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To whom it may concern

I am since May 2008 the Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on the right to food. I have been requested to provide my assessment of the work of the Centre Europe Tiers Monde (CETIM), and of its contributions to the United Nations system of human rights.

The CETIM is a well-known non-governmental organisation, doing important work in the area of human rights since its foundation. It is particularly active in the area of economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development. It has been particularly successful in promoting economic, social and cultural rights through its publications and by organizing public events.

The CETIM has always been very active within the United Nations system. It regularly intervenes within the Human Rights Council. It sets up side events, facilitating the dialogue between the special procedures and the wider human rights community. The areas on which the contributions of the CETIM have been most important are the right to work and the right to social security ; the right to food ; the question of the foreign debt of poor countries and its impact on their ability to discharge their human rights obligations ; the regulation of transnational corporations ; and the right to development.

In my capacity as Special Rapporteur on the right to food, I have consistently been impressed by the quality and rigor of the work carried out by the CETIM. Almost by definition, positions adopted by non-governmental organisations may be controversial. But their contribution to the debate as to how to strengthen the protection and promotion of human rights through the UN mechanisms has been undeniable. For all these reasons, and in recognition of its specific contribution to the field of economic, social and cultural rights, it is my firm belief that the suspension of the consultative status of the CETIM by the Committee on NGOs would be regrettable, as it would deprive us from an important and useful source of information.

Olivier De Schutter