

**CONCLUSIONS OF THE ELEVENTH WORKSHOP ON REGIONAL  
COOPERATION FOR THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION  
OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION**

Islamabad, Pakistan, 25-27 February 2003

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 Eleventh Workshop on Regional Cooperation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Asia-Pacific Region held in Islamabad, Pakistan from 25 to 27 February 2003;
2. Recalling the important contributions made and recommendations and conclusions adopted by previous workshops, and, in particular, the Beirut Workshop held in 2002 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 inter-relatedness of all human rights – civil, cultural, economic, political and social – and the right to development;
4. 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;
5. Recognizing that democracy, development and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing;
6. Committed to enhancing sub-regional, regional and international cooperation to promote universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms, in conformity with international obligations, particularly through strengthening the rule of law;
7. Mindful of the vastness of, and diversities within, the Asia-Pacific region;
8. Recalling the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the unanimous adoption of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action on 25 June 1993;
9. Recalling the Millennium Declaration adopted unanimously on 8 September 2000, in particular Section V regarding human rights, democracy and good governance in which States undertake to spare no effort to promote democracy and strengthen the rule of law as well as respect for all internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development;
10. Recognizing that realisation of the Millennium Development Goals would contribute significantly to the promotion and protection of human rights and vice versa;

11. Recalling the outcomes of the International Conference on Financing for Development held in Monterey, Mexico, in March 2002, as well as the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in August/September 2002;
12. Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on 'Strengthening the United Nations: an agenda for further change', in which he states that the emplacement or enhancement of a national protection system in each country, reflecting international human rights norms, should be a principle objective of the Organization;
13. Encouraging United Nations Country Teams to support the implementation of activities at country level under the Tehran Framework and the strengthening of national human rights capacities, at the request of Member States;
14. Reiterating the importance of an inclusive, step-by-step, practical, building blocks approach towards enhancing regional cooperation for the promotion and protection of human rights;
15. Having reviewed progress achieved so far in implementing the Framework for Regional Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region and concerned about the limited resources available to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), reaffirming the importance of technical cooperation and the role Member States can play to support the activities of the OHCHR;
16. Taking note of the current initiatives taken by the countries of the region, including by ASEAN and SAARC, for the strengthening and development of regional or sub-regional endeavors for the promotion and protection of human rights in Asia and the Pacific;

Hereby,

17. Express appreciation to the Government of Pakistan for hosting the XI annual workshop and for the statements made by Mr. Muhammad Raza Hayat Hiraj, the Minister of State for Law, Justice and Human Rights as the representative of the Government of Pakistan;
18. Welcome the participation of Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in the Islamabad Workshop, as well as his statement;
19. Express appreciation to the Governments, national institutions, experts, representatives of civil society and the OHCHR for the implementation of the proposals made at previous workshops;
20. 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;

21. Take note of the report of the Secretary-General entitled 'Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration', outlining comprehensive cross-cutting strategies to be pursued both at the national and international levels, which would lead to the promotion of human rights;
22. Welcome the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on progress made in the implementation of goals outlined in the Millennium Declaration.

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

23. 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;
24. Recognize the desirability of including in national human rights action plans as appropriate, a component to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;
25. 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 actors and of monitoring and evaluating these plans;
26. 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;
27. Take note the 'Handbook on National Human Rights Plans of Action' launched by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in August 2002, available on the [www.ohchr.org](http://www.ohchr.org) website;

**With regard to human rights education:**

28. Recognize that human rights education can play a crucial 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;
29. Recognize that human rights education should benefit from diverse social and cultural values and traditions that enforce the universality of human rights, having the aim of promoting a multicultural understanding of human rights;

30. 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;
31. Encourage Governments to promote the development of national plans and strategies for human rights education which are comprehensive, participatory, effective and sustainable, and to accelerate the pace of implementation of such plans and strategies within the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004), so as to realize significant achievements by the end of the Decade;
32. Note the implementation of, and substantive report and conclusions relating to the workshop on human rights and the administration of justice, held in Fiji in June 2002;
33. Recognize the important role of national human rights institutions in human rights education and encourage a sharing of lessons learned and best practices among them in this regard;
34. Recognize that human rights education in schools is a comprehensive process which concerns not only the inclusion of human rights elements in the curriculum, but also the further development of textbooks and teaching methodologies, the human rights training of teachers and school administrators as well as the fostering of learning environments which encourage the full development of the human personality;
35. Note that priority should also be given to human rights education for all those involved in the administration of justice, including judges, lawyers, prosecutors, police, prison officials and relevant Government officials as well as among the marginalized, vulnerable and illiterate section of the population;
36. Acknowledge the important role that non-governmental actors can play in furthering human rights education, and stress the need for governmental and non-governmental actors to enhance partnership to this end.

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

37. Welcome the further strengthening of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights in many countries of the Asia-Pacific region and the new member institutions of the Republic of Korea, Malaysia and Thailand to the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions;
38. Reaffirm that independent national human rights institutions should be established following an appropriate and inclusive process of consultation;
39. 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), unanimously adopted 10 years ago;

