



February 27th, 2015. Geneva, Switzerland.
Honduras
Brussels

Mr.
Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein
United Nations High Commissioner
For Human Rights
Geneva

Subject: Appointment of Director of the new Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Honduras.

Honourable High Commissioner:

The undersigned international organizations have participated, cooperated, accompanied and been allied with Honduran Civil Society organizations for over a decade. We address you in order to celebrate the initiative of opening an Office for the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Honduras (hereafter 'the Office'). Your Office will be able to make an important contribution to improve respect, protection and guarantee of Human Rights in a complex context, given the special situation of multiple Human Right violations endured by this country.

We are aware that launching an Office of this nature contains diverse challenges. One of the main ones is related to in-field capacity to properly observe situations relating to Human Rights, whether in the capital or marginalized regions in a country where the conditions of exclusion, violence, insecurity and vulnerability prevail. Periodic reports from the Office about said situations could promote actions that would permit qualified authorities to approach the issues and fulfill State obligations in accordance with the recommendations of different Entities Special Procedures of the United Nations to the Honduran State. Furthermore, we believe it is of vital importance that the Office representative should have, in his/her mandate, the ability to independently intervene in public debates, in order to make the public opinion aware of the Human Rights issues that exist in Honduras.

Moreover, it would be ideal for the Office to receive, as it does in other countries, claims on Human Rights violations, to deliver these to the right authorities without risking the claimant's safety. Likewise, the Office could make a notable contribution to building reliable dialogue mechanisms between the State

and Civil Society; provide Civil Society special accompaniment and advisory on Human Rights and the use of international protection mechanisms.

From our own experience, in addition to what is established in the role and the Office mandate, a key factor to accomplish its mission will be the designation of the representative in the field. We understand a process has been initiated to find the person to take this role, and would like to contribute with said process by submitting some criteria, for your consideration, that the candidate should meet:

- 1) A resume of a personal life committed to the protection and promotion of human rights in adverse situations
- 2) Solid knowledge on Human Rights and the mechanisms for its protection.
- 3) Will to maintain the independence and impartiality of the institution.
- 4) Understanding of the Honduran political and social contexts, and/or the will to strengthen said understanding.
- 5) Competency in the handling of gender perspectives, given the particular violence and exclusion situation experienced by Honduran women.
- 6) Ability to maintain an open dialogue with various stakeholders in the political, economic and social field in Honduras, particularly with marginalized communities.
- 7) Strong leadership capacities.
- 8) Good knowledge of the Spanish language.

Though not covering all the conditions for an ideal profile, we hope you will consider these suggestions, and allow our new Office in Honduras to contribute to strengthening national institutions for protecting and exercising Human rights in the mentioned country. For our part, as part of the leading organizations for Civil Society in various European and American countries, we commit to continue supporting the installation of the Honduran Office and, once installed, serve and support the work to benefit the Honduran people.

With nothing further to add, we send our best regards to your Excellency, from all the participating organizations.

CIFCA – Copenhagen Initiative for Central America and México
International Platform against Impunity
Peace Brigades International, PBI
Humanist Institute for Development Cooperation, HIVOS
Impunity Watch
Switzerland DIAKONIA
MISEREOR
OXFAM
TROCAIRE
Latin America Working Group
Honduras Delegation
Honduras-Switzerland Forum
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