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**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER  
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND REPORTS OF THE OFFICE OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER AND THE  
SECRETARY-GENERAL**

**Report of the High Commissioner containing the conclusion of the  
14th Annual Workshop on Regional Cooperation for the Promotion  
and Protection of Human Rights in the Asia-Pacific Region**

## Summary

In its decision 3/102, the Human Rights Council, recalling resolution 2005/71 of the Commission on Human Rights, decided to convene a further Workshop on Regional Cooperation for the Promotion and the Protection of Human Rights in the Asia-Pacific Region in 2007. The 14th Annual Workshop on Regional Cooperation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Asia-Pacific Region was subsequently held in Bali, Republic of Indonesia, from 10 to 12 July 2007.

The present report focuses on the key elements of discussion during the 14th Workshop. The Workshop reviewed progress achieved since the 13th Workshop in Beijing in the four areas under the Tehran Framework of Regional Technical Cooperation Programme for Asia and the Pacific (Tehran Framework), namely:

- (a) National human rights action plans;
- (b) National human rights institutions;
- (c) Human rights education; and
- (d) Right to development and economic, social and cultural rights.

In addition, discussions were held on the theme of Human Rights and Extreme Poverty, which had been identified through consultations among member States as a common priority. The Workshop also included a discussion on future challenges for the Asia-Pacific Regional Framework. Participants reviewed current regional and subregional human rights initiatives in the Asia-Pacific Region and identified possible areas for cooperation. The Workshop was concluded with the adoption of a comprehensive set of points for follow-up action entitled the “Bali Action Points”, which are annexed to this report.

## CONTENTS

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
Introduction .....	1 - 3	4
I. REVIEW OF THE FOUR PILLARS OF THE TEHRAN FRAMEWORK .....	4 - 9	4
II. THEMATIC DISCUSSIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND EXTREME POVERTY .....	10 - 12	5
III. THE FUTURE OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGIONAL FRAMEWORK .....	13	6
IV. CONCLUSION .....	14 - 16	7
<b>Annex</b>		
Bali Action Points .....		8

## **Introduction**

1. The 14th Annual Workshop on Regional Cooperation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Asia-Pacific Region (the Workshop) was held in Bali, Republic of Indonesia, from 10 to 12 July 2007. It was attended by a total of 94 participants, including 25 member States from the region, as well as representatives of subregional organizations, national human rights institutions, United Nations agencies and programmes, and non-governmental organizations.
2. The theme selected by member States for the Workshop was Human Rights and Extreme Poverty. In preparation for the Workshop, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (“the Office”) invited two resource persons with expertise in human rights and extreme poverty, Mr. Siddiq Osmani and Mr. Rajeev Malhotra, to facilitate the thematic sessions and make presentations on the topic.
3. The Workshop was addressed at its opening by His Excellency the Director-General for Multilateral Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, Mr. Rezlan Ishar Jenie, and by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Louise Arbour. Mr. Jenie reflected on the centrality of human rights to Indonesia’s national experience of political reform and economic development, and the evolving discussion on a regional human rights mechanism. The High Commissioner reviewed some of the achievements of the Asia-Pacific Regional Framework, commending member States for progress made in implementing several aspects of the four pillars of the Tehran Framework. The High Commissioner noted the linkage between the four pillars of regional cooperation and the thematic challenge of addressing extreme poverty. She highlighted the draft guidelines on human rights and poverty reduction strategies developed by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights as an important tool for member States, regional bodies such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and civil society actors. Lastly, she encouraged efforts within regional organizations to develop human rights charters or mechanisms. The High Commissioner hailed developments such as increased networking and collaboration among national human rights institutions in the region, as well as progress made at subregional levels towards developing appropriate mechanisms for the enhanced protection of human rights.

### **I. REVIEW OF THE FOUR PILLARS OF THE TEHRAN FRAMEWORK**

4. The first session of the Workshop was dedicated to the review of progress achieved in the four areas identified in the Tehran Framework, namely, national human rights action plans, national human rights institutions, human rights education, and right to development and economic, social and cultural rights.
5. Member States had the opportunity to make statements on their achievements, experiences and lessons learned under each of the four pillars. National institutions and civil society representatives also provided input under each topic.
6. With regard to National Action Plans (NAPs), a number of member States highlighted their experience with the preparation or implementation of such plans. Lessons learned included the importance of an inclusive and participatory process that created broad-based ownership among

all the relevant stakeholders, including the private sector; the importance of institutionalizing the plan by designating a lead agency and establishing appropriate coordination mechanisms; the value of decentralized approaches such as regional or State-level committees; the leadership role that could be played by national institutions in both formulation and implementation; the link to treaty reporting processes; and the importance of budget processes that could adequately ensure sustainability in the implementation of the NAPs.

