

LETTER TO THE MEMBERS OF THE UN ECOSOC

DEFENDING FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

The undersigned NGOs in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations in accordance with its resolution 1996/31, having considered the expedited process that led the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations to ask for the suspension of the consultative status of the Centre Europe - Tiers Monde (CETIM) for a period of two years, wish to bring your attention the following considerations:

The complaint filed by the Republic of Turkey against CETIM on 14 May 2010, was communicated to the concerned party two weeks later, on May 27, giving it a period of only three days to provide the requested explanations. On 4 June, the NGO Committee adopted without a vote the recommendation to suspend for two years CETIM's consultative status. Given these severe time limitations, we are concerned that the members of the Committee could not possibly verify the validity of the serious accusations made by the Republic of Turkey, especially that of CETIM having a hidden agenda and be the vehicle for the propaganda of a terrorist organization.

Since its inception in 1970, CETIM has put the ideals enshrined in the UN Charter at the heart of all its actions, including the defense and promotion of fundamental human rights, dignity and worth of the human person, and equal rights of men and women, in order to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom by encouraging the development of friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples while refraining from undermining the territorial integrity or political independence of any State. In addition, the CETIM has always been at the forefront in defending the institution of the United Nations against its detractors.

By the quality of its reflections illustrated by numerous publications, and by the deep level of commitment in protecting and promoting human rights as embodied in their work of counseling, support and education to many organizations worldwide and in its varied contributions to UN human rights mechanisms, CETIM makes his mark as an important player for the protection and promotion of human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development.

If the status of the Human Rights Council is higher than that enjoyed by the late Commission and its work has the advantage of being made public through new communication technologies, it is the more important that the freedom of expression of the civil society be preserved for the Council to reinforce its credibility.

Finally, we consider it as fundamental that, within the UN system, the right of the accused to be heard must be fully respected, including in the context of the provisions under ECOSOC resolution 1996/31. At this time, the Economic and Social Council cannot formally rule on the recommendation adopted by the Committee on NGOs without it having been able to study adequately CETIM's response to the recommendation, in accordance with Article 56 of that resolution. Otherwise, the decision is vitiated by an obvious procedural defect.

Therefore, the undersigned non-governmental organizations request ECOSOC to refer CETIM's case back to the Committee on NGOs for review

2010, July 8

LIST OF SIGNATORIES (ECOSOC consultative status)

Swiss Catholic Lenten Fund / Action de Carême (special consultative status)

International Alliance of Women / Alliance internationale des femmes (general consultative status)

African Association of Education for Development / Association Africaine d'Education pour le Développement - ASAFED (special consultative status)

American Association of Jurists / Association américaine de juristes – AAJ (special consultative status)

Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies – CIHRS (special consultative status)

FIAN International (List)

France Libertés : Fondation Danielle Mitterrand (special consultative status)

Development innovations and networks / Innovations et réseaux pour le développement - IRED (special consultative status)

Interfaith International (special consultative status)

International Association of Democratic Lawyers - IADL / Association internationale des juristes démocrates – AIJD (special consultative status)

Mouvement contre le racisme et pour l'amitié entre les Peuples – MRAP (List)

International Organization for the Right to Education and Freedom of Education / Organisation Internationale pour le Développement de la Liberté d'enseignement – OIDEL (special consultative status)

International Movement for Fraternal Union among Races and Peoples / Mouvement international pour l'Union fraternelle entre les Races et les Peuples – UFER (special consultative status)

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom – WILPF / Ligue internationale des femmes pour la paix et la liberté- LIFPL (special consultative status)

World Federation for Mental Health - WFMH (special consultative status)