and human rights;
- Resolution on technical assistance and capacity-building for human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo;
- Resolution on technical assistance and capacity-building in the field of human rights in the Central African Republic;
- Resolution on technical assistance and capacity-building to improve human rights in the Sudan; and
- Resolution on civil society space.

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## 28<sup>TH</sup> REGULAR SESSION (2<sup>ND</sup> – 27<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2015)

On 3 March 2015 Utoni Nujoma, Minister of Justice of Namibia, delivered a statement to the **Annual High-level Panel on human rights mainstreaming** noting that inequality in levels of development hampers the protection and promotion of human rights in many parts of the world. The minister asserted that differences in interpretations of the rights to development should not prevent cooperative work towards its realization. The minister also encouraged cooperation to defeat terrorism, which threatens all forms of human rights.

Also on 3 March 2015 during a **High-level Segment** Minister Nujoma expressed concern over a number of human rights issues including terrorist groups, on-going conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan, the deteriorating human rights situation in several African countries, migration, ISIL, the continuing lack of self-determination for the peoples of Palestine and Western Sahara, climate change and the death penalty. The minister also welcomed positive developments in Sri Lanka and the US-Cuba relationship, and announced the launch of Namibia's National Human Rights Action Plan in December 2014 to improve the promotion and protection of rights in the country.

On 4 March 2015 at the **Biennial High-level Panel discussion on the question of the death penalty** Minister Nujoma expressed satisfaction at regional and global trends towards abolition and urged all States to reconsider their use of the death penalty.

On 5 March 2015 during the **Interactive Dialogue with the Commissioner for the Presentation of the Annual Report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights** Namibia called on States to balance their dedication of resources to social, economic, cultural, civil and political rights. It called on the Office of the High Commissioner to continue efforts to combat violations of women and children's rights, to facilitate dialogue on the right to development, and to carry out diligently and considerately need assessments for technical assistance, both for States who request it and those who do not but require aid.

On 6 March 2015 during the **Annual full-day discussion on human rights and climate change** Namibia stated it was extremely vulnerable to climate change, that the developing nations in general were more at risk, and that it was making efforts to reduce its climate impact. It urged global cooperation on the issue.

On 9 March 2015 during the **Interactive Dialogues with the Special Rapporteurs on the Right to Food and Right to Adequate Housing** Namibia said its constitution guaranteed the right to food and it was trying to boost agricultural production to ensure better access. It asserted global cooperation must become the norm in order to ensure a Right to Food for all.

On 10 March 2015 during the **Annual Interactive Debate on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** Namibia stated the disabled needed to be included in their communities and policies designed to accommodate them, and that governments and other stakeholders needed to work to form partnerships on the local, national and international level to share best practices.

On 18 March 2015 in response to the **Report of the Forum on Minority Issues** Namibia provided an overview of the protections for minorities in its Constitution and legislative framework and acknowledged the importance of including minorities in socio-economic and political life through a rights-based approach.

On 19 March 2015 during the **Panel discussion on the issue of national policies and human rights** Namibia said the timely identification of technical needs and the formation of national action plans help States fulfil international commitments effectively. It appealed to States who could afford to do so to contribute to the Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights and the UPR Voluntary Fund for Financial and Technical Assistance.

On 20 March 2015 during the **debate on the state of racial discrimination worldwide** Namibia said that, unlike in the colonial era, children in the country now learn the truth about its history. It said the gaps in the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the reservations some State parties held should be reconsidered with the underlying causes of racism and xenophobia in mind. It also expressed hope education would help combat racial discrimination and related intolerance in Africa.

On 23 March 2015 during the **Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967** Namibia criticized Israel's human rights violations in the Palestinian territories. It said the international community had to

end Israel's status as the exception to international rules, principles and standards, and that the UN must fulfil its legal obligation to help the Palestinian people achieve statehood. It also welcomed Palestine's accession to multilateral treaties and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Also on 23 March 2015 during a **general debate on the human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories** Namibia called upon the international community to pressure Israel to allow Palestine its right to self-determination, including land and the creation of a state in peaceful coexistence with Israel.

Namibia **voted in favour** of the following resolutions:

- Resolution on human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan;
- Resolution on right of the Palestinian people to self-determination;
- Resolution on Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan;
- Resolution on human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

Namibia did not **vote against** any resolutions during this Session.