40. Welcome efforts to encourage and assist national human rights institutions which are not yet members of the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions to become so;
41. Welcome the efforts of the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions in supporting national human rights institutions within the Asia-Pacific region and encourage it to enhance its activities in the West Asia region;
42. Encourage the OHCHR to continue to provide technical cooperation for the development of national human rights institutions in the Asia-Pacific region, at the request of Governments;
43. Encourage continued cooperation among national human rights institutions, civil society and United Nations Agencies, Programmes and Funds and invite the OHCHR to promote and facilitate such cooperation and provide advice and appropriate support to existing national human rights institutions;
44. Note the implementation of, and substantive reports and conclusions relating to, the Workshop concerning National Human Rights Institutions, human rights education, media and racism (Australia, July 2002); the Training Programme for National Human Rights Institutions in Asia and the Pacific (Thailand, November 2002), the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (India, November 2002); and the Asia Pacific Regional Training Programme in Human Rights Investigations (Australia, November 2002);
45. Note the support provided by the OHCHR in establishing individual websites of national human rights institutions within the region and strongly encourage the use of the Internet;
46. Note the important role which national institutions can play in following up the recommendations of human rights treaty bodies;
47. Welcome the offer of the Nepalese and Mongolian Human Rights Commissions to host respectively the Eighth and Ninth Annual Meetings of the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions and request the OHCHR to adequately support the meetings.

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

48. Reaffirm that the right to development is a universal and inalienable right and an integral part of fundamental human rights; Reaffirm the need for effective international cooperation for the realization of the right to development and the elimination of obstacles to development;

49. Reaffirm also that States have the primary responsibility for their own economic and social development, and the role of national policies and development strategies cannot be over emphasized;
50. Affirm that peace and security as well as a fair international economic climate are essential elements for the realization of economic, social and cultural rights, and the right to development;
51. Reaffirm that 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;
52. Reaffirm that respect for all rights –civil, cultural, economic, political and social – is necessary to ensure enjoyment of the right to development;
53. 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;
54. Reaffirm the indivisibility and interrelatedness between the national and international dimensions of the process of development;
55. Reaffirm that States should take steps to address the economic and social development of marginalized or socially excluded groups;
56. 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;
57. Recognise that poverty and unemployment are among the major obstacles to the realization of the right to development and economic, social and cultural rights and emphasize the need for increased international cooperation to tackle these problems as well as the need for action at the national level;
58. Note the ongoing discussion on the question of a suitable permanent follow-up mechanism for the realisation of the right to development and the various views expressed thereon in United Nations fora;
59. 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 realization 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;
60. Recognize the important link between the international economic, commercial and financial spheres and the realization of the right to development, in this regard the need for broadening the base of the decision making at the international level on issues of concern to development and to fill organizational gaps, was highlighted, as was the strengthening of the United Nations system and the other multilateral institutions, the need to broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries and economies in transition in international economic, decision making and norm setting, was also stressed;
  61. Recognize that good governance and the rule of law at the national level assist all States in the promotion and protection of human rights, including the right to development, and agree on the value of ongoing efforts by States to identify and strengthen good governance practices, including transparent, democratic, accountable and participatory government, that are responsive and appropriate to their needs and aspirations, including in the context of agreed partnership approaches to development, capacity-building and technical assistance;
  62. Further recognize the important role and the rights of women and the application of a gender perspective as a cross-cutting issue in the process of realizing the right to development and notes in particular the positive relationship between women's education and their equal participation in the civil, political, economic, social and cultural activities of the community, and the promotion of the right to development;
  63. Invite all States to consider signing and ratifying, and the States parties to implement, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
  64. Call upon States further to secure progressively, through national development policies and with international assistance and cooperation, full realization of economic, social and cultural rights, and the right to development, paying particular attention to the individuals, most often women and children, especially girls, and communities living in extreme poverty and therefore most vulnerable and disadvantaged as well as the issue of human trafficking.

**Participants in the Islamabad Workshop thus:**

65. Recognize the close relationship between and the mutually supporting nature of the four pillars of the Framework for Cooperation in 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;
66. While noting that the Tehran Framework for Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region 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 the OHCHR to establish partnerships with these actors in the implementation of the Tehran Framework;

67. Note that the implementation of the activities envisaged under the Framework for Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region, including the programme of action for 2002-2004 adopted in Beirut, is the responsibility of all States in the region and agree to strengthen joint efforts, including through cooperation with the OHCHR and the various United Nations Country Teams, within the Asia-Pacific region towards the implementation of these conclusions;
68. Express their appreciation for the efforts made by the OHCHR to implement the 2002-2004 Programme of Action for the Framework for Cooperation in Asia-Pacific region and encourages the OHCHR to continue implementing the activities under the Framework;
69. Call on United Nations agencies, global and regional financial institutions and bilateral donor agencies to examine how they could support the implementation of the activities, including in poverty reduction strategies under this Framework, including through financial and technical support and the provision of human resources;
70. Welcome OHCHR Regional Representatives' role in advising Asia-Pacific Governments, at their request, on the implementation of their activities under the Framework;
71. Request the OHCHR to present, for the consideration of the next Asia Pacific workshop, a paper containing concrete ideas in connection with further strengthening regional and sub-regional endeavours;
72. 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;
73. Call upon the OHCHR to report at the next annual Workshop, on progress achieved in the implementation of the Framework for Cooperation for the promotion and protection of human rights in the Asia-Pacific region;
74. While welcoming contributions already made to the OHCHR by Member States of the Asia-Pacific region, invite all of them to consider contributing for the first time or increasing their contributions, particularly with respect to activities in the area of technical cooperation and the strengthening of national capacities and infrastructures in the field of human rights as outlined in the 2003 Annual Appeal;
75. Invite all States in the Asia-Pacific region to host inter-sessional sub-regional workshops within the Framework for Cooperation and welcome the offer made by the Government of Qatar to host the upcoming sub-regional workshop on human rights

education in schools for the six members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and in cooperation with the GCC;

76. Welcome the offer of the Government of the Republic of Palau to host an annual or an inter-sessional workshop within the Framework for Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region.