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**EFFECTIVE FUNCTIONING OF HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS:
NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND REGIONAL ARRANGEMENTS**

**Information presented by the Asia Pacific Forum
of National Human Rights Institutions**

Note by the Secretariat

The Secretariat of the Commission has received the following communication* which is reproduced below in accordance with the decision adopted by the Commission at its fifty-seventh session that, if requested, information or reports received from national institutions on their regional meetings might be circulated as documents of the Commission (E/2001/23-E/CN.4/2001/167, para. 22).

* Reproduced in the annex as received.

Annex

UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
61st Session



THE ASIA PACIFIC FORUM
OF NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS

...a partnership for human rights in our region

REPORT ON ACTIVITIES

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
1. PURPOSE.....	4
2. APF ACTIVITIES	4
2.1 ANNUAL MEETING.....	4
2.2 GENERAL ADVISORY SERVICES	6
2.2.1 <i>Advice to Members</i>	6
2.2.2 <i>APF mission to Fiji</i>	6
2.3 ADVISORY COUNCIL OF JURISTS	7
2.3.1 <i>Rule of Law and Terrorism</i>	7
2.3.2 <i>Torture</i>	7
2.4 INFORMATION AND PROMOTION	7
2.4.1 <i>Forum Bulletin</i>	8
2.4.2 <i>Donor Update</i>	8
2.4.3 <i>Website</i>	8
2.4.4 <i>Participation in APF Activities</i>	8
2.4.5 <i>Speaking Engagements</i>	8
2.5 INTERNATIONAL LAW DEVELOPMENT	9
2.5.1 <i>12th UN Workshop on Regional Cooperation</i>	9
2.5.2 <i>60th Session of the UN Commission on Human Rights</i>	11
2.5.3 <i>International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions</i>	11
2.5.4 <i>New International Instrument on Disability</i>	11
2.6 TRAINING.....	13
2.6.1 <i>Training Needs Analysis</i>	13
2.6.2 <i>Thematic Regional Workshops</i>	13
2.6.2.1 <i>Pacific Human Rights Consultation</i>	13
2.6.2.2 <i>Human Rights Educators ‘National Action Plan’ Seminar</i>	13
2.6.2.3 <i>Workshop on Building an Effective Media and Communication</i> <i>Programme</i>	14
2.6.2.4 <i>Workshop on NGO – National institution Working Relationships</i>	14
2.6.3 <i>National Disability Training</i>	14
2.6.4 <i>Investigations Training</i>	15
2.6.5 <i>Staff Training</i>	15
2.6.6 <i>Regional Staff Placements</i>	15
2.7 CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECTS	16
2.7.1 <i>Trafficking</i>	16
2.7.2 <i>Internally Displaced Persons</i>	16
2.7.3 <i>APF mission to Palestine and Jordan</i>	17
2.7.4 <i>APF mission to Cambodia</i>	17
2.8 STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT	18

1. PURPOSE

In accordance with the decision adopted by the UN Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-seventh session (E/2001/23-E/CN.4/2001/167, para. 22), information received from national institutions on their regional meetings may be circulated as documents of the Commission.

This report, prepared in accordance with the above decision, contains information on the regional activities of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (APF) for the period from March 2004 to January 2005.

2. APF ACTIVITIES

The APF is comprised of the National Human Rights Institutions of Afghanistan, Australia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, New Zealand, Palestine, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka and Thailand. The work of the APF can be categorised under three broad areas:

- (i) Strengthening the capacity of individual APF member institutions to enable them to more effectively undertake their national mandates.
- (ii) Assisting governments and non-governmental organisations to establish national institutions in compliance with the minimum criteria contained in the Paris Principles.
- (iii) Promoting regional cooperation on human rights issues.

During the reporting period the APF's operations focused on the following eight main areas of activity – (i) Annual Meetings, (ii) General Advisory Services (iii) Advisory Council of Jurists, (iv) Information and Promotion, (v) International Law Development, (vi) Training (vii) Capacity Building Projects and (viii) Strategic Management.