Namibia **abstained** from voting on:

- Resolution on effects of terrorism on the enjoyment of human rights;
- Resolution on the continuing grave deterioration in the human rights and humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic;
- Resolution on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran;
- Resolution on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The following resolutions were **passed without a vote** during the Session as they did not face any opposition from any member of the Council:

- Resolution on the right to work;
- Resolution on the right to privacy in the digital age;
- Resolution on freedom of religion or belief;
- Resolution on the rights of the child: towards better investment in the rights of the child;
- Resolution on the situation of human rights in Myanmar;
- Resolution on contribution of the Human Rights Council to the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem of 2016;
- Resolution on combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against, persons based on religion or belief;

- Resolution on technical assistance and capacity-building to improve human rights in Libya;
- *Resolution on technical assistance and capacity-building for Mali in the field of human rights*;
- Resolution on technical assistance and capacity-building in strengthening human rights in Iraq in the light of the abuses committed by Daesh and associated terrorist groups;
- *Resolution on strengthening of technical cooperation and consultative services in Guinea*;
- Resolution on prevention of genocide.

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## 29<sup>TH</sup> REGULAR SESSION (15<sup>TH</sup> JUNE – 3<sup>RD</sup> JULY 2015)

In 15 June 2015 during the **Update by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights** Namibia said it was looking forward to an update from OHCHR on the situation in Western Sahara and the Saharawi refugee camps. It expressed concern over the rights of migrants, the lack of geographic diversity at OHCHR and the continuing lack of sovereignty for Palestine and Western Sahara. It said the OHCHR should be encouraging national efforts, not violating sovereignty under the auspices of human rights. It also looked forward to the inclusion of human rights in the SDGs.

Also on 15 June 2015 during the **Enhanced Interactive Dialogue on the human rights of migrants** Namibia said the root causes of migration needed to be addressed including by increasing development in sending countries. It noted the flight of skilled and semi-skilled persons has been a major setback for Africa and asked this issue not be politicized but approached as a human rights issue.

On 16 March 2015 during the **Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises** Namibia said there was a lack of awareness of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and some countries would struggle with implementation due to capacity. In addition to providing technical assistance to countries that need it and making sure home countries of corporations play a more engaged role, Namibia said the shortcomings of the Guiding Principles should be addressed by an international legally binding instrument.

Also on 16 June 2015 during the **panel on realizing the equal enjoyment of the right to education by every girl** Namibia said educating girls was essential to achieve other development goals and that it was working hard to ensure girls' education domestically.

On 17 June 2015 during the **Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on violence against women** Namibia said regional mechanisms were important to reinforce human rights standards, including on this issue. It also stated that ending violence against women was high on Namibia's agenda and that it was taking a multi-sectorial approach to tackle the problem domestically.

On 18 June 2015 during the **Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers and the Special Rapporteur on the right to health** Namibia said the independence of the judiciary was vital for democracy. It also said a juvenile justice system with a rights-based approach was the best model for protecting children's rights and welcomed the General Assembly's adoption of the United Nations Model Strategies and practical measures on the elimination of violence against children in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice. It noted it was taking several steps to protect the rights of the child domestically in the justice system.

On 19 June 2015 during the **Annual Full-day Panel on Human Rights of Women** Namibia said its principle objectives domestically were improving women's socio-economic status and consolidating their political rights. It underlined the importance of women as agents of development and change, reaffirmed its commitment to the Beijing Declaration, called upon States to address all forms of violence against women and said gender inequality and women's empowerment should be addressed in discussions in relation to the SDGs.

On 22 June 2015 during the **Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and the Special Rapporteur on countering terrorism** Namibia said it was on track to reduce poverty but not hunger or income inequality in line with the MDGs and was working on all three issues with international assistance. It noted gender inequality was a driver of poverty and undermined economic growth and said economic empowerment for women was imperative.

On 29 June 2015 during **the Individual Interactive Dialogue with the Commission of Inquiry on Gaza** Namibia urged that those responsible for human rights violations in Gaza be held responsible and called for the end of the occupation of Palestine. It underlined it was voting differently on the Gaza resolution than other, country-specific resolutions because it saw a difference between interfering in the affairs of sovereign States and supporting a state being occupied, which is an issue of international concern.

On 30 June 2015 during **general debate** Namibia said it was concerned about the proliferation of terrorism-related resolutions at the Council and potential apologizing for the denial of human rights. It said the Council should be mostly concerned with purely human rights concerns and its sole role with terrorism was to ensure counter-terror measures did not infringe on human rights.

Also on 30 June 2015 during the **Panel discussion on the effects of terrorism on the enjoyment by all persons of human rights and fundamental freedoms** Namibia reiterated its statement on keeping the focus strictly on human rights concerns.

