

## Annex II

Biographical data form of candidates to human rights treaty bodies  
(Please respect the specified amount of lines when filling out this form and  
return it electronically in word format)

Name and first name: **Benyam Dawit MEZMUR**

Date and place of birth: **22 May 1980, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

Working languages: **English, Amharic,**

### **Current position/function:**

(5 lines maximum)

Associate Professor of Law, University of the Western Cape, Cape Town, South Africa and lecture/supervise on an *ad hoc* basis at Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia

Director (Acting) of the Dullah Omar Institute<sup>1</sup> for Constitutional Law, Governance and Human Rights and Coordinator of its Children's Rights Project, University of the Western Cape, Cape Town, South Africa

Chairperson, United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child

### **Main professional activities:<sup>2</sup>**

(10 lines maximum)

Mr Mezmur is currently the Chairperson of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and served as Vice-Chairperson from May 2013 until May 2015. As an academician Mr Mezmur has lectured masters courses/ and supervised students on children's rights, the rights of persons with disabilities, international protection of human rights, international family law, and the African human rights system. He has also lectured in a number of academic institutions in Africa [Ethiopia and South Africa] and Europe [Belgium, Switzerland, The Netherlands, UK etc]. He coordinates/conducts research on children's rights in a number of African countries, and has been involved in institutional efforts aimed at providing technical support to governments through UN agencies such as UNICEF. In addition, he is involved in advocacy work on the rights of the child with treaty bodies at the UN, the Human Rights Council, and regionally, he continues to serve on the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child of the African Union.

### **Educational background:**

(5 lines maximum)

Doctorate in Law (LLD), (2010), University of Western Cape, (research paper on child rights in intercountry adoption)

Masters in Law (LLM) in Human Rights and Democratization (CHR), (2005), University of Pretoria, South Africa (research paper on child soldiers);

Postgraduate Diploma in international protection of human rights, (2007), Abo Akademi, Finland.

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<sup>1</sup> Formerly known as "Community Law Centre", and re-named after its founding Director, the first Minister of Justice of democratic and post-apartheid South Africa, Advocate Dullah Omar.

<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that membership in the Committee on the Rights of the Child requires participation in three (January/February, May/June and September /October) sessions of three weeks duration each per year; in addition, pre-sessional working groups are held immediately after each session during five working days in order to prepare the following session. The total number of weeks during which the Committee meets in Geneva therefore amounts to 12 weeks per year.

Bachelor of Laws (LLB), (2003), Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia; and Certificates in mental disability law (CEU, Budapest); development law; international criminal and humanitarian law; ESC rights; etc.

**Other main activities in the field relevant to the mandate of the treaty body concerned:**

(10 lines maximum)

In addition to Mr Mezmur's main professional activities mentioned above, he has also taken part in the negotiations to draft the 3rd Optional Protocol to the CRC; participated (since 2007-2012) in the contribution of submissions to the CRC Committee in its Days of General Discussion; and made submissions to the Human Rights Council, and participated in its Day on the Rights of the Child; etc. Formerly Mr Mezmur was a Legal Officer (2003-2005) at the African Child Policy Forum (ACPF), and continues to serve on its International Board of Trustees, which is chaired by Mme Graca Machel. Mr Mezmur also serves/served in Expert Groups/Meetings/Advisory Councils/Task Forces such as on the Sustainable Development Goals; children's rights and digital media; budgeting for children; children's rights and the business sector; commercial sexual exploitation (ECPAT); juvenile justice (UNODC); financial aspects of intercountry adoption (HCCH); violence against children including harmful practices (SRSG VAC and ACPF) and the right to education. Mr Mezmur has also been invited as a speaker to more than 50 international and regional meetings/conferences/workshops in the last five years including more recently to the Council of Europe child rights conference (April 2016, Sofia), African Union Conference on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the African Children's Charter (Nov 2015, Addis Ababa), regional child rights forum on children and business (Sept 2015, Johannesburg), and regional nationality and statelessness conference (Feb 2015, Abidjan). Mr Mezmur is a member of a number of child rights organizations' boards and professional bodies.

**List of most recent publications in the field:**

(5 lines)

Mr Mezmur has more than 50 published academic and lay publications/reports/ etc on child rights in the last few years including:

- (1) "Madonna, Mercy, Malawi, and international children's rights law in adoption" (2012) 20 International Journal of Children's Rights;
- (2) "Corporal punishment and the African Children's Charter" (2012) (Save the Children);
- (3) " 'Listen to us': Arguing for child participation in NEPAD" (2009) 17 AJICL\*;
- (4) "The right to education in Africa: Taking stock" (Chapter in book) (2009)\*; (5) "Children at both ends of the gun: Child soldiers in Africa" (Chapter in book) (2008);
- (6) "From Angelina (to Madonna) to Zoe's Ark: What are the 'A-Z' lessons for intercountry adoptions in Africa" (2009) 23 International Journal of Law, Policy and the Family;
- (7) "2 + 2 = 5? Exploring the domestication of the CRC in the South African courts (2002-2006)" (2008) 16 International Journal of Children's Rights 1\*<sup>3</sup>

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\*With J Sloth-Nielsen