

August XX, 2009

H.E. Zacarias Albano da Costa  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation  
GPA Building No. #1, Ground Floor  
Rua Avenida Presidente Nicolau Lobato, PO Box 6  
Dili, Timor-Leste

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 Timor Leste's membership on the Council will help to ensure that the Asian Group uses its key position on the Council as a means of demonstrating the region's commitment to human rights promotion.

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. Timor Leste'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. In last year's elections, however, the Asian Group presented the same number of candidates as seats available in their region. We are particularly concerned that this trend may continue this year. Your government's candidacy for the Human Rights Council would reverse this trend and send a signal that the Asian 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 Timor Leste'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 Asian Group seats. We believe Timor Leste's participation in this process would be an important contribution and urge you to come forward with a strong human rights agenda for the promotion and protection of human rights at the national level and on the Council and set out pledges in this regard.

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