7. Several member States made presentations on their human rights education strategies or action plans, as well as the institutions and laws established for such programmes. Emphasis was placed not only on human rights education in schools but also on target groups such as parliamentarians, judges, lawyers and law enforcement personnel. Linkages were drawn with broader empowerment strategies, such as legal awareness programmes, which can contribute to broader poverty reduction and social mobilization efforts. Emphasis was placed on the rights-based approach to education that calls for greater participation, for instance of indigenous communities, in the design of education programmes, as well as the importance of applied training that goes beyond principles and encourages behavioural change.

8. Participants reflected on their experiences with national human rights institutions and the wide range of activities being undertaken by such mechanisms in the region. Experiences covered a variety of issues such as the organization of national inquiries, dialogues, round tables and summits to highlight priority issues. Examples were given of strong collaboration between groups of national human rights institutions on common challenges, as well as capacity-building activities being undertaken by some institutions. It was noted by national institutions that effective working relations with other departments of government were of great importance.

9. In the discussion on the right to development and economic, social and cultural rights, themes emphasized were the importance of linking national human rights action plans with poverty reduction and national development strategies, and the value added of rights-based approaches in framing development assistance programmes. Participants noted the importance of addressing issues of equity in their national development strategies to acknowledge disparity between different areas and groups, emphasizing gender equality, anti-discrimination measures and the importance of empowerment of women active in economic and political life. The protection of cultural rights, the environment, and the rights of non-citizens, migrant workers and refugees and internally displaced persons were highlighted by some participants, in addition to the importance of combating corruption.

## **II. THEMATIC DISCUSSIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND EXTREME POVERTY**

10. Presentations and discussion on the second day of the meeting focused on the theme of Human Rights and Extreme Poverty, a topic identified through consultation with member States as a common priority for the region. The two expert resource persons selected to speak on the topic, Mr. Siddiq Osmani and Mr. Rajeev Malhotra, gave comprehensive and enlightening presentations as a starting point for discussion. The first presentation covered the human rights-based approach to poverty reduction and how it could be integrated into poverty reduction strategies and policymaking. The premise of the presentation was that poverty constitutes a

denial of human rights, and that in order to reduce poverty, the poor must be empowered, through strategies which focus on participation and accountability. It also covered the State's obligations to respect, fulfil (which includes promote and provide) and protect human rights, as well as issues of progressive realization and accountability mechanisms, such as formal, informal, judicial and non-judicial mechanisms.

11. The second presentation focused on United Nations initiatives on poverty reduction through a human rights lens. It highlighted the document "Draft guiding principles 'Extreme poverty and human rights: the rights of the poor'", which is under circulation for comments with a view to submission to the Human Rights Council. The guiding principles underscore that poverty and extreme poverty are violations of human rights, promote the participation of the poor in all initiatives to eliminate poverty, and emphasize the indivisibility and interdependence of human rights, as well as the State's obligations in combating poverty. The presentation also explained how United Nations human rights mechanisms, including the treaty body system, the special procedures and independent experts, have focused on the elimination of poverty in their work.

12. The presentations were followed by an active discussion on the theme of human rights and extreme poverty. It was acknowledged that growth strategies were not sufficient in and of themselves but needed to be accompanied by social and legal development. The importance of a global economic environment which facilitated advances in the right to development and human rights more broadly was also underscored. The meeting reviewed progress in debates by the task force on the implementation of the right to development and the Working Group on the Right to Development. The *Principles and Guidelines for a Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategies* published by the Office, which outline guidelines for integrating specific human rights standards, strategies, key targets and indicators for monitoring and implementation of specific human rights with a direct bearing on poverty eradication, were discussed as a useful tool for policymakers.

