



## **10** FOR ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL HUMAN RIGHTS

**September –December 10, 2010**

**Ratify the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to ensure justice for victims of economic, social and cultural rights violations**

The time has come to ensure that people denied their economic, social and cultural rights, in particular those living in poverty, are able to access justice. The NGO Coalition for an Optional Protocol calls on States to become party to the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

On **December 10** 2008, the United Nations General Assembly adopted an Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. **September 24, 2010** marks the first anniversary of the Protocol's opening for signature, ratification and accession. We call on States to utilize **the opportunity offered by the September "2010 Treaty Event: Towards Universal Participation and Implementation"** and the **MDG-10 year review**, and to become party to this treaty, to ensure at least **10** ratifications or accessions by December **10**, 20**10**.

Governments are required by international law to ensure economic, social and cultural rights for all. Governments worldwide have consistently stated their commitment to **reducing poverty, inequality and meeting the Millennium Development Goals**. This commitment can be demonstrated through action by becoming party to this critical mechanism which would hold governments to account for failures to uphold their human rights obligations established by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

We commend Ecuador and Mongolia for ratifying the Protocol. We also commend the 31 other countries who signed the Protocol and urge them and other countries of the world to ratify it and encourage other countries to do so, ensuring that at least **10** countries become party to the Protocol by December **10**, 20**10** in order to bring the treaty into force.

States that become party to the Protocol will send a signal to other countries that we can no longer be complacent about marginalisation and neglect of those living in poverty. Governments must **seize this opportunity to ensure access to justice and effective accountability for all human rights**.

We therefore urge all Governments to:

- Become party to the Optional Protocol to the ICESCR by December **10, 2010**
- Issue a Declaration recognizing the Competence of the Committee to conduct inquiry and Inter-State procedures
- Encourage other countries to become party to the Protocol

## **10** Human Rights Protected by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights:

1. be free from discrimination
2. work
3. just working conditions
4. adequate housing
5. food
6. water
7. health
8. social security
9. protection of the family and,
10. education

- ✓ The Protocol will invigorate the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
- ✓ The Protocol will provide an opportunity for people to claim their rights under this treaty. Their complaints would be heard in front of an independent, international panel of experts who would determine whether their rights had been upheld.
- ✓ The Protocol will help governments identify gaps in the protection of economic, social and cultural rights in the country.
- ✓ The Protocol will create an incentive for all government officials to listen to people living in poverty and to ensure that no groups are left out from efforts at social and economic development.

**Steering Committee of the NGO Coalition for the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights:**



Centre on  
Housing Rights  
and Evictions



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