



*Editorial*

## *Making Inter-Governmental Dialogues Fruitful*

It has been observed that the "diversity and complexity of the [Asia-Pacific] region in terms of history, culture, religion, political system, level of social and economic development [are] often cited as explanation for the absence of a regional mechanism as well as justification for an approach which emphasizes negotiation and constructive dialogue." Taking this view as one of the basic principles, it is suggested that "constant efforts should be made in parallel to build[ing] awareness of [people] that diversity in the region is a source of strength and should facilitate (not obstruct) the search for an appropriate human rights system for the region and its subregions. Cooperation should, for this reason, provide an efficient opportunity for the countries of the region to explore their own policies and strategies for the promotion and protection of human rights."

Realities in the Asia-Pacific region show that there is so much diversity in approaches, systems and programs relating to multi-country and national-level human rights work. No existing national human rights institution in the region, for example, is a copy of any other institution. Each institution is unique in its own way because of the national context.

Regional programs on various issues (women, children, disabled people, and so on) do respect national particularities. Human rights education programs, whether regional or national, are even more diverse.

Regional and national particularities are not obstacles to regional work considering the amount and extent of cooperation among various institutions (government and non-government) at present.

What is the basis then of the repetitious assertion of the need to recognize regional and national particularities when actual work experiences tell us that this is a non-issue? For many human rights workers in this region, discussing practical steps on how to make human rights, in its universal, indivisible and interdependent sense, a reality matters most. Dialogues among government representatives need this perspective to make the exercise useful.

FOCUS Asia-Pacific is designed to highlight significant issues and activities relating to human rights in the Asia-Pacific. Relevant information and articles can be sent to HURIGHTS OSAKA for inclusion in the next editions of the newsletter.

FOCUS Asia-Pacific is edited by Dong-hoon Kim, Director of HURIGHTS OSAKA.

# **Eighth Workshop on Regional Cooperation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Asia-Pacific Region**

**Beijing, China- March 1- 4, 2000**

## **Background [1]**

The Asia-Pacific region is the only United Nations defined region without a specific regional human rights treaty and without some form of region-wide mechanisms directed towards the protection and promotion of human rights. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has organized a number of workshops to promote regional arrangements in the Asia-Pacific region (Manila in 1990, Jakarta in 1993, Seoul in 1994, Kathmandu in 1996, Amman in 1997, Tehran in 1998 and New Delhi in 1999). Through these workshops a consensus has been reached among governments of the region on the principles and a step-by-step, building blocks approach involving extensive consultations among governments of the region, concerning the possible establishment of regional arrangements.

In 1998 in Tehran, governments of the region adopted the so-called Tehran Framework for Technical Co-operation in the Asia-Pacific region (Tehran Framework), which sets out a program for regional arrangements aiming to contribute to the development and strengthening of national capacities for the promotion and protection of human rights in the Asia-Pacific region. Adopted by consensus, the Tehran Framework identifies States' commitment to four regional priorities: national plans of action for the promotion and protection of human rights and the strengthening of national capacities; human rights education; national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights; and strategies for the realization of the right to development and economic, social and cultural rights.

The Seventh Asia-Pacific Workshop on Regional Cooperation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, held in New Delhi in February 1999, called upon OHCHR to develop and implement the proposals made in the four areas identified under the Tehran Framework. In July 1999, a regional workshop on National Human Rights Action Plans was held in Bangkok, Thailand. In December 1999, a sub-regional workshop on Human Rights Education in Northeast Asia was organized in Seoul, Republic of Korea. A Workshop on National Plans of Action for Human Rights Education was held in Tokyo, Japan, in January 2000 and in February 2000 a Workshop on Strategies for the Realization of the Right to Development and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights took place in Sana'a, Yemen. Furthermore, two meetings on National

Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights were held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, and Manila, the Philippines.

The Eighth Asia-Pacific Workshop was held in Beijing from March 1-3, 2000 in keeping with Commission of Human Rights Resolution 1999/69.



## **Workshop Strategies**

Having been organized annually since 1995, this regional workshop has become a regular (annual) event, providing a unique forum where all governments of the region exchange views and information on human rights issues of common interest and concern. The workshops are intended to continue to be held in an atmosphere conducive to constructive discussion, consensus-building and confidence building.

The Beijing workshop focused on specific and practical issues. In particular, the workshop

- 1) Reviewed the follow-up action taken within the Tehran Framework as agreed upon in Tehran, assessing in particular: results of the inter-sessional workshop in Bangkok on national human rights action plans; results of the sub-regional workshop in Seoul on human rights education; results of the Asia-Pacific Forum meetings on national institutions in Colombo and Manila; results of the inter-sessional workshop in Tokyo on national action plans for human rights education; results of the inter-sessional workshop on development and economic, social and cultural rights in Sana'a;

- 2) Identified the next steps to be taken by governments of the region in order to further the process of regional cooperation for the protection and promotion of human rights and action at the regional, sub-regional and national levels, including through national institutions and representatives of civil society; and
- 3) Discussed issues relating to the preparation for the World Conference Against Racism.

### Workshop output

After short introductory remarks by invited resource persons, a number of representatives of governments presented either the official stand of their governments or reports on what their governments are doing on each of the four areas of concern. Representatives of national institutions and NGOs likewise presented their positions on the issues as well as reports of their activities.

