

December 6, 2005

To: Permanent Representatives of UN Member States

Re: Urgency of Completing Negotiations for Human Rights Council This Year

We, the undersigned organizations and individuals dedicated to protecting and promoting human rights, are watching with keen interest the discussions now underway to create a new Human Rights Council at the United Nations. We are writing to you now, on the eve of International Human Rights Day and in honor of the victims of human rights violations in every corner of the globe, to urge each of your governments to adopt a General Assembly resolution by the end of this year establishing a Human Rights Council that will be stronger and more effective than the Commission on Human Rights.

In the attached letter dated November 1 to UNGA President Eliasson, human rights organizations from around the world have presented their views on the key elements that must be included in the resolution in order to fulfill the commitment made by heads of state and government in September to further strengthen the UN's human rights machinery. We hereby reaffirm our support for these essential points as interdependent elements critical to achieving a credible outcome.

We believe, based on consultations conducted thus far among UN Member States, that there is strong consensus on these points among the vast majority of UN delegations. We strongly urge you to take account of this consensus and act without delay in the coming two weeks to complete negotiations on a resolution consistent with the principles set forth in the attached letter.

Sincerely,

Helen Darbshire, Executive Director
Access Info Europe (Spain)

Mohsen Marzouk, Coordinator
Al Kawakibi Center for Democracy

Yvonne Terlingen, AI Representative at the United Nations
Amnesty International

Roberto Saba, Executive Director
Association for Civil Rights (Argentina)

Mark Thomson, Secretary General
Association for the Prevention of Torture

Bani Dugal, Principal Representative
Bahá'í International Community, UN Office

Denis Caillaux, Secretary General
CARE International

John Podesta, President and CEO
Center for American Progress

Lene Schumacher, Director of Programs
Center for Development of International Law

Charlotte Bunch, Executive Director
Center for Women's Global Leadership

Charles J. Brown, President and CEO
Citizens for Global Solutions

Vicente García-Delgado, Esq, UN Representative
CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation

Richard C. Rowson, President
Council for a Community of Democracies

Ted Piccone, Executive Director
Democracy Coalition Project

Iлона Mihaies, Executive President
Euroregional Center for Democracy (Romania)

Djingarey Maiga, Executive Director
Femmes et Droits Humains (Mali)

Omar Lopez, Executive Director
Foundation for Human Rights in Cuba

Sidiki Kaba, President
FIDH - Fédération Internationale des Ligues des Droits de l'Homme /
International Federation for Human Rights

John Quigley, Executive Director
Franciscans International

Jennifer Windsor, Executive Director
Freedom House

Jamils Richard Achunji Anguaseh, Program Director
Global Welfare Association (Cameroon)

Julianne Traylor, Chair of the Board of Directors
Human Rights Advocates

Neil Hicks, Director of International Programs
Human Rights First

Kenneth Roth, Executive Director
Human Rights Watch

Hélène Sackstein, Permanent UN Representative
International Alliance of Women

Monique McClellan, UN Representative
International Catholic Child Bureau (ICCB/BICE)

Nicholas Howen, Secretary General
International Commission of Jurists (ICJ)

Gareth Evans, President and CEO
International Crisis Group

Eylah Kadjjar-Hamouda, Coordinator
International Federation Terre des Hommes

Bob Arsenault, President
International League for Human Rights

Atsuko Tanaka-Fox, Permanent Representative to the United Nations
The International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR)

Görel Bogärde, UN Representative
International Save the Children Alliance

Chris Sidoti, Director
International Service for Human Rights

Felice D. Gaer, Director
Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights

Vanida S. Thephsouvanh, President
Lao Movement for Human Rights (LMHR)

Peter N. Prove, Assistant to the General Secretary for International Affairs and Human Rights
The Lutheran World Federation

Kok Ksor, President
Montagnard Foundation, Inc

Robin Phillips, Executive Director
Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights

Morton Halperin, Director of US Advocacy
Open Society Institute

Andrea Sanhueza, Executive Director
Participa (Chile)

Shulamith Koenig, Founding President
PDHRE, People's Decade for Human Rights Education

Paul English, Executive Director
Penal Reform International

Leonard Rubenstein, Executive Director
Physicians for Human Rights

Vo Van Ai, President
Quê Me: Action for Democracy in Vietnam

Ken Bacon, President
Refugees International

Carol Bower, Executive Director
Resources Aimed at the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (South Africa)

Howard Glenn, Executive Director
Rights Australia (Australia)

Jean-Louis Roy, President
Rights and Democracy (Canada)

Anita Sheth, Senior Analyst
Save the Children (Canada)

Abdinasir Nur, Director
Somali Youth for Peace and Democracy (SYPD) (Somalia)

Charlie Szrom, President
Students for Global Democracy International

Matteo Mecacci, UN Representative
Transnational Radical Party (Italy)

Catherine Ferguson, Coordinator
UNANIMA International

Vina Nadjibulla, United Nations Representative
United Methodist UN Office

Penelope Faulkner, Vice-President
Vietnam Committee for Human Rights

Joy Olson, Executive Director
Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA)

William Pace, Executive Director
World Federalist Movement

Seng Xiong, Executive Officer
World Hmong People's Congress

Eric Sottas, Director
World Organization against Torture

Cc: H.E. Mr. Jan Eliasson, President of the U.N. General Assembly
H.E. Mr. Ricardo Alberto Arias, Co-Chair, Human Rights Council Negotiations
H.E. Mr. Dumisani Shadrack Kumalo, Co-Chair, Human Rights Council negotiations
Mr. Kofi Annan, U.N. Secretary General
Ms. Louise Arbour, U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights