

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4502

September 27, 2011

The Honorable Irina Bokova
Director-General
United Nations Educational, Scientific
and Cultural Organization
7, place de Fontenoy
75352 Paris 07 SP France

Dear Director General Bokova:

I learned recently that the African Union, of which President Teodoro Obiang of Equatorial Guinea currently serves as chairman, adopted a resolution calling on UNESCO to award the UNESCO-Obiang International Prize for Life Sciences, and that it is on the agenda for UNESCO's Executive Board meeting this week.

I am writing to urge UNESCO to not award the Obiang Prize. For the reasons I stated in my letter to you of May 20, 2010, I join those who believe it would be a serious mistake for UNESCO to associate itself with a prize named for the leader of an authoritarian government widely criticized for corruption and human rights abuses. It is likely that the \$3 million prize itself was the product of corruption or theft from the public treasury.

UNESCO's record in recent years has been impressive. Its credibility and reputation are essential to the increasingly visible role it is playing on an extraordinary range of important global issues. It would be very unfortunate if UNESCO were to compromise its reputation and leadership.

Please feel free to share this letter with members of the Executive Board.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



PATRICK LEAHY
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on the
Department of State and Foreign Operations