Namibia **voted in favour** of the following resolutions:

- Resolution on human rights and international solidarity;

- Resolution on human rights and the regulation of civilian acquisition, possession and use of firearms;
- Resolution on the protection of the family: contribution of the family to the realization of the right to an adequate standard of living for its members, particularly through its role in poverty eradication and achieving sustainable development;
- Resolution on cooperation and assistance to Ukraine in the field of human rights;
- Resolution on ensuring accountability and justice for all violations of international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

Namibia did not **vote against** any resolutions during this Session.

Namibia **abstained** from voting on:

- Resolution on the grave and deteriorating human rights and humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic;
- Resolution on the situation of human rights in Belarus.

The following resolutions were **passed without a vote** during the Session as they did not face any opposition from any member of the Council:

- Resolution on the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption and the fortieth anniversary of the entry into force of the International Covenants on Human Rights;
- Resolution on the protection of the human rights of migrants: migrants in transit;
- Resolution on the elimination of discrimination against women;
- Resolution on the elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their family members;
- Resolution on the independence and impartiality of the judiciary, jurors and assessors, and the independence of lawyers;
- Resolution on the right to education;
- Resolution on strengthening efforts to prevent and eliminate child, early and forced marriage;
- Resolution on the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism;
- Resolution on the negative impact of corruption on the enjoyment of human rights;
- Resolution on unaccompanied migrant children and adolescents and human rights;

- Resolution on the Mission by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to improve human rights, accountability and reconciliation in South Sudan;
- Resolution on accelerating efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women: eliminating domestic violence;
- Resolution on human rights and climate change;
- Resolution on the situation of human rights in Eritrea;
- Resolution on the Social Forum;
- Resolution on the incompatibility between democracy and racism;
- Resolution on the situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar;
- Resolution on capacity-building and technical cooperation with Côte d'Ivoire in the field of human rights.

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### 30<sup>TH</sup> REGULAR SESSION (14<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER TO 2<sup>ND</sup> OCTOBER 2015)

On 14 September 2015 during the **Update by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights** Namibia said there had to be a consensus solution to the migrant crisis that upheld the human rights of migrants. It expressed dismay over the progress made on implementing the Declaration on the Right to Development, which it said was being deliberately hampered by some States. It expressed confidence that human rights would be a pillar of the SDGs and called for fulfilling the right to self-determination of the peoples of Palestine and Western Sahara.

On 15 September 2015 in a statement not delivered due to lack of time during the **Annual discussion on the integration of a gender perspective throughout the work of the Human Rights Council and that of its mechanisms** Namibia said there needed to be more women in governance and in the UN human rights mechanisms. It noted it supported the African goal of gender parity by 2063 and was working domestically to promote equality. It said gender equality was a precondition to overcoming poverty and other obstacles and more should be committed to this goal.

On 16 September 2015 during the **Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Independent Expert on the rights of older persons and the Working Group on the use of mercenaries** Namibia agreed with the IE that there needed to be a paradigm shift in the way society perceives aging and asked what actions could be taken to encourage this. It gave an overview of domestic protections for older persons and said a new binding international instrument was needed to protect the rights of older persons globally.

Also on 16 September 2015 during the **Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes and the Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation** Namibia said the SR's call for States to create strong

regulatory frameworks to ensure affordable service delivery was a strong message in support of a paradigm shift in ensuring an adequate standard of living for all and the highest attainable standard of health. On toxic waste, Namibia supported the SR's call for disseminating information and noted its efforts to curb dumping of hazardous waste on its territory. It said corporations should implement the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and refrain from illegal dumping, and also provide information on the impact of hazardous substances throughout the supply chain.

On 17 September 2015 during the **Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order and the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights** Namibia said it agreed with most of the recommendations and plan of action of the IE's report and that it would be helpful in reviewing bilateral agreements. It said unilateral coercive measures violated the Declaration on the Right to Development and should be eliminated. It also called for the lifting of the embargo on Cuba.

On 18 September 2015 during **general debate** Namibia said the SDGs had the potential to create a world in which human rights were realized and sustainable development benefitted all. It said cooperation was essential and more had to be done to strengthen implementation and revitalize the global partnership at national, regional and international levels.

On 22 September 2015 during **the Clustered Interactive Dialogue with Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples and the Expert Mechanism on the rights of Indigenous Peoples** Namibia said it considered the majority of Namibians to be indigenous people and attributes the rights of indigenous people to marginalized peoples, whose rights it was working to improve in line with constitutional and international obligations. It acknowledged that women and girls from indigenous groups face multiple forms of abuse and violations of their rights. It said it looked forward to the SR's forthcoming report on international investment and free-trade regimes and their impact on the rights of indigenous peoples.