2.1 Annual Meeting

The Ninth Annual Meeting of the APF was held in Seoul, Republic of Korea, on 13th September 2004. This one day meeting of APF member institutions and the OHCHR provided an opportunity for extended discussion of the APF's management, its functioning and future needs. This meeting was followed by the 7th International Conference of National Human Rights Institutions which was held from the 14th to 17th September 2004. The National Human Rights Commission of the Republic of Korea hosted both meetings. In terms of the key outcomes of the meeting, Forum Councillors:

1. Approved the annual report of the APF for 2004 and the Business Plan for 2005 and expressed their appreciation for the financial contributions made by (i) member institutions; (ii) the governments of Australia, India, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, United Kingdom and the United States; (iii) donor institutions, including the British Council, Brookings Institution, MacArthur Foundation and the National Endowment for Democracy; and (iv) intergovernmental agencies, including the Commonwealth Secretariat and United Nations agencies (UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF and the OHCHR).

2. Reaffirmed that the structure and responsibilities of national institutions should be consistent with the Principles Relating to the Status of National Institutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (Resolution 49/134) commonly referred to as the 'Paris Principles.' On this basis they admitted the Jordan National Centre for Human Rights as an associate member of the APF. This increased the APF's overall membership to 15 institutions. The APF will provide assistance to the Jordan National Centre for Human Rights to become fully compliant with the Paris Principles.
3. Approved the next draft reference to the Advisory Council of Jurists to be on the issue of the prevention of torture during detention.
4. Considered the training needs of national human rights institutions and welcomed the commissioning of a training needs analysis of all APF member institutions. Forum Councillors requested that the secretariat disseminate the findings and recommendations of the analysis to all Forum Councillors for their consideration and further action.
5. Discussed the potential role of national human rights institutions in the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). Forum Councillors agreed to advocate for the participation of national human rights institutions in CSW on a basis at least consistent with their participation in the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.
6. Considered recent threats to the effective functioning of national human rights institutions. In this regard the Forum Councillors condemned the destruction of the regional Herat office of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission.
7. Unanimously elected the National Human Rights Commission of the Republic of Korea (as the current host institution of the annual meeting) to the position of Chairperson of the APF. The National Human Rights Commission of Nepal (as the host institution for the last annual meeting) and the National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia (as the host institution for the next annual meeting) were also elected unanimously to the two positions of Deputy Chairpersons.
8. Gratefully accepted the kind offer of the National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia to host the Tenth Annual Meeting of the Forum in August 2005.

The meeting adopted a comprehensive Statement of Conclusions detailing the above outcomes. A full copy of this statement, and all the associated meeting papers prepared for the meeting, are available at: www.asiapacificforum.net.

2.2 General Advisory Services

The APF provided a wide range of advisory services to member institutions, prospective members, governments and NGOs during the reporting period. Advice included (i) the nature and status of national institutions; (ii) specific issues of regional concern; (iii) operational issues such as institutional strengthening; and (iv) the promotion of 'best practice' models.[†]

2.2.1 Advice to Members

Advice was provided to national human rights institutions on the following issues – (i) disability; (ii) anti-terrorism measures; (iii) trafficking; (iv) investigation techniques; (v) national action plans; (vi) strategic planning; (vii) monitoring in conflict situations; (viii) HIV/AIDS; (ix) regional human rights mechanisms; (x) compliance with the Paris Principles (xi) internally displaced persons and (xii) follow up on previous recommendations of the Advisory Council of Jurists.

2.2.2 APF mission to Fiji

The APF made a formal submission to the 'Eminent Persons Review Group' of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF – the regional intergovernmental organisation in the Pacific – see www.forumsec.org.fj) urging PIF to place a greater emphasis on both national and regional human rights machinery for Pacific Island States. In April 2004 the Eminent Persons Review Group adopted the submission of the APF and recommended to the leaders of Pacific Island States that they develop national human rights machinery in cooperation with the APF (recommendation 6 of the report, which can be obtained at www.mfat.govt.nz/foreign/regions/pacific/pif03/pifreviewdocs/reviewindex.html). In late April 2004 all 16 leaders of the Pacific Island States unanimously adopted the recommendation.

