

## **CONCLUSIONS OF THE TENTH WORKSHOP ON REGIONAL COOPERATION FOR THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE ASIAN-PACIFIC REGION**

Beirut, Lebanon, 4 – 6 March 2002

1. Representatives of Governments of the Asia-Pacific region participating, together with representatives of national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations attending as observers, in the Tenth Workshop on Regional Co-operation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Asia-Pacific Region held in Beirut, Lebanon from 4 to 6 March 2002;
2. Recalling the important contributions made and conclusions adopted by previous workshops, and, in particular, the Bangkok Workshop held in 2001 and the inter-sessional workshops on the four areas identified under the Tehran Framework for Regional Technical Cooperation;
3. Reaffirming the universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelatedness of all human rights – civil, cultural, economic, political and social, – and the right to development;
4. Reaffirming the continuing relevance and applicability of international human rights instruments;
5. Recognizing that democracy, development and respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing;
6. Recalling the commitment of the international community at the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights to treat human rights globally in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing and with the same emphasis, and that while the significance of the national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds must be borne in mind, it is the duty of States, regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms;
7. Reaffirming that the primary focus for the promotion and protection of human rights is at the national level, and that therefore it is the primary responsibility of States to ensure that human rights are promoted and protected;
8. Committed to enhancing regional and international cooperation to promote universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms;
9. Mindful of the vastness of, and diversities within, the Asia-Pacific region;
10. Taking note of the recent Regional Ministerial Conference on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Trans-National Crime (Bali, February 2002) initiated and co-chaired by Indonesia and Australia and note the recognition by Ministers for the need for these problems to be addressed cooperatively and comprehensively within the region;
11. Reiterating the importance of an inclusive, step-by-step, building blocks approach towards enhancing regional cooperation for the promotion and protection of human rights;

12. Having reviewed the progress achieved so far in implementing the Framework for Regional Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region;
13. Having reviewed current initiatives for the strengthening and development of regional or subregional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights in the Asia-Pacific;
14. Having taken stock of on-going initiatives on the implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Conference against Racism;

Hereby,

15. Express appreciation to the Government of Lebanon and ESCWA for hosting this Workshop and for the statements made by Mr. Mahmoud Hammoud, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lebanon and Dr. Mervat Tellawi, Executive Secretary of ESCWA;
16. Welcome the participation of Ms. Mary Robinson, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Beirut Workshop, as well as her statement;
17. Take note with appreciation of the decision of the High Commissioner to appoint OHCHR Regional Representatives for the Asia-Pacific region, based in Bangkok, and for the Arab region, based in Beirut;
18. Express appreciation to the Governments, national institutions, experts, representatives of civil society and Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights for the implementation of the proposals made at the Beijing Workshop;
19. Invite Asia-Pacific Governments to consider acceding to the relevant human rights instruments and urge States parties to make every effort to meet their reporting obligations under United Nations human rights instruments;

With regard to National Human Rights Plans of Action and national capacity building:

20. Welcome the efforts of those States that are already implementing or have adopted, national human rights plans of action, including Australia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand, and the efforts of those States which are in the process of developing national human rights plans of action including Jordan, Nepal, New Zealand and Mongolia;
21. Recognize the desirability of including plans, as appropriate, to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, as a component of national human rights plans of action;
22. Reaffirm the desirability of developing national human rights plans of action through a process which ensures the participation of a wide range of relevant national, provincial and local government ministries and agencies, national human rights institutions, non-

governmental organizations, academic institutions and other sectors of civil society and of evaluation of these plans in order to gather lessons learned;

23. States the importance of monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the action plans;
24. Recognize the value of regional cooperation in sharing useful practices and methodologies in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national human rights action plans and capacity building;

**With regard to human rights education:**

25. Recognize that human rights education can play a positive role in enhancing respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and can contribute to the promotion of human rights, the prevention of human rights violations and the achievement of a culture of peace;
26. Recognize that human rights education should benefit from cultural values and traditions that enforce the universality of human rights, having the aim of promoting a multicultural understanding of human rights;
27. Recognize the desirability of including human rights education as a component of national human rights plans of action, development plans and other relevant national plans of action;
28. Encourage Governments to promote the development of national strategies for human rights education which are comprehensive, participatory, effective and sustainable;
29. Recognize that human rights education in schools at all levels represents an important component of such strategies, and can be regarded as a priority;
30. Note that priority should also be given to human rights education for all those involved in the administration of justice, including judges, lawyers, police, prison officials and relevant ministry officials;
31. Acknowledge the important role that non-governmental actors, including national human rights institutions, the media and non-governmental organizations, can play in furthering human rights education;