Also on 22 September 2015 during **general debate** Namibia agreed with the Advisory Committee's Report on the Role of Local Government that local jurisdictions played an important role in the protection and promotion of human rights. It underlined the role of both government and civil society in doing this at the local level in Namibia and said more attention should be paid to the emphasis in the report on taking a human rights approach to local service provision. It also found noteworthy the recommendation to include local authorities in the UPR process to enhance implementation of UPR recommendations.

On 24 September 2015 during the **Panel on good governance in public service** Namibia underlined its own efforts to improve governance and asked the panel to discuss the prevalence and efficacy of public protectors and anti-corruption bodies in ensuring a human rights-based approach in public service

On 25 September 2015 during the **general debate** Namibia said the UPR process helped States share best practices, acknowledge achievements and take stock of challenges. It welcomed the

input of civil society into the process and said it was the most efficient and effective mechanism of the Council.

On 28 September 2015 during the **general debate** Namibia said it supported the establishment of an independent Palestinian state living side-by-side with Israel as the only way to achieve peace in the Middle East. It also said safe passage for humanitarian assistance must be assured and urged the international community to not allow the peace process to be derailed by regional violent extremist groups.

Also on 28 September 2015 during the **Interactive Dialogue with the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent** Namibia said fighting racism had to be a priority, and would give full effect to the human rights priorities of the International Decade of people of African descent. It said the contribution of people of African descent had to be recognized and all efforts taken to support their inclusion and combat racism and xenophobia. It called upon States to comply with their international obligations to stop the adverse effects of racism and attend to the realities faced by people of African descent.

Namibia **voted in favour** of the following resolutions:

- Resolution on human rights and unilateral coercive measures;
- Resolution on the question of the death penalty;
- Resolution on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination;
- Resolution on the promotion of the right to peace;
- Resolution on the promotion and protection of the human rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas;
- Resolution on the forum on people of African descent in the diaspora;
- Resolution on the right to development;
- Resolution on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order.

Namibia **voted against** the following resolutions:

- From rhetoric to reality: a global call for concrete action against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.<sup>15</sup>

Namibia **abstained** from voting on:

- The grave and deteriorating human rights and humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic;
- Human rights and preventing and countering violent extremism.

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<sup>15</sup> The delegation of Namibia subsequently stated that there had been an error in its voting and that it had intended to vote in favour of the draft text.

The following resolutions were **passed without a vote** during the Session as they did not face any opposition from any member of the Council:

- Resolution on promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka;
- Resolution on regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights;
- Resolution on human rights and indigenous peoples;
- Resolution on human rights in the administration of justice, including juvenile justice;
- Resolution on the contribution of the Human Rights Council to the high-level meeting on HIV/AIDS in 2016;
- Resolution on equal participation in political and public affairs;
- Resolution on the review of the mandate of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
- Resolution on the contribution of parliaments to the work of the Human Rights Council and its Universal Periodic Review;
- Resolution on technical assistance and capacity-building for Yemen in the rights;
- Resolution on technical assistance and capacity-building in the field of human rights in the Central African Republic;
- Resolution on assistance to Somalia in the field of human rights;
- Resolution on enhancement of technical cooperation and capacity-building in the field of human rights;
- Resolution on technical assistance and capacity-building to improve human rights in the Sudan;
- Resolution on advisory services and technical assistance for Cambodia;
- Resolution on national policies and human rights;
- Resolution on promoting international cooperation to support national human rights follow-up systems and processes;
- Resolution on technical assistance and capacity-building for human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo;
- Resolution on technical cooperation and capacity-building for Burundi in the field of human rights.

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### 31<sup>ST</sup> REGULAR SESSION (29<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY TO 24<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2016)

On 29 February 2016 during the **Annual panel discussion on human rights mainstreaming** Namibia said the human rights thread should form the bedrock of negotiations within the UN System and that promoting and protecting human rights was essential to achieving the SDGs. It said it was concerned about the lack of political will by some States to recognize and implement

the right to development and said universal acknowledgement and commitment to implementation would be a good start to the implementation of the SDGs.

On 1 March 2016 during the **High-level panel discussion on the fiftieth anniversary of the International Covenants on Human Rights** Namibia said it was concerned that 29 States are still not party to the CCPR and 33 States are still not party to the CESC, including members of the Council, and urged them to ratify these covenants. It urged the Council to focus on equal protection of economic, social and political rights and acknowledged States' obligations to increase awareness among citizens of their rights. It also said the rights in the two Covenants were interrelated and the cumbersome reporting obligations could be streamlined if combined.