From the 5 to 7 May 2004 the Director of the APF travelled to Fiji (location of the PIF Secretariat) for meetings with the PIF Deputy Secretary-General in addition to government and civil society representatives to discuss future APF activities in the Pacific. During this time the Director was also the keynote speaker and guest of honour for the Fiji Human Rights Commission's Human Rights Media Awards (for further information see www.usp.ac.fj/journ/wansolnews/2004/may/wansol0705041.html).

On the 18 November 2004, PIF and the APF again met in Fiji to discuss the holding of a joint regional workshop for Pacific Island States on human rights mechanisms. This regional workshop was held in Nadi, Fiji, from 28 February to 1 March 2005 for the Member States of PIF. A full report on this activity will be provided in the next reporting period.

[†] As foreshadowed, advice was provided to Afghanistan, Jordan, Maldives, Palestine, Japan, Taiwan, Timor-Leste and Solomon Islands. Additionally, advice was also provided to Bangladesh, Federated States of Micronesia, Pakistan, Qatar, Samoa, Saudi Arabia and Vanuatu.

2.3 Advisory Council of Jurists

2.3.1 Rule of Law and Terrorism

During 2004 the APF acted as the secretariat to the Advisory Council of Jurists. In particular this involved (i) the development of terms of reference on the rule of law and terrorism (ii) the development of a comprehensive background paper on the rule of law and terrorism (iii) liaison with the Jurists and member institutions (iv) liaison with the host institution and logistics for the meeting of the Council (v) finalising the conclusions of the Council (vi) liaising with member institutions concerning the adoption and implementation of the Council's recommendations and (vii) developing the terms of reference for a new reference. For further details of the operation of the Advisory Council of Jurists see www.asiapacificforum.net/jurists/jurists.html. For a full copy of the background paper and final report of the Jurists on the 'rule of law and terrorism' reference see www.asiapacificforum.net/jurists/terrorism/intro.htm. The APF also sent a questionnaire to all APF member institutions seeking updated information on their activities in relation to counter-terrorism measures. The information provided by APF members was synthesised into a report provided to the 7th International Conference on National Institutions.

2.3.2 Torture

At the APF's Eighth Annual Meeting (APF 8) held in Kathmandu, Nepal, in February 2004, Forum Councillors "decided to formulate a new reference to the Advisory Council of Jurists on the issue of the prevention of torture during detention and requested the secretariat to prepare draft terms of reference for the consideration and approval of the Forum" (paragraph 7 of the Concluding Statement - see www.asiapacificforum.net/activities/annual_meetings/eighth/concluding.htm). During the reporting period the APF undertook research and drafting on proposed terms of reference on the prevention of torture during detention. The Advisory Council of Jurists will consider this reference in association with the Tenth Annual Meeting of the APF to be held in Mongolia in 2005. A full report on this activity will be provided in the next reporting period.

2.4 Information and Promotion

Throughout the reporting period the APF undertook a range of information and promotional activities on the role and functions of national human rights institutions and the activities of the APF. These educational activities aim to (i) improve awareness among political and administrative decision-makers and the wider community of the value and importance of national human rights institutions; (ii) improve awareness among relevant regional governments and agencies of the appropriate functions, powers, structures and legislation for national institutions established in accordance with the *Paris Principles*; (iii) improve awareness among national institutions of the legislation, casework, techniques, procedures and outcomes of other institutions both within and outside the region; and (iv) provide information about APF activities

to members institutions, governments (inside and outside the region), UN agencies, NGOs and the general community. In particular, the following specific activities were undertaken:

2.4.1 Forum Bulletin

The APF published two issues of a regular newsletter, titled the *Forum Bulletin*, to keep APF members, governments and NGOs informed of important policy, legal, administrative and training developments in the region. Copies of the Forum Bulletin can be obtained at www.asiapacificforum.net/forumbulletin.htm.

2.4.2 Donor Update

The APF published a quarterly update for supporters of the APF, titled *Donor Update* and undertook regular electronic communication with donor organisations on an issue by issue basis. Copies of the donor update can be viewed at www.asiapacificforum.net/finance/donors.html

2.4.3 Website

The APF regularly updated its website and published new information on a fortnightly basis. The website includes details on the role and functions of national institutions, the APF, individual member institution activities and the Advisory Council of Jurists. The APF also undertook regular electronic communication with members, governments and NGOs on an issue by issue basis. The website was also expanded with the inclusion of new information resources – particular the development of a secure ‘Senior Executive Officer’ component of the website containing a host of administrative and managerial information. The website can be viewed at www.asiapacificforum.net.

