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Unofficial translation from Russian

PRESS RELEASE

Russian Federation Elected a Member of the UN Human Rights Council

810-10-05-2006

On May 9, in New York, a plenary meeting of the UN General Assembly elected 47 members of the UN Human Rights Council, the new chief intergovernmental rights body of the United Nations system. The Russian Federation was elected a member in the very first round of voting, its candidacy drawing support from 137 delegations out of the 191 UN member states.

The result demonstrates the authority and role of Russia in the system of international relations. Its election as a member of the UN Human Rights Council is also seen by us as a sign of the high trust from our foreign partners who cast their votes for Russia amid an unprecedented competition that had unfolded for the right to be included in the first HRC.

The Russian Federation attaches great importance to the work of the future Council, which is to serve as a forum for developing a constructive dialogue among states, international organizations and non-governmental structures on pressing human rights problems. We are convinced that a response to the contemporary challenges and threats in the field of the encouragement and defense of human rights can only be worked out by common efforts of all the parties concerned.

The Russian Federation is determined to help ensure that the UN Human Rights Council is guided in its activities by the principles of universality, impartiality and nonselectivity and of a constructive international dialogue and cooperation to promote the encouragement and defense of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction and on a fair and equal basis, as is enshrined in General Assembly resolution 60/251 on the creation of the Council.

In addition, Russia will stand for preserving in the UN Human Rights Council's work all those things of positive value that were accumulated over the years of work of its predecessor, the UN Commission on Human Rights. It is equally important that the Council overcome all those negative aspects that hindered the Commission from realizing its potential in full: confrontation and "double standards" in assessing the human rights situation in the world. We shall seek to ensure that the Council's work bears an impartial and nonpoliticized character.

The Council will hold its first meeting in Geneva on June 19.

May 10, 2006