**With regard to National Human Rights Institutions:**

32. Welcome the establishment of new national human rights institutions in Mongolia, Thailand and the Republic of Korea and the further strengthening of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights in many countries of the Asia Pacific Region;
33. Reaffirm that national human rights institutions should be established following an appropriate and inclusive process of consultation;

34. Reaffirm that the status 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 48/134);
35. Note the importance of the Principles Relating to the Status of National Institutions and recognise that, ten years after their adoption by the General Assembly, there could be value, drawing on experiences of the OHCHR, National Human Rights Institutions and States within the Asia Pacific region, to consider how these principles could be clarified by further explanation of their application;
36. Welcome efforts to help and encourage national human rights institutions which are not yet members of the Asia Pacific Forum to become so;
37. Welcome the support provided by the Office of the High Commissioner to the Asia Pacific Forum of National Institutions and encourage the Office to continue to provide technical cooperation at the request of Governments for the development of national human rights institutions;
38. Encourage greater cooperation among national human rights institutions, non-governmental actors, civil society and United Nations agencies with mandates relevant to the protection and promotion of human rights and requests the OHCHR to promote and facilitate such cooperation and advise and appropriate support to existing national human rights institutions;
39. Note the implementation of, and substantive reports and conclusions relating to, the workshop concerning the role of national human rights institutions and other mechanisms in promoting and protecting economic, social and cultural rights, (Hong Kong, July 2001) and the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (Sri Lanka, September 2001);
40. Note the consensus statement of national institutions at the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and encourage them to play a major role in the implementation of the Programme of Action of the World Conference as envisaged in many of the provisions of the Programme;
41. Note the concluding statement by national human rights institutions at the regional workshop of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions on HIV/AIDS (Australia, October 2001) and human rights, and encourage them to continue their efforts to address HIV/AIDS related stigma and discrimination, and to promote and protect human rights in the context of HIV/AIDS;
42. Note the important role which national institutions can play in preventing trafficking of persons, especially women, youth and children, and protecting the rights of victims of trafficking and of migrants, including migrant workers;
43. Welcome the offer of the Nepal Human Rights Commission to host the Seventh Annual Meeting of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions and request OHCHR to adequately support the meeting;

**With regard to the realization of the right to development and economic, social and cultural rights:**

44. Reaffirm that peoples and the human person is the central subject of development and that development policy should make the human being the main participant and beneficiary of development;
45. Reaffirm that respect for all rights –civil, cultural, economic, political and social – is necessary to ensure enjoyment of the right to development;
46. Reaffirm that development is a comprehensive economic, social, cultural and political process, which aims at the constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population;
47. Reaffirm that states should take steps to address the economic and social development of marginalized or socially excluded ethnic minorities;
48. Welcome the guidance provided by the Sub-regional workshop on the Justiciability of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in South Asia, held in New Delhi, in November 2001;
49. Recognize the importance of good governance at national and international levels to ensure that human rights are protected, freedoms respected and development resources properly and efficiently utilised for implementing the right to development;
50. Affirm that international peace and security are essential elements for the realization of economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development;
51. Recognise that poverty and unemployment are among the major obstacles to the realisation of the right to development and economic, social and cultural rights and emphasize the need for action at national level and international cooperation to address this issue;
52. Welcome the conclusions of the regional workshop on the impact of globalisation on the full enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, May 2001) and in this regard;
53. Affirm the importance of the human rights treaty system:
  - in providing a legal framework within which states parties may address the positive and negative impact of globalisation;
  - in creating processes which enable the harmonisation of law and policy needed to achieve progressive realisation of economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development, and which contribute to maximizing the benefits of globalisation for all;
  - in clarifying the content of specific rights and in promoting public awareness of the provisions and principles concerning economic, social and cultural rights;