2.4.4 Participation in APF Activities

The APF encouraged the participation of governments and human rights NGOs in the APF’s annual meetings, workshops and training programs as an important awareness raising and partnership exercise about the role and functions of national institutions. For details on the range of governmental, NGO and expert participants in the APF’s activities, please view the participant lists associated with each activity at www.asiapacificforum.net/activities/activities.html. In addition the APF received a number of visits from regional government and civil society representatives.

2.4.5 Speaking Engagements

The APF undertook speaking engagements where they demonstrably assisted the APF to meet its mission, goals and objectives. For example, from 4 to 5 September 2004 Dr Shaista Shameem of the Fiji Human Rights Commission represented the APF at an Amnesty International conference titled ‘**Human Rights: A Pacific Agenda – Partnerships and Perspectives**’. The conference was held to promote dialogue and understanding between key actors in the Pacific region on

critical issues affecting the promotion and protection of human rights. For further information see

www.amnesty.org.au/whats_happening/hrc?MySourceSession=8800798f1bcb6c5de0ce912192786de8. In addition, from the 8th to 10th December 2004 the Director attended and presented a paper at an EU forum on Human Rights Defenders, held in the Netherlands.

2.5 International Law Development

During the reporting period the APF took an active role in the development of international law and in participating in major international activities.

2.5.1 12th UN Workshop on Regional Cooperation

The UN organised the above workshop in Doha, Qatar from the 2 to 4 March 2004. The workshop was attended by representatives from:

- (i) the governments of Afghanistan; Australia; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Brunei Darussalam; Cambodia; China; Cyprus; Fiji; India; Indonesia; Iran; Japan; Kuwait; Lebanon; Malaysia; Maldives; Marshall Islands; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nepal; Oman; Pakistan; Palau; Philippines; Qatar; Republic of Korea; Saudi Arabia; Samoa; Sri Lanka; Syria; Thailand; Timor Leste; United Arab Emirates; Yemen; and Palestine;
- (ii) the national human rights institutions from Afghanistan; Australia; Fiji; India; Indonesia; Iran; Jordan; Maldives; Malaysia; Mongolia; Nepal; New Zealand; Palestine; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Thailand and the Asia Pacific Forum;
- (iii) seven non-governmental organisations; and
- (iv) the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The purpose of this meeting is to assist in the development of regional or sub-regional inter-governmental arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights. In particular the workshop reviewed the progress achieved under the agreed UN framework of four "pillar's" to support the development of regional arrangements – namely (i) national human rights plans of action (ii) human rights education (iii) national human rights institutions and (iv) the realisation of the right to development and economic, social and cultural rights.

Specifically with regard to national human rights institutions, the 36 government representatives in their final concluding statement and associated programme of action for 2004 to 2006:

From the *Conclusions*:

22. *Welcome* the establishment of national human rights institutions and those in the process of being established, consistent with the principles relating to the status of national institutions of the promotion and protection of human rights adopted unanimously by the United Nations General Assembly (resolution 48/134, annex), while recognizing that it is the right of each state to choose the framework that is best suited to its particular needs at the national level;

23. *Reaffirm* that independent national human rights institutions should be established following an appropriate and inclusive process of consultation;
24. *Note* the report on the activities of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions, welcome the membership of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission and the Palestine Independent Commission for Citizens' Rights, and encourage its continuing commitment in concerted endeavours for the promotion and protection of human rights in the Asian-Pacific region;
25. *Welcome* the financial contributions made by member states of Australia, India, New Zealand and the Republic of Korea to the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions and invite other states of the region that have not yet done so to consider contributing to the Forum;
26. *Encourage* continued cooperation among national human rights institutions, civil society and United Nations agencies, programmes and funds and appreciate existing support of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to promote and facilitate such cooperation and provide advice and appropriate support to existing national human rights institutions;
27. *Note* the important role, which national institutions can play in connection with the development and implementation of national human rights action plans, as well as in providing advice to member States in the follow-up to the recommendations of human rights treaty bodies;
28. *Encourage* the participation of national human rights institutions in the sessions of the Commission on Human Rights and other relevant United Nations fora in accordance with their rules of procedure;

