

Members
Inter-American Commission on Human Rights
1889 F Street, NW
Washington DC 20006

March 23, 2016

Ref: Competition for position of Executive Secretary

Dear Members of the Commission,

I am pleased to address you for the purpose of presenting my application for the position of Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. It has been my privilege over the past 24 years to work for the Commission, during the last eight years as Assistant Executive Secretary. This experience has enabled me to learn about and deal with a broad range of human rights challenges in the region, and to work with all of the different mechanisms the Commission has at its disposal.

More specifically, as Assistant Executive Secretary, my primary functions have included directing the legal team. In this sense, I act as Legal Director, which in practice includes the review of and intervention in each document that would present a juridical position of the Commission. Within the framework of the individual case system, this includes all the draft reports on admissibility, inadmissibility, merits and friendly settlement. This also includes the review of all the draft reports on countries as well as thematic reports. This supervision serves to ensure that the draft documents present uniform positions prior to submitting them for the consideration of the Commission, ensuring that the legal analysis is presented at the highest possible level. Within this same function, I supervise all of the work of the legal team that supports the Commissioners before the Inter-American Court, reviewing the documents to be presented. I also supervise the work of the Group in charge of precautionary measures.

The Assistant Executive Secretary participates in the formulation of and follow-up on proposals for external funding, including meetings with donors, preparation of the strategic plan, as well as in diverse administrative responsibilities including the authorization of expenses. In my current position I also have an active role in decisions concerning personnel selection, the assignment of responsibilities within the Secretariat, the distribution of work and performance evaluation.

I am applying for this position with the professional objective of continuing to support the Commission in its mandate of protection and promotion. The Commission confronts tremendous challenges in the discharge of its mandate. These include achieving better compliance with its decisions and recommendations; the integral incorporation of the standards of the system in domestic law and practice; and broader ratification of the treaties of the system.

At present the Commission is confronting very particular challenges in responding to individual petitions in a way that is more timely and relevant for the users of the system, and in seeking the additional resources necessary to make that happen. As Assistant Executive Secretary, I have invested considerable efforts in combatting procedural delay, with positive results, particularly in the stage of initial review. I would like to continue contributing, from the distinct role of Executive Secretary, in the implementation of all possible mechanisms to overcome this problem.

The Commission has made a crucial contribution to the protection of human rights in the region since it

was established, and has evolved on the basis of the challenges confronted and the experience gained. Please accept the present application as my indication that I would welcome the opportunity to continue to support the Commission from a new perspective, based on the experience I have acquired, in the design and implementation of the changes and reforms necessary to confront the challenges it faces. It would be an honor to be considered in the present competition.

Yours sincerely,

Elizabeth Abi-Mershed