**With regard to the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance:**

54. Express their profound concern at, and unequivocal condemnation of, all forms of racism and racial discrimination, including acts of racially motivated violence, xenophobia and related intolerance, as well as propaganda activities and organizations which attempt to justify or promote racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in any form;
55. Welcome the adoption of the Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (Durban, South Africa, September 2001), which includes the intention of OHCHR to establish an Anti-Discrimination Unit;
56. Affirm their commitment to implementing the Programme of Action of the World Conference Against Racism;
57. Decide to include the implementation of the Programme of Action of the World Conference Against Racism as an integral part of the Asia-Pacific Framework for Regional Technical Cooperation;

**Participants in the Beirut Workshop thus:**

58. Recognize the close relationship between and mutually supporting nature of the four pillars of the Framework for Regional Cooperation for the Asia-Pacific Region and call on member states of the region to take concrete steps, as appropriate, at the national level in connection with the implementation of the Tehran Framework;
59. Affirm that the new programme of action to be adopted should further link regional, sub-regional and national activities, and provide for mutually reinforcing activities in order to strengthen its coherence and consistency;
60. While noting that the Tehran Framework is mainly a governmental process, acknowledge the importance of participation by national institutions, non-governmental and intergovernmental organisations and the private sector; the initiative of holding a consultation of non-governmental actors prior to the official opening of the workshop; and their reports to the plenary, and call on OHCHR to establish partnerships with these actors in the implementation of the Tehran Framework;
61. Note that the implementation of the activities envisaged under the Asia-Pacific Framework for Technical Cooperation is the responsibility of all States in the region and agree to strengthen joint efforts towards the implementation of these conclusions;
62. Express their appreciation for the efforts made by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to implement the Beijing Plan of Action and for its proposal to continue the implementation of the activities under the Framework in close cooperation with regional, sub-regional and national partners;

63. Call on UN agencies, global and regional financial institutions and bilateral donor agencies to examine how they could support the implementation of the activities under this Framework, including through financial and technical support and provision of human resources;
64. Welcome OHCHR Regional Representatives involvement in advising Asia-Pacific Governments at their request on the implementation of the activities under the Framework;
65. Agree to disseminate widely the results of this annual Workshop, as appropriate, among relevant Government ministries and institutions, national human rights institutions, non-governmental organisations and academic institutions and other partners at national, sub-regional and regional levels;
66. Call upon the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to report on progress achieved in the implementation of technical cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region in accordance with the Framework of Cooperation to the 11<sup>th</sup> Workshop on Regional Cooperation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Asia-Pacific Region;
67. Invite States to host inter-sessional sub-regional workshops and welcome the offer made by the Government of Vanuatu to host the upcoming sub-regional workshop on human rights education in the area of administration of justice in the Pacific;
68. Take note with appreciation of the proposals made by the Governments of Pakistan and Fiji to consider hosting the next Workshop;
69. Endorse and consider for action the next steps and activities as included in the attached annex.

## ANNEX

### **2002-2004 Programme of Action for the Asia-Pacific Framework for Regional Cooperation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights<sup>1</sup>**

The main responsibility for implementation of this Programme of Action lies with all States in the region. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights will facilitate the implementation of the activities in close cooperation with regional, sub-regional and national partners.

#### **1. National human rights plans of action and national capacity building**

*Main objectives: To gather lessons learnt and best practices in the region and to develop tools for the development of National Plans of Action.*

- Finalize the handbook, containing “Possible elements to facilitate the development of national plans of action for the promotion and protection of human rights that could be considered by countries which wish to include a national plan of action as part of their approach to human rights observance”, to States, national institutions and NGOs in the Asia-Pacific region. Translate the handbook into relevant languages and disseminate it to States, national institutions and NGOs in the Asia-Pacific region;
- Make available, upon request, technical co-operation and advisory services to develop national human rights capacity, especially to promote ratification of human rights instruments and to support State Parties to fulfil their reporting obligations;
- Make available, upon request, technical co-operation and advisory services to support the development, implementation, evaluation and monitoring of national human rights plans of action, including with the aim of integrating economic, social and cultural rights and action plans to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;
- In collaboration with relevant Governments, evaluate the experiences of all countries in the Asia-Pacific region which have completed national plans of action in order to gather lessons learned and best practices;

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<sup>1</sup> The Implementation of proposed activities by OHCHR is subject to the availability of resources from within the Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation In the Field of Human Rights.