From the 2004-2006 Program of Action:

Main objectives: To support regional initiatives to strengthen the role of national human rights institutions and the Asia-Pacific Forum

- (i) In co-operation with States, continue to make available, upon request, technical co-operation and advisory services to support the establishment and strengthening of national human rights institutions;
- (ii) Support the work of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions.

Activities:

- (i) Support the annual meetings of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions for 2004 to 2006;
- (ii) Support training activities of the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions on an annual basis;

- (iii) Support a sub-regional workshop for the Arab region on national human rights protection systems, including national human rights institutions;
- (iv) Support a sub-regional workshop for the Pacific region on national human rights protection systems, including national human rights institutions;

The full text of the Concluding Statement and Programme of Action can be found at

www.asiapacificforum.net/activities/international/un_asia/twelfth.htm

The APF also participated in the UN regional workshop on national human rights action plans held under this framework in Bangkok, Thailand in October 2004.

2.5.2 60th Session of the UN Commission on Human Rights

The APF attended the 60th Session of the UN Commission on Human Rights in April 2004 and participated in the discussions surrounding the annual resolution on national institutions that is adopted in the UN Commission. The APF made a formal statement to the UN Commission on Human Rights. A copy of the statement can be found at

www.asiapacificforum.net/activities/international/un_commission/un_commission.htm

2.5.3 International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions

In association with the 60th Session of the UN Commission on Human Rights in April 2004, the APF participated in the annual meeting of the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions and various 'side events' on relevant topics. A full report on APF activities was sent to the OHCHR secretariat to be made available to all members of the ICC. In addition, the APF participated in the 7th International Conference of National Human Rights Institutions which was held from the 14th to 17th September 2004, in Seoul, Republic of Korea.

2.5.4 New International Instrument on Disability

The APF developed a coordinated policy position for all its members on the proposal to create a new international human rights instrument dealing with the rights of people with disabilities. A copy of the agreed APF position and associated discussion papers can be obtained at www.asiapacificforum.net/activities/annual_meetings/seventh/Disability.doc.

At the Eighth Annual Meeting of the APF, held in Kathmandu, Nepal from 16 to 18 February 2004, APF member institutions "welcomed progress to develop a new international convention on the rights of people with disabilities, as advocated by national institutions at the workshop

held in New Delhi, India in 2003. Forum institutions agreed to establish a working group to assist in the development of the proposed convention.”[‡]

The APF working group on disability is comprised of the national human rights institutions from Australia, India and New Zealand. The APF brought the members of the working group together at a workshop held by the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission on the proposed convention. The workshop was held in Canberra, Australia, from 25 to 26 March 2004. The members of the working group also held a separate meeting to discuss the development of the APF submission to the UN Ad Hoc Committee on this issue.

The APF working group developed a detailed paper for the consideration of the broader APF membership and for submission to the 3rd session of the Ad Hoc Committee in May/June 2004. A full copy of this submission can be found at www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/rights/ahc3contrib.htm.

An APF delegation attended the 3rd session of the Ad Hoc Committee. The delegation comprised Ms Anuradha Mohit, Special Rapporteur on Disability of the National Human Rights Commission of India, advised and assisted by Professor Andrew Byrnes, of the Faculty of Law, Australian National University. They attended the session of the Committee which ran from 23 May 2004 until 4 June 2004.[§] A report of the activities of the delegation can be found at www.asiapacificforum.net/news/index.html.

The APF working group continued their work and developed a detailed submission for the consideration of the broader APF membership and the 4th session of the Ad Hoc Committee in August/September 2004. The full text of this submission can be found at www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/rights/ahc4nhricomments.htm. The submission specifically focused on the following draft articles of the Convention – (2) General Principles, (7) Equality and non-discrimination, (17) Education, (18) Right to Political and Public Life, (21) Right to Health and Rehabilitation, (23) Social Security and Adequate Standard of Living, and (25) National Implementation and Monitoring Framework.