### **III. THE FUTURE OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGIONAL FRAMEWORK: NEXT STEPS, ADOPTION OF THE ACTION POINTS, AND CLOSING OF THE WORKSHOP**

13. Mr. Vitit Muntarbhorn gave a presentation entitled "Exploring the Window of Opportunities: Evolving a Framework for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Asia-Pacific Region". It emphasized the future challenges for the Asia-Pacific Regional Framework, taking into consideration recent initiatives by regional organizations, such as ASEAN, to develop subregional arrangements, reforms to the United Nations human rights system and human rights mainstreaming within United Nations country programming, as well as the expansion of the Office's field presence in the region. This was followed by an interactive discussion in which many participants endorsed the concept of "workshop plus", which would provide for more experimentation in the format of meetings and greater intersessional preparation, dialogue and follow-up. Discussions also indicated general support for greater contact and inclusion of regional organizations in the process.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

14. The Bali Action Points were drafted through informal consultations between member States in order to reflect agreed conclusions and recommendations on the way forward. The Action Points acknowledged the value added of thematic discussions as part of the workshops and recognized the important linkages between human rights and initiatives and policies for the elimination of extreme poverty. After discussion and some revisions, they were adopted by consensus on 12 July 2007.

15. It was noted that 2008 will mark the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the fifteenth anniversary of the process of regional cooperation for the promotion and protection of human rights in the Asia-Pacific region, as well as the tenth anniversary of the Tehran Framework on Regional Technical Cooperation. It was also agreed to hold regular consultations of member States among Permanent Missions to the United Nations in Geneva in order to review progress in implementation of these action points and broader activities under the Regional Framework.

16. The Office was requested to produce a summary of recommendations made since the first annual workshop and progress made in their implementation; to prepare a directory of resource materials and resource persons available to assist the implementation of activities under the Regional Framework; and to prepare a compilation of the outcome documents of the four subregional workshops for judges and lawyers on the justiciability of economic, social and cultural rights in order to ensure effective dissemination.

## Annex

### **14th ANNUAL WORKSHOP OF THE FRAMEWORK ON REGIONAL COOPERATION FOR THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION**

#### **Bali Action Points adopted by member States on 12 July 2007**

*Expressing appreciation* to the Government of the Republic of Indonesia for hosting the Annual Workshop of the Framework on Regional Cooperation for the Protection of Human Rights in the Asia-Pacific Region in collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights;

*Expressing appreciation* to the representatives of national human rights institutions, international organizations, civil society and resource persons for their inputs to the workshop;

*Acknowledging* the value added of the thematic discussions at the 13th and 14th Annual Workshops of the Framework on Regional Cooperation for the Protection of Human Rights in the Asia-Pacific Region in Beijing on human trafficking and in Bali on extreme poverty, respectively, and *supporting* the continuation of the good practice of thematic discussions;

*Noting* that 2008 will mark the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the fifteenth anniversary of the process of regional cooperation for the promotion and protection of human rights in the Asia-Pacific region, as well as the tenth anniversary of the Tehran Framework on Regional Technical Cooperation;

*Welcoming* the activities by national human rights institutions in support of regional cooperation, including those with the support of the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Institutions and the Office of the High Commissioner;

*Noting* the proposal of the Office to hold a regional workshop in 2007 on the establishment of national human rights institutions with a view to sharing information and best practices;

#### Member States:

1. *Recognize* the important linkage between human rights and efforts to address extreme poverty, and *agree* to continue sharing experiences and ideas on the application on this linkage;

2. *Agree* that the next regional workshop should be a special event to reflect on the progress and achievements made under the Asia-Pacific Framework, including the four Tehran pillars and to define further priorities for regional cooperation for the promotion and protection of human rights;

3. *Request* the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in preparation for the fifteenth anniversary of the process, to produce a summary of recommendations put forward since the first annual workshop in Manila, the Philippines in 1991 and progress made in their implementation;

4. *Request* the Office to prepare a directory of resource materials and resource persons available to assist the implementation of activities under the Regional Framework;

5. *Request* the Office to prepare a compilation of the outcome documents of the four subregional workshops for judges and lawyers on the justiciability of economic, social and cultural rights in order to ensure effective dissemination;

6. *Request* the Office to engage in consultations with member States, regional organizations, national institutions, civil society and other stakeholders on follow-up to activities under the Regional Framework;

7. *Request* the Office to engage in follow-up consultations and dialogue with other United Nations and multilateral development agencies with a view to harnessing their resources in order to achieve progress under the Regional Framework, including on human trafficking and extreme poverty in the region;

8. *Agree* to hold regular consultations of member States among Permanent Missions to the United Nations in Geneva in order to review progress in implementation of these Action Points and broader activities under the Regional Framework.

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