

March 22, 2016

The Commissioners
Organization of American States
1889 F St NW
Washington, D.C., 20006
United States of America

Dear Commissioners,

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights is the premier institution for advancing and promoting the universal application of human rights in the Americas.

The enduring legacy of the IACHR is not only its protection of the rights of the vulnerable, but the seminal work done in supporting the construction and the necessary reinforcement of the foundation upon which all human rights rests – democracy.

The IACHR has played a leading, and a pioneering role in generating or consolidating emerging international human rights standards in areas like amnesty laws, freedom of expression, the rights of LGBT persons and property rights for indigenous and tribal peoples.

The work and achievements of the IACHR not only commands my respect and admiration, but also my desire to consolidate and strengthen and extend its reach. It is this desire that moves me to offer myself for consideration for the position of Executive Secretary of the Commission.

The historiography of the IACHR, as reflected in its annual and thematic reports demonstrates not only its track record of success but also demonstrates the challenges of building on that track record.

Although the IACHR's 2011-2015 Strategic Plan sought to further human rights by seven overarching strategic objectives, supported by eight institutional programs, there are number of challenges that continue to confront the IACHR. Furthermore despite the fact that the Commission has made reforms to "its Rules, policies and practices with the aim of strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights"¹, challenges remain.

¹ IACHR RESOLUTION 1/2013 REFORM OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE, POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Among these challenges, are the universal acceptance of the Inter - American human rights system, victims' access to that system, and its efficiency.

Other rising challenges to the IACHR system are, inter alia, the troubling rise in the Americas of discrimination and marginalization of citizens because of political opposition; the difficulties faced by communities in respect of national or multi-national development projects and their toll on the said communities and their quality of life; and the increase in violence and abuse faced by girls, women and LGBT citizens.

Meeting all of these challenges will require the IACHR to meet an even greater challenge – that of continuing to build its capacity in terms of financial and human resources, and optimizing that capacity as effectively and as efficiently as possible; especially in times of diminishing political and financial support and in particular of funding.

As detailed in my enclosed resume -I offer a mix of leadership, professional, diplomatic, and managerial skills that would be deployed in addressing the current challenges of the IACHR, and advancing its ultimate objective of furthering human rights and of democracy in the Americas.

I also believe I possess the necessary skill-set to drive and implement innovative means for raising funds in order to deal with the increasing shortfall in funding that the IACHR, like every organization is currently faced with.

I know that it is critical to ensure that the IACHR is adequately resourced to meet the increasing demands made on it. Coming from a developing country, I do have experience in being required to a lot with limited resources.

As a former Lead Opposition Senator, Foreign Minister and Minister of Foreign Trade of Belize, an Ambassador to the United States and more importantly, former Permanent Representative of Belize to the OAS for seven years, I am familiar not only with the institutional framework and culture in which the IACHR operates, but also with the broader sub-regional, regional and international context in which the IACHR is required to meet its institutional challenges.

As a Belizean national, my hybrid Caribbean/Central American ancestry and education has equipped me not only with a bilingual capacity, but also a cultural predisposition to bridge gaps between the Caribbean and the Latin America.

My blend of legal, diplomatic and political experience over a span of over 25 years has given me the tools to not only understand the perspective of individual citizens

whose human rights have been violated, but also to advocate successfully for their protection in any forum, be it judicial, legislative, or international.

I would welcome the honor and the opportunity to place my skills and experience at the disposal of the IACHR in the cause of not only building on the existing “three pillars” of the IACHR, but in contributing to a fourth pillar: sustainability, which is essential to safeguarding the legacy of the IACHR of the past 53 years, and ensuring its continued expansion and success over the next 50 years.

I look forward to the prospect of meeting with you, and I make myself available at your convenience to discuss my application for the post of Executive Secretary of the IACHR.

Yours sincerely,

Lisa M. Shoman

Encl. Resume