



10 FOR ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL HUMAN RIGHTS

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 to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights reiterates its call on States to become party to this Protocol.

On September 2010 we called on States to utilize the opportunity offered by the first anniversary of the Protocol's opening for signature, ratification and accession 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**. We reiterate our call, and ask States to ensure that the **second anniversary of the adoption of the Optional Protocol**, by the UN General Assembly in December 10, 2008, is marked with a historic moment for human rights in the world: the entry into force of a mechanism that will reunify the vision of human rights as including economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights, all in an equal status.

Governments are required by international law to ensure economic, social and cultural rights for all. Countries 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, Mongolia and Spain for ratifying the Protocol. We also commend the 32 other countries who signed the Protocol and urge them and other countries of the world to ratify it, ensuring that at least **10** countries become party to the Protocol by December **10**, 20**10**. This will bring this 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 marginalization 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 Protocol 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. freedom 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 the Protocol. 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:

