

I would be extremely honored to serve in the position of Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and I believe that my experience and competencies are particularly well-suited to supporting the Commission at this particular time.

I currently represent Amnesty International at the United Nations in New York, where I have been able to work on the human rights situation in several countries in the Americas and to advocate for the strengthening of the Inter-American Human Rights System. I am also an Adjunct Professor of human rights advocacy and research at New York University. Previously I served with the Organization of American States (OAS) as Deputy Secretary of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. I worked with the Truth Commission in Guatemala, and led a team charged with evaluating the implementation of large regional programs on human rights and democracy in Central America funded by the European Commission. As the armed conflicts in Central America drew to a close I served as a Political Affairs Officer and Legal Officer with the United Nations peacekeeping operations in El Salvador (ONUSAL) and Guatemala (MINUGUA). I started my international professional career some 25 years ago as a diplomat in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Uruguay. All these positions demanded strong knowledge of international human rights standards and institutional mandates and sound political analysis and diplomacy, and required me to provide leadership, political support and advice in the framework of peacekeeping activities, post-conflict and other politically-sensitive environments.

I have a Master of Laws in international law and human rights from Harvard Law School and a Law degree from the University of the Republic School of Law in Montevideo, Uruguay. I have a strong academic background in human rights, history -including Latin American history, diplomacy, international relations and international law.

I worked directly on the full range of human rights issues as Deputy Secretary and director of the legal department of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, as representative of the largest international human rights organization (Amnesty International), as a professor of graduate students at New York University and during my tenure as a human rights officer with UN peacekeeping operations. I am well versed in the Inter-American System's practices, procedures and substantive human rights instruments from my experience at the Court and from the many years I have spent supporting and advocating for the strengthening of the System, and in particular the Commission.

I have had to exercise independent judgment and discretion in handling highly-sensitive and complex issues and problems. I have provided sound analysis and guidance on legal and political issues to UN peacekeeping leadership, and have a strong record of communicating persuasively with a variety of audiences in a concise and clear manner. I have drafted reports and published articles in English and Spanish –my mother tongue– on the human rights and political situation in post-conflict settings.

For years I have led and mentored teams of highly-qualified and diverse personnel, often in difficult environments. I have supervised staff at many levels, and I have always managed to create a supportive and nurturing environment in which team members worked productively to achieve the mandate of the organization. I both enjoy and have proven effective at building unity among teams of people from diverse backgrounds and cultures.

My expertise in Latin American issues is the product of my years of experience with the Uruguayan Foreign Ministry, the human rights components of UN peace operations in Central America, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, and my work in numerous countries of the region both as a consultant and on missions with Amnesty International. During the past five years I led Amnesty International's engagement with the Inter-American Human Rights System and have maintained relationships with representatives of civil society organizations, diplomats and other state authorities, and high-level officials at the OAS and the Inter-American System. As a Latin American myself, I remain very up-to-date on human rights and political developments in the region and have an understanding of most political and social issues.

As Executive Secretary I would represent the Commission tactfully and effectively and would ensure the Commissioners receive high-quality analysis, advice and drafting. Again, it would be a high honor and a privilege for me to serve the Commission and the OAS in this important position.