An APF delegation attended the 4th session of the Ad Hoc Committee. The delegation comprised Ms Anuradha Mohit, Special Rapporteur on Disability of the National Human Rights Commission of India, advised and assisted by Professor Andrew Byrnes, of the Faculty of Law,

[‡] See paragraph 20 of the Concluding Statement of the 8th Annual Meeting, http://www.asiapacificforum.net/activities/annual_meetings/eighth/concluding.htm

[§] Ms Robyn Hunt, of the New Zealand Human Rights Commission, who had served on the APF working group to prepare the APF submission was present as part of the New Zealand delegation, and participated in the APF/NHRI meetings. Mr Graeme Innes and Ms Rosemary Kayess, of the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, both of whom were also part of the APF working group, were present as members of the Australian government delegation, but were also able to contribute to APF discussions.

Australian National University during the first week of the two week meeting. Ms Grace Cho (a recent APF intern) also attended on behalf of the APF to assist Ms Mohit. They attended the session of the Committee which ran from 23 August 2004 until 3 September 2004.

2.6 Training

2.6.1 Training Needs Analysis

The APF commissioned the International Service for Human Rights (ISHR) to undertake an independent training needs analysis to assist the APF to refine and prioritise its training activities. The ISHR made a presentation to the Ninth Annual Meeting of the APF on its approach to the training analysis. They also liaised with individual APF member institutions and other key stakeholders to discuss the development and prioritisation of the APF's professional training program during the course of the 7th International Conference of National Institutions. The report and recommendations of the ISHR are anticipated in early 2005.

2.6.2 Thematic Regional Workshops

The following thematic regional workshops were held by the APF during the reporting period:

2.6.2.1 Pacific Human Rights Consultation

The Pacific Islands Human Rights Consultation was held from 1 to 3 June 2004 in Suva, Fiji Islands. Over 60 participants from 15 Pacific Island countries, representing non-government organisations, governments, international and inter-governmental organisations and national institutions, met to discuss human rights issues in the Pacific and endorsed the development of further national and regional mechanisms to protect and promote human rights. Participants highlighted that greater attention needed to be given to human rights issues in the Pacific region through the establishment and development of national institutions and regional initiatives. Hosted by the Fiji Human Rights Commission, the consultation was organised by the APF and OHCHR with financial support from UNDP, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the New Zealand Government. For further information see www.asiapacificforum.net/activities/thematic/pacific/index.htm.

2.6.2.2 Human Rights Educators 'National Action Plan' Seminar

A workshop on National Plans of Action for Human Rights Education was held at the Waipuna Conference Centre in Auckland, New Zealand on Wednesday, 14 July 2004. Senior educators from ten APF member institutions attended the workshop. This interactive and practical workshop focussed on the development of national plans of action for human rights education. The workshop provided an excellent opportunity for NHRIs to increase their expertise in the development of national action plans. The one-day workshop was sponsored by APF in

cooperation with the New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID), UNESCO Bangkok, and the New Zealand Human Rights Commission. The workshop followed a three day conference entitled *Living and Learning Together: The Role of Human Rights Education in Strengthening Communities in New Zealand and the Pacific* which was co-organised by the New Zealand Human Rights Commission. Further information on this activity can be found at www.hrc.co.nz/conference.

2.6.2.3 Workshop on Building an Effective Media and Communication Programme

The APF provided expert advice and training at a workshop for Commonwealth national human rights institutions held in Accra, Ghana from 22-24 June 2004. The workshop “National Human Rights Institutions: Building an Effective Media and Communication Programme” was organised by the British Council and the Ghana Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice with assistance from the APF. It was funded by the British Council and the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The aim of the workshop was to provide a forum for information sharing, skill development and strengthening ties between representatives of Commonwealth NHRIs. In addition, a media handbook was developed as a resource for workshop participants and their NHRIs.

2.6.2.4 Workshop on NGO – National institution Working Relationships

The APF provided expert advice and training at a workshop for Commonwealth national human rights institutions held in Colombo, Sri Lanka from 22-25 November 2004. The workshop was hosted by the National Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka. The primary goal of the workshop was to foster improved partnerships between national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations that work at the international, regional and national levels. The Kandy Declaration (see <http://www.asiapacificforum.net/activities/thematic/ngos/ngos.htm>), which expresses the earlier outcomes of interactions between Asia-Pacific national institutions and NGOs was used as the foundation upon which the workshop was built around. The means by which this workshop endeavoured to go beyond earlier dialogues, was by consolidating and referring to the expertise of African and European national institutions and NGOs, whose representatives were present in order to share their experiences.

2.6.3 National Disability Training

From 28th October to 1st November 2004 the Director of the APF participated in a program by the National Human Rights Commission of India relating to the development of professional training modules on disability rights for Universities, legal advocates and NGOs. The training program was held in Hyderabad, India.

2.6.4 Investigations Training

During the reporting period the APF worked with the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand to specially tailor an 'in-country' training program on investigation techniques. The training program is part of the APF's Professional Development Program. The five-day training program was implemented from the 22nd to 26th October 2004 in Bangkok, Thailand. It provided foundation knowledge and skills in the investigation of alleged infringements of human rights. In particular the program provided participants with (i) an overview of various models of investigation and an opportunity to clarify the appropriate model(s) of investigation within the Thai context, (ii) the purpose of investigations and the role of the investigation officer; (iii) an understanding of international human rights instruments as relevant to the legislative context of the Thai Commission and associated legal definitions and concepts; (iv) information on approaches to the assessment of complaints with particular reference to variables that influence determination of priority handling, preliminary or formal investigation and early resolution; (v) an understanding of key legal principles that guide the conduct of investigations into alleged infringements of human rights; (vi) a model to plan investigations to ensure they are efficient and effective; (vii) knowledge and skills to enable the efficient and effective gathering of evidence relevant to an investigation; (viii) knowledge and skills to enable the efficient and effective analysis of evidence that has been gathered; and (ix) knowledge and skills to enable appropriate handling of evidence, efficient and effective documentation of an investigation and appropriate file and caseload management.

The APF also followed up with the Sri Lankan Human Rights Commission on the implementation of the training program in Colombo, Sri Lanka in November 2003. For further information on this program see www.asiapacificforum.net/activities/investigations.htm.

2.6.5 Staff Training

From 1 to 10 December, the APF, in collaboration with the Raoul Wallenberg Institute, conducted a regional training program for staff representatives of APF national human rights institutions. The training was on general human rights law and theory with a specific emphasis on the role and functions of national human rights institutions. The training was held in Bangkok, Thailand.

2.6.6 Regional Staff Placements

The APF provided funds to assist with a placement by Ms Batchuluun Khishigsaikan, Director of the National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia, with both the New Zealand Human Rights Commission and the Fiji Human Rights Commission in July/August 2004. See www.asiapacificforum.net/activities/staff.htm for further information.

2.7 Capacity Building Projects

The APF undertakes capacity building projects involving its member institutions, governments and civil society organisations.

2.7.1 Trafficking

The issue of human trafficking has been identified by the membership of the APF as a major human rights concern that requires focused regional cooperation. Over the past four years, the APF and its members have taken concrete steps to provide a platform for cooperation including: inviting experts to its meetings, organising regional workshops and an annual meeting with a focus on trafficking, having its Advisory Council of Jurists prepare a reference on trafficking and establishing a Trafficking Focal Point Network between its member institutions and the APF. During the reporting period the APF liaised with the National Human Rights Commission of Nepal and India on the bilateral project to address trans-border trafficking.

2.7.2 Internally Displaced Persons

At the APF's Sixth Annual Meeting held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, September 2001, the member institutions of the APF expressed interest in developing their potential in promoting and protecting the human rights of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in their respective countries. In order to more effectively undertake this work, APF members requested that the APF secretariat raise funds to assist national institutions on this issue.