On 2 March 2016 during the **general segment** Namibia said the Council had a special preventative function to fulfil and disapproved the elevation of some rights above others and the use of the Council for States' own agendas. It said the agenda, including resolutions, panels and treaty reporting obligations, had to be streamlined. It stated that ways had to be found to support smaller States with feedback on UPR recommendations and implementation. It asked why the room was often half-empty when small island and developing States had UPR sessions. It added it remained unwavering in its support to the people of Palestine and Western Sahara.

On 3 March 2016 in a statement not delivered due to lack of time during the **Panel discussion on climate change and right to health** Namibia said a human rights-based approach was essential for understanding the impacts by climate change on human health and well-being. It noted its domestic efforts to address climate change and urged the international community to examine further climate change and potential adaptation strategies.

Also on 3 March 2016 during the **Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the safe, clean, healthy and sustainable development, and the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing** Namibia said it was the duty of all States, especially the industrialized ones and the rapidly emerging economies, to avoid further climate change. It noted the link between a healthy environment and human well being, including human rights. On homelessness, it agreed inequality was at issue and the onus was on governments to address inequalities, migration and urbanization. It noted its work on homelessness domestically and said it was necessary to remain cognizant of different definitions of homelessness leading to different framings and policy priorities.

On 4 March 2016 in a statement not delivered due to lack of time during **the Annual interactive debate on the rights of persons with disabilities** Namibia encouraged States to initiate training programmes for professionals and staff working with people living with disabilities. It said it was necessary to strengthen existing mechanisms for the protection of persons with disabilities and develop new ones. It said local, national, and international partnerships were important for fulfilling Goal 8 of the SDGs and fostering the spirit of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

On 7 March 2016 in a statement not delivered due to lack of time during the **Annual full-day meeting on the rights of the child** Namibia underscored the importance of implementing the 2030 Agenda in protecting children. It noted its work to establish legal frameworks to protect children nationally and said all members of the international community should develop strategies that address both the opportunities and risks posed to children by new technologies. It said it was important to expand awareness and ensure exploitation of children is prevented, criminalized, investigated, prosecuted and that victims have access to remedy.

Also on 7 March 2016 during the **Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and the Special Rapporteur on the right to food** Namibia said food was a right and it had been astonished to learn of how disproportionately women were affected by lack of nutrition. It noted its efforts to empower women domestically and the challenge climate change posed to food security. It called upon industrialized countries and emerging economies to avoid further exacerbation of climate change and supported adaptation and mitigation as well as transfer of agricultural technology. On debt, Namibia said it was trying to fight the inequalities its colonial and apartheid past had bestowed on it while keeping public debt manageable.

On 8 March 2016 during the **Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on violence against children and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for children and armed conflict** Namibia said it was working to implement the CRC domestically and agreed that consolidating knowledge to prevent and respond to violence against children by hosting international consultations and strengthening national implementation efforts would increase awareness and ultimately help combat violence against children. It added this required a multi-sector, integrated approach from States and the international community.

On 10 March 2016 during the **Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on promotion and protection of human rights while countering terrorism and the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights** Namibia said the Council was at risk of duplicating the efforts of the GA and Security Council in countering terrorism. It said the proper role for the Council was to ensure countries respected international law in taking countermeasures against terrorism and possibly to look at root causes. It said the focus should be on core rights, the lack of which leads to extremism, and that such a focus would also help rationalize the Council's agenda.

Also on 10 March 2016 during the **Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General** Namibia said technical assistance and capacity-building were critical for States to protect and promote human rights. It was particularly pleased the Voluntary Technical Assistance Trust Fund had helped 18 officials from LDC and Small Island Developing States attend and participate in the Council's sessions. It urged the HC and deputy HC to continue to participate in sessions on the right to development and ensure the division responsible for this right was adequately funded. It said the human rights indicators developed by the OHCHR were an essential tool for prevention and protection efforts. It asked the HC what further measures would be taken to ensure geographic diversity in the office.

On 11 March 2016 during the **Panel discussion on the progress in and challenges of addressing human rights issues in the context of efforts to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic by 2030** Namibia noted with concern that women and girls continue to experience higher infection rates and said States had to expand prevention initiatives to target them. It noted its domestic efforts to help and protect the rights of those with HIV/AIDS and said the international community had to sustain or increase its assistance to countries without the capacity to fight the epidemic on their own.

Also on 11 March 2016 during the **Presentation of the report of the open-ended intergovernmental working group on transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights** Namibia said there was a legal lacuna entirely in favour of transnational corporations and that it was puzzling some States didn't recognize this. It said it hoped for an inclusive process to create a universally accepted international treaty governing enterprises, with a focus on transnationals. It believed this would protect the human rights of all, help States with weak regulatory frameworks and reduce uncertainty for corporations.

On 15 March 2016 during the **Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on minority issues** Namibia said discrimination based on castes and analogous systems should be discouraged or even prohibited. It noted its own domestic framework for minority rights and said it was pivotal to socially and economically integrate members of minority groups through a rights-based approach.

On 17 March 2016 in a statement not delivered due to lack of time during the **Panel discussion of the Human Rights Council on the human rights dimensions of preventing and countering violent extremism** Namibia said the Council's continuous focus on the conflated concepts of violent extremism and/or terrorism was the wrong approach and not the calling or purpose of the Council. It said the Council was addressing symptoms, not root causes, and had to prioritize ensuring the maximum number of human rights, including development and self-determination, to the maximum number of people.

On 18 March 2016 during **general debate** Namibia said UPR discussions were much more effective than those under Agenda Item 4, and asked the OHCHR to take note of requests for technical assistance by States under review. It urged States to participate during reviews of all States. It agreed the UPR should be made more efficient and effective but not at the price of its stability or success as a mechanism

Also on 18 March 2016 during the **Commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination & debate on the state of racial discrimination worldwide** Namibia said the international community had to promote and treasure tolerance. It underlined the importance of the Durban Declaration and the proclamation of the International Decade on People from African Descent and its Programme of Action to fighting racism. It called on the international community to give effect to these measures. It voiced concern that progress had not been made on the mandate created by Council Decision 3/103 to create complementary standards to the ICERD and provide normative standards for combatting racism.

On 21 March 2016 during the **Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur for human rights in the Palestinian territories** Namibia said it was concerned by the continuous expansion of Israeli settlements and the deteriorating human rights situation in Palestine. It said Israel was committing human rights violations and flouting its responsibilities under international law, and called upon it to immediately cease illegal practices and be held to account.

Also on 21 March 2016 during **general debate** Namibia celebrated the raising of the Palestinian flag at the UN on 14 October 2015 and said the establishment of an independent Palestinian state existing side-by-side with Israel was the only path to peace and security in the Middle East. It said the focus should be on peaceful negotiation within the UN framework.

Namibia **voted in favour** of the following resolutions:

- Resolution on the composition of staff of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights;
- Resolution on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights;
- Resolution on the negative impact of the non-repatriation of funds of illicit origin to the countries of origin on the enjoyment of human rights, and the importance of improving international cooperation;
- Resolution on human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan;
- Resolution on the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem;
- Resolution on ensuring accountability and justice for all violations of international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem;
- Resolution on the commemoration of the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration on the Right to Development.

Namibia did not **vote against** any resolutions during this Session.

Namibia **abstained** from voting on:

- Resolution on the human rights situation in the Syrian Arab Republic;
- Resolution on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran;
- Resolution on the effects of terrorism on the enjoyment of all human rights;

- Resolution on protecting human rights defenders, whether individuals, groups or organs of society, addressing economic, social and cultural rights;
- Resolution on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of peaceful protests.

The following resolutions were **passed without a vote** during the Session as they did not face any opposition from any member of the Council:

- Resolution on the right to food;
- Resolution on the promotion of the enjoyment of the cultural rights of everyone and respect for cultural diversity;
- Resolution on the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities;
- Resolution on the role of good governance in the promotion and protection of human rights
- Resolution on the right to work;
- Resolution on the freedom of religion or belief;
- Resolution on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea;
- Resolution on the integrity of the judicial system;
- Resolution on the situation of human rights in South Sudan;
- Resolution on human rights education and training;
- Resolution on promoting Human Rights through sport and the Olympic ideal;
- Resolution on the situation of human rights in Myanmar;
- Resolution on combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against, persons based on religion or belief
- Resolution on technical assistance and capacity-building to improve human rights in Libya;
- Resolution on technical assistance and capacity-building for Mali in the field of human rights;
- Resolution on strengthening technical cooperation and advisory services for Guinea;
- Resolution on protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism: mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism;
- Resolution on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment: safeguards to prevent torture during police custody and pre-trial detention;
- Resolution on the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination;
- Resolution on the question of the realization in all countries of economic, social and cultural rights;
- Resolution on the rights of persons with disabilities in situations of risk and

humanitarian emergencies

- Resolution on the rights of the child: information and communications technologies and child sexual exploitation;
- Resolution on human rights and the environment;
- Resolution on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and the right to non-discrimination in this context.