## 2. Human rights education

*Main objective: To strengthen national capacities for human rights education with a focus on the incorporation of human rights education within the school system*

- In the framework of the Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004) prepare, publish and disseminate a compilation of initiatives undertaken in the Asia-Pacific region in the area of human rights education, training and public information;
- Conduct and publish a study on popular and non-formal human rights education methodologies used in the region, paying particular attention to those which are directed to vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalised groups;
- Compile existing materials (textbooks, curricula, legislation, etc.) for human rights education in schools, consistent with the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, for dissemination;
- Organise, in partnership with regional/sub-regional partners, a series of workshops in various sub-regions, aiming at the inclusion of human rights education in the school system and including elements as training of teachers and curriculum and materials development. The workshop will build on the methodology developed at the Sub-Regional Training Workshop on Human Rights Education in Northeast Asia held in Seoul, Republic of Korea, in December 1999. The workshops will target education policy-makers, officers responsible for teacher-training institutions, officers responsible for education faculties of universities, teaching materials and curriculum developers, parents' associations, NGOs active in the area of human rights education in schools and other relevant national organizations and institutions;
- Link national efforts to follow-up the sub-regional workshops into a regional network, including through the use of the internet, to promote information sharing;
- Support research on various aspects of human rights education in schools, such as comparative studies and development of guidelines concerning education policies, school and teacher-training curricula, extracurricular activities and innovative classroom/school management experiences, evaluation of impact of human rights education programmes;
- Request the United Nations to develop appropriate video materials for the promotion of human rights in schools;
- Make available, upon request, advisory services to develop and implement further activities to promote effective human rights education in schools, underlining the benefits of human and cultural diversity and religious tolerance and combating discrimination;

### 3. National human rights institutions

*Main objective: To support regional initiatives to strengthen the role of national institutions and their regional association in the Asia-Pacific region*

- Support the annual meetings of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Institutions with a view to a sharing of best practices and request the Forum to report to the Annual Asia-Pacific Workshop;
- 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 institutions;
- Support follow up activities related to the implementation of the Programme of Action of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance;
- Provide support to the workshop on media, racism and education to be organized in cooperation with the Asia Pacific Forum (Australia, June 2002), with special emphasis on the need to encourage media to avoid indirectly or directly fostering racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance as contemplated in the Programme of Action of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance;
- In co-operation with national human rights institutions continue to develop and implement training programmes, including in the area of investigation techniques;
- Organise a series of regional and national initiatives, aiming at strengthen national institutions' work at the national level concerning economic, social and cultural rights, building on the methodology developed at the workshops held in Manila and Hong Kong;
- Assist National Institutions to follow up the conclusions of the Regional Workshop on the Role of National Human Rights Institutions in Advancing the International Human Rights of Women, held in Fiji in May 2000, particularly as concerns the need to provide effective training courses that will ensure satisfactory awareness of the rights and special needs of women;
- In collaboration with UNAIDS and in consultation with national human rights institutions, develop guidelines to assist national human rights institutions in addressing HIV/AIDS-related discrimination and stigma, and in promoting and protecting human rights in the context of HIV/AIDS;
- Organise a workshop to consider ways and means by which national institutions can contribute to preventing trafficking and protecting the rights of trafficked persons and develop a pilot project between at least two national institutions of the region to promote cross-border cooperation in this area;

#### **4. Realisation of the right to development and economic, social and cultural rights**

*Main objective: To strengthen national capacities to develop the justiciability of economic, social and cultural rights*

- Organise, in partnership with regional/sub-regional partners, a series of workshops in various sub-regions, for judges and lawyers on the justiciability of economic, social and cultural rights, building on the methodology developed at the Workshop for Judges on the Justiciability of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in South Asia, held in New Delhi, India, in November 2001;
- Link judges and lawyers participating in these workshops into a regional network, including through the use of the internet, to follow-up to the sub-regional workshops and to promote information sharing;
- Establish a database on jurisprudence on economic, social and cultural rights building on the network facilities and national task forces established at the workshops;
- Organise a workshop involving national planning authorities, relevant ministries, national institutions and representatives of civil society at which information on national experiences can be exchanged with a view to compiling a reference of good practices of responses to globalisation;
- Organize in cooperation with a host State and regional partners a regional meeting to undertake a dialogue on the causes and consequences of migration that focus not only on law enforcement and border control, but also on the promotion and protection of the human rights of migrants and on the relationship between migration and development;
- Make available upon request technical co-operation and advisory services to assist in the integration of human rights in national poverty reduction strategies.

Beirut,  
6 March 2002