

August XX 2009

H.E. Jean-Marie Ehouzou
Foreign Minister
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Integration,
Francophonie, and Beninese Expatriates
B.P. 318
Cotonou, Benin

Your Excellency,

We are writing to encourage your government to present its candidacy to the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) elections that will take place in May 2010. We believe that as a member of the Council Benin could play an important role in the promotion and protection of human rights.

The U.N. General Assembly resolution establishing the HRC affirmed that only states which themselves uphold the highest standards of human rights are to be elected as members. Benin's support and promotion of human rights at a national, regional and international level, make it a worthy candidate.

The election process outlined by UNGA Resolution 60/251 implies that there should be competitive elections for the Council seats allotted to each regional group, and that the UN General Assembly should vote for candidates based on their commitments to promote and protect human rights. During last year's election, the African Group enjoyed a spirited contest for the available seats after years of presenting a clean slate. This year, we hope to see that trend continue. Your government's candidacy for the Human Rights Council would send a signal that the African Group is committed to competitive elections in which candidates can be judged by their dedication to human rights.

We hope that you will give early consideration to a potential candidacy for the HRC to provide your government ample time to organize a campaign. We believe Benin's record on human rights make it a worthy candidate for the HRC, and its geographic and political position will enable a strong candidacy and a special role as a leader and consensus-builder on the Human Rights Council.

We look forward to a principled election for the four open African seats. We believe Benin's participation in this process would be an important contribution to the development of the Human Rights Council.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.