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HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL  
Fourth organizational meeting  
26 November 2007

**Letter dated 23 November 2007 from the Permanent Representative  
of Egypt to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the  
President of the Human Rights Council**

You will recall that, in my letter dated 19 November 2007, I transmitted the African Group non-paper on the role of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) troika-rapporteurs and requested you to kindly hold intergovernmental discussions on the matter under your auspices. During your briefing to the African Group on 21 November, you informed the Group that, in view of the differing interpretations by various regional groups, further consultations should be held.

Meanwhile, the secretariat of the Council circulated, on the same day, a note to Member States informing them that a “final rehearsal” of the selection of the troikas would be organized on 23 November at 3 p.m., in anticipation of the holding, during the organizational meeting on 26 November, of the actual drawing of lots for the first two groups of countries to be reviewed, and the finalization of the matter on 28 November, after receipt of their replies with regard to the troika members attributed to them.

In this regard, the African Group requests you to take appropriate measures to postpone the selection of troikas until an agreement has been reached on the scope and nature of their role through an intergovernmental process of consultations.

The Group does not share the sense of urgency for proceeding with the selection of the troikas at the dates announced by the Secretariat, particularly in view of the fact that the first session of the UPR Working Group is only to begin in April 2008.

More importantly, the Group believes that any deadlines to be communicated to Member States should be set solely on the basis of explicit decisions made by the Council, or at the very least, as recommended by its Bureau. No such decision was made by the Council, and we are unaware of any such recommendation having been conveyed by the Bureau.

I would also seize this opportunity to convey to you the position of the African Group on related issues pertaining to this matter as follows:

- (a) Countries selected to serve on the troikas should not be asked to decide on the spur of the moment and announce publicly whether or not they want to be part of the troikas to which they have been assigned;
- (b) It is preferable that selected troika members and reviewed States be given an adequate period of time to communicate their position in a manner assuring confidentiality.

The African Group would like to reiterate the importance it attaches to reaching an agreement on this important matter, which in our view is essential for the success of the UPR exercise and hence of the Human Rights Council itself, a matter to which the African Group, and no doubt all other regional groups, are committed.

Finally, Mr. President, the Group also requests that the present letter, as well as the previous one addressed to you on the role of the Troika-Rapporteurs, be circulated as documents of the Council.

*(Signed):* **Sameh Shoukry**  
Ambassador, Permanent Representative

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