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### LINKS TO COUNTRY PLEDGES

Botswana: [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/65/732&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/65/732&Lang=E)

India: [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/65/758&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/65/758&Lang=E)

Namibia: [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/68/522](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/68/522)

Pakistan: [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/67/486](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/67/486)

Sierra Leone: [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/67/531](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/67/531)

## VOTING RECORDS OF COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES AT THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL, SESSION 25-31

25<sup>TH</sup> REGULAR SESSION (3-28 MARCH 2014)

Resolution	Asian Group			African Group					W. Euro. Group
	India	Maldives	Pakistan	Botswana	Kenya	Namibia	Sierra Leone	South Africa	United Kingdom
Promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka	ABST	NO	NO	YES	NO	ABST	YES	ABST	YES
Integrity of the judicial system	YES	ABST	YES	YES	ABST	YES	YES	YES	ABST
The negative impact of the non-repatriation of funds of illicit origin to the countries of origin on the enjoyment of human rights, and the importance of improving international cooperation	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	ABST
Promotion of a democratic and equitable International order	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
Mandate of the Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
Ensuring use of remotely piloted aircraft or armed drones in counter-terrorism and military operations in accordance with international law, including international human rights and humanitarian law	ABST	YES	YES	YES	YES	ABST	YES	YES	NO
The continuing grave deterioration of the human rights and humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic	ABST	YES	ABST	YES	ABST	ABST	YES	ABST	YES
Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran	NO	-	NO	YES	ABST	ABST	ABST	ABST	YES
Situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea	ABST	YES	NO	YES	ABST	ABST	YES	ABST	YES
Right of the Palestinian people to self-determination	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Human rights situation in Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Follow-up to the report of the United Nations Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	ABST
The promotion and protection of human rights in the context of peaceful protests	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	ABST	YES	NO	YES

26<sup>TH</sup> REGULAR SESSION (10<sup>TH</sup> -27<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2014)

Resolution	Asian Group			African Group					W. Euro. Group
	India	Maldives	Pakistan	Botswana	Kenya	Namibia	Sierra Leone	South Africa	United Kingdom
The question of the death penalty	NO	ABST	NO	NO	ABST	YES	YES	YES	YES
Mandate of the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
Elaboration of an international legally binding instrument on transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights	YES	ABST	YES	ABST	YES	YES	ABST	YES	NO
Protection of the family	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
Human rights and the regulation of civilian acquisition, possession and use of firearms	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
The continuing grave deterioration in the human rights and humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic	ABST	YES	ABST	YES	-	ABST	YES	ABST	YES
Situation of human rights in Belarus	NO	YES	ABST	YES	ABST	ABST	YES	ABST	YES
Promotion and protection of the human rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas	YES	ABST	YES	ABST	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
Cooperation and assistance to Ukraine in the field of human rights	ABST	YES	ABST	YES	ABST	ABST	YES	ABST	YES

27<sup>TH</sup> REGULAR SESSION (8<sup>TH</sup> TO 26<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2014)

Resolution	Asian Group			African Group					W. Euro. Group
	India	Maldives	Pakistan	Botswana	Kenya	Namibia	Sierra Leone	South Africa	United Kingdom
The right to development	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	ABST
Mandate of the Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
The use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
The continuing grave deterioration in the human rights and humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic	ABST	YES	ABST	YES	ABST	ABST	YES	ABST	YES
Promotion of the right to peace	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
Human rights and unilateral coercive measures	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
Effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights: the activities of vulture funds	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
Human rights, sexual orientation and gender identity	ABST	NO	NO	NO	NO	ABST	ABST	YES	YES

28<sup>TH</sup> REGULAR SESSION (2 TO 27<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2015)