In response to this request, the APF entered into a partnership with the leading research and policy institute in this field, the Brookings Institution-SAIS Project on Internal Displacement (Brookings-SAIS Project). The Brookings-SAIS Project and the APF succeeded in securing financial and human resources to enable an eighteen-month internal displacement project consisting of: (i) individual assessments of six institutions in countries experiencing displacement (India, Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand) to be held during 2004 and (ii) a regional workshop on IDPs and the role of NHRIs to be undertaken in 2005 to enable institutions to exchange ideas, challenges and practices. Another important component of this project is to, in partnership with participating NHRIs, develop a program for technical assistance that aims to develop the capacity of the institution with regard to internal displacement. The APF and the Brookings Institution will, if requested, provide assistance in sourcing funding for those capacity-building initiatives.

During 2004 six visits led by Ms Pip Dargan, Deputy Director, APF Secretariat, have been undertaken by the joint APF/Brookings – SAIS team to the national institutions of the Philippines (26-30 April), Indonesia (3-7 May), Nepal (5-9 July), Thailand (9-13 August), India (4 to 8 October) and Sri Lanka (27 November-4 December).

In addition, the APF/Brookings Institution Team is currently working with the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) in the delivery of specialist training to the six participating NHRIs on the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. The first of these training programs was

implemented with the Philippines Commission of Human Rights for their central and regional office staff in Mindanao, Philippines, from 9-12 November 2004.

It is anticipated that the regional workshop on IDPs and the role of NHRIs will be held by the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka in mid-2005.

2.7.3 APF mission to Palestine and Jordan

The APF is working with the Jordan National Centre for Human Rights (JNCHR) and the Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizen's Rights (PICCR) to develop and implement institutional capacity building and strengthening programs. The twenty-eight month program, which will run until the end of 2005, involves three main activities – (1) participation at APF annual meetings; (2) participation at APF thematic workshops and (3) advisory and capacity building services which include staff training, staff exchanges and a study tour.

An APF 'needs assessment mission', comprised of the Chief Commissioner of the New Zealand Human Rights Commission, Ms Rosslyn Noonan and Mr Naresh Perinpanayagam of the APF secretariat, visited the Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizens Rights (PICCR) from 25-31 July and the Jordan National Centre for Human Rights (JNCHR) from 1-4 August. The objective of the APF mission was to meet with PICCR and JNCHR Commissioners and staff to discuss current joint projects, possible future projects and compliance with the UN Paris Principles. The APF Mission team is currently writing a report on the initial dialogue which will be made available to Forum Councillors. Further information on these activities can be found at www.asiapacificforum.net/news/2004_06_news_archive.htm.

2.7.4 APF mission to Cambodia

From 10 to 22 May 2004 a three person APF team made their second visit to Cambodia to undertake a situation analysis of the human rights of women and children in Cambodia on behalf of UNICEF. The objective of this work was to:

- synthesise new statistics, national policies and trends, and new research and analysis accumulated over the past years on the situation of women and children in Cambodia;
- examine causes and linkages between issues affecting the rights of children and women and potential hazards to their well-being;
- identify the country's human, financial and organizational capacities, the capacity gaps, and the necessary actions;
- identify key counterparts/players and their respective roles;
- assess the overall programming environment, including an overview of support and priority areas for the donor community

The APF draft of the situation analysis was completed in November 2004. When finalised, the analysis will be used by the Government of Cambodia and UNICEF to determine their forthcoming country programs. For further information see www.unicef.org/infobycountry/cambodia.html.

2.8 Strategic Management

During the reporting period the APF was responsible for the strategic management of the organisation and its operations. All activities as identified and approved by Forum Councillors in the APF Business Plan were successfully completed. These included:

- servicing the APF Chairperson, meetings of the full Forum Council and any sub-committees established by the Council;
- identifying international issues and pursuing activities that support the APF's mission and vision for the region;
- identifying and pursuing opportunities to increase regional participation and representation across the breadth of its activities including the involvement, wherever possible, of non-member institutions, governments and civil society;
- completing all monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements;
- identifying and implementing risk management strategies for all project activities and the overall operation of the APF;
- implementing a long-term fund development strategy to achieve financial stability and support for a growing organisation;
- the effective, efficient and equitable management of APF financial and human resources;
- strengthening the APF's governance and organisational structure through the development of board and operational policies;
