

Ad Memoire
On the question of election of the Russian Federation
to the UN Human Rights Council

In September, 2005 the decision to create a new main UN human rights body – the UN Human Rights Council – was adopted at the Meeting of the Heads of State and Government (Summit-2005) in New York.

Within the framework of implementation of this historical decision, on March 15th, 2006 the 60th Session of the UN General Assembly adopted resolution 60/251 which contains the provisions regarding the mandate, membership and election procedure to the Council, and also indicates that the first elections to the Council will take place May 9th, 2006 at the plenary meeting of the UN General Assembly.

The Government of the Russian Federation has taken a decision to submit the candidature of Russia for election to the UN Human Rights Council for one of the six seats allocated in the body to the Eastern European regional group.

The Russian Federation attaches great importance to the development of constructive international cooperation in the field of the promotion and protection of human rights. The Russian Federation (USSR) was a member of the UN Commission on Human Rights from the date of its creation (at present the Commission has completed its work). Our country actively supports the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Evidence of this support are four visits of the High Commissioner for human Rights to Russia (including two official visits by Mrs. Louise Arbour), and also a decision of the Government of the Russian Federation of December, 2005 regarding an annual voluntary contribution of two million US dollars to the budget of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights beginning this year.

Active cooperation with the special procedures of the UN Commission on Human Rights, which have been transferred to the UN Human Rights Council,

constitutes an integral part of the policy of the Russian Federation. During the past several years our country hosted visits by the Special Representative of the Secretary General on internally displaced persons, the Special Representative of the Secretary General on children and armed conflict, the Special Rapporteur on child prostitution, child pornography and the sale of children, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women. We have scheduled visits of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism and the Special Rapporteur on the question of torture for the current year.

Besides, the Russian Federation actively cooperates with regional human rights institutions and mechanisms, in particular, with the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Baltic Sea States.

Russia is a party to six core international human rights treaties: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In accordance with our international obligations under these treaties, Russia timely submits periodic reports to the relevant human rights treaty bodies. In terms of the number of already presented reports (38) Russia is among leading nations of the world. Besides, the Russian Federation recognizes, where applicable, competence of human rights treaty bodies to consider individual complaints on alleged violations of obligations regarding specific rights and freedoms under relevant treaties.

Russian representatives have always been active participants in drafting new international legal documents in the field of human rights. At the same time the Russian Federation believes that elaboration of new human rights standards should

be one of the main areas of activities of the UN Human Rights Council and its working bodies.

We proceed from the assumption that States themselves should bear the main responsibility for the protection of human rights and freedoms. The Russian Federation is convinced that the UN Human Rights Council's activities should encourage the development of constructive international cooperation in the humanitarian sphere, the strengthening of the international system for the promotion and protection of human rights on the basis of equity and equality in accordance with the goals and principles stipulated in the UN Charter. Russia is confident that human rights should contribute to bringing together different countries and groups of countries and improve the atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in international relations.

Given our record in the field of international cooperation for human rights, we believe that our partners in the UN General Assembly will offer their support to the candidature of the Russian Federation during the elections to the UN Human Rights Council on May 9th, 2006.