Resolution	Asian Group				African Group							W. Euro. Group
	Bangladesh	India	Maldives	Pakistan	Botswana	Ghana	Kenya	Namibia	Nigeria	Sierra Leone	South Africa	United Kingdom
Composition of staff of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
Ensuring use of remotely piloted aircraft or armed drones in counter-terrorism and military operations in accordance with international law, including international human rights and humanitarian law	ABST	ABST	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
The negative impact of the non-repatriation of funds of illicit origin to the countries of origin on the enjoyment of human rights, and the importance of improving international cooperation	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	ABST
Renewal of the mandate of the open-ended intergovernmental working group to consider the possibility of elaborating an international regulatory framework on the regulation, monitoring and oversight of the activities of private military and security companies	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
The effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
Human rights, democracy and the rule of law	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	ABST	YES	ABST	YES
Effects of terrorism on the enjoyment of human rights	YES	YES	YES	YES	ABST	ABST	YES	ABST	YES	YES	YES	NO
The continuing grave deterioration in the human rights and humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic	ABST	ABST	YES	ABST	YES	YES	ABST	ABST	ABST	YES	ABST	YES
Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran	NO	NO	ABST	NO	YES	ABST	ABST	ABST	ABST	ABST	ABST	YES
Situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea	ABST	ABST	YES	ABST	YES	YES	ABST	ABST	ABST	YES	ABST	YES
Human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan	YES	YES	YES	YES	ABST	ABST	YES	YES	YES	ABST	YES	ABST
Right of the Palestinian people to self-determination	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	ABST	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem	YES	YES	YES	YES	ABST	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

29<sup>TH</sup> REGULAR SESSION (JUNE 15<sup>TH</sup> TO 3<sup>RD</sup> JULY 2015)

Resolution	Asian Group				African Group							W. Euro. Group
	Bangladesh	India	Maldives	Pakistan	Botswana	Ghana	Kenya	Namibia	Nigeria	Sierra Leone	South Africa	United Kingdom
Human rights and international solidarity	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
Human rights and the regulation of civilian acquisition, possession and use of firearms	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	ABST
The grave and deteriorating human rights and humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic	ABST	ABST	YES	ABST	YES	YES	ABST	ABST	ABST	YES	ABST	YES
Situation of human rights in Belarus	ABST	NO	YES	ABST	YES	ABST	ABST	ABST	ABST	YES	ABST	YES
Protection of the family, contribution of the family to the realization of the right to an adequate standard of living for its members, particularly through its role in poverty eradication and achieving sustainable development	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO
Cooperation and assistance to Ukraine in the field of human rights	ABST	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	ABST	YES	ABST	YES
Ensuring accountability and justice for all violations of international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem	YES	ABST	YES	YES	YES	YES	ABST	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

30<sup>TH</sup> REGULAR SESSION (14<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER TO 2<sup>ND</sup> OCTOBER 2015)

Resolution	Asian Group				African Group							W. Euro. Group
	Bangladesh	India	Maldives	Pakistan	Botswana	Ghana	Kenya	Namibia	Nigeria	Sierra Leone	South Africa	United Kingdom
Human rights and unilateral coercive measures	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
The question of the death penalty	NO	NO	ABST	NO	NO	ABST	ABST	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
The use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
The grave and deteriorating human rights and humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic	ABST	ABST	YES	ABST	YES	YES	ABST	ABST	ABST	YES	ABST	YES
Promotion of the right to peace	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
Promotion and protection of the human rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	ABST
Human rights and preventing and countering violent extremism	YES	YES	YES	ABST	YES	YES	YES	ABST	YES	YES	NO	YES
From rhetoric to reality: a global call for concrete action against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO*	YES	YES	YES	NO
Forum on people of African descent in the diaspora	YES	YES	ABST	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
Right to development	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
Promotion of a democratic and equitable international order	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO

\* The delegation of Namibia subsequently stated that there had been an error in its voting and that it had intended to vote in favour of the draft text.

31<sup>ST</sup> REGULAR SESSION (29<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY TO 24<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2016)

Resolution	Asian Group			African Group						W. Euro. Group
	Bangladesh	India	Maldives	Botswana	Ghana	Kenya	Namibia	Nigeria	South Africa	United Kingdom
Composition of staff of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
The effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
The human rights situation in the Syrian Arab Republic	ABST	ABST	YES	YES	YES	ABST	ABST	ABST	ABST	YES
Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran	NO	NO	ABST	YES	ABST	NO	ABST	ABST	NO	YES
The negative impact of the non-repatriation of funds of illicit origin to the countries of origin on the enjoyment of human rights, and the importance of improving international cooperation	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	ABST
Human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan	YES	YES	YES	ABST	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Effects of terrorism on the enjoyment of all human rights	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	ABST	YES	NO	NO
Protecting human rights defenders, whether individuals, groups or organs of society, addressing economic, social and cultural rights	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	ABST	ABST	NO	YES	YES
Human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem	YES	YES	YES	ABST	ABST	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Ensuring accountability and justice for all violations of international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem	YES	ABST	YES	ABST	ABST	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
The promotion and protection of human rights in the context of peaceful protests	ABST	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	ABST	ABST	ABST	YES
Commemoration of the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration on the Right to Development	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	ABST