The participants adopted the workshop document entitled "Conclusions of the Eighth Workshop on Regional Cooperation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Asia-Pacific." The document reaffirmed the results of the series of intersessional and sub-regional workshops held since the seventh regional workshop in New Delhi and restated the need for national action plan for human rights, establishment of national human rights institutions, emphasis on economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development, and the development of human rights education programs. The participants also discussed the regional preparations for the forthcoming World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Tolerance to be held in 2001 in South Africa.

The workshop participants:

1. Affirmed the importance of the implementation of technical cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region pursuant to the Tehran Framework, with the support of the international community, including through the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights, as one of the key components of the promotion of human rights in the Asia-Pacific region;
2. Recognized the close relationship between and mutually supporting nature of the activities undertaken within the Tehran Framework, and otherwise, in the region for the promotion and protection of human rights;
3. Emphasized the importance of undertaking activities under the Tehran Framework at national and sub-regional levels with the assistance of the concerned governments, national institutions and civil society;
4. Acknowledged the importance of governments undertaking regional, sub-regional and national

activities for the implementation of the technical cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region in accordance with the Tehran Framework in partnership with parliaments, national institutions, relevant experts and civil society organizations;

5. Declared that within each of the areas of the Tehran Framework close attention should also be paid to the promotion and protection of the rights of women, children and vulnerable groups;
6. Welcomed the proposal made by the OHCHR to continue the implementation of the Tehran Framework;
7. Welcomed the intention of OHCHR to invite UN partner agencies to carry out some of the activities discussed during the workshop;
8. Proposed that the OHCHR undertake an evaluation of the implementation of the Tehran Framework so far and report to the next Annual Asia-Pacific Workshop;
9. Agreed to invite parliaments, national institutions and civil society groups to participate, as appropriate, in the development and implementation of the Tehran Framework;
10. Agreed to disseminate among appropriate government agencies and institutions and other partners at national level, as well as regional and sub-regional level, the results of this annual Workshop and to initiate joint efforts towards the implementation of these conclusions;
11. Called upon the OHCHR to report on progress achieved in the implementation of technical cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region in accordance with the Tehran Framework to the next annual Asia-Pacific Workshop. The workshop took note of the proposal made by the government of Thailand to host the next annual workshop;
12. Endorsed the next steps and activities as included in the attached annex.

The annex to the conclusions lists recommended activities to be undertaken at the regional, sub-regional and national levels. The implementation of the activities is dependent on the availability of funds under the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights (VFTC). Some activities are, however, already funded. Each activity also has to be hosted by a State. The recommended activities are grouped into the four main areas:

a. National human rights plan of action and national capacity building

Regional level

1. Development and dissemination of a handbook on the development of national action plan for human rights to governments, national institutions and

NGOs in the region;

2. UN training activities on making reports for human rights treaty bodies especially Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women and the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

#### Sub-regional level

##### Workshops

1. Possibly in cooperation with ASEAN, for governments, national institutions and civil society on national human rights planning;
2. For members of parliaments with special emphasis on combating racism and realization of women and children's human rights.

#### National level

1. Technical assistance in the development of national action plans of Thailand, Mongolia, Nepal and Jordan, and other interested States;
2. Technical cooperation and advisory services to develop national capacity especially regarding the administration of justice, legislative reform, promotion of ratification of human rights instruments, and human rights skills development in civil society.

#### b. Human rights education

##### Regional level

1. Survey of human rights education materials, organizations and programs in the region including collection of sample activities undertaken in the first half of the UN Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004), and on funding agencies and resources for human rights education in the region;
2. Research 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 marginalized groups.

##### Sub-regional level

1. Workshops for governments, national institutions and civil society to develop a) sub-region specific human rights training programs for those involved in the administration of justice; b) sub-region specific strategies to direct human rights education to vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalized groups; c) sub-region specific strategies for promotion of human rights education within the school system.
2. Technical training workshop on human rights for the judiciary with special emphasis on economic,

social and cultural rights, combating racism and on the realization of women's and children's rights.

#### c. National human rights institutions

##### Regional level

1. Support for the annual meetings of the Asia-Pacific Forum of national institutions;
2. Start of the first phase of a training program on protection approaches and appropriate follow-up activities.

##### Sub-regional level

1. Support for intersessional workshop on the role of national institutions in the protection and promotion of women's human rights to be held in Fiji and another workshop on the role of the media and human rights education;
2. Co-organizing of the second national institutions training course on economic, social and cultural rights and related follow-up activities.

##### National level

1. Assistance, in cooperation with main partners in the States in the region including the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Institutions, for the establishment and strengthening of national institutions;
2. Support for promotion and protection of the rights of women, children and vulnerable groups by national institutions.

#### d. Realization of the right to development and economic, social and cultural rights

##### Regional level

1. Workshop for governments, national institutions and civil society to explore the impact of globalization on the full enjoyment of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Right to Development especially in relation to vulnerable segments of society.

##### Sub-regional level

1. Workshop for governments, national institutions and civil society on ratification of international treaties including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and its implications in terms of reporting obligations, legislation and practice, as well as of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families;
2. Workshop involving national planning authorities, relevant ministries, national institutions and representatives of civil society to explore means to integrate human rights in national development plans.

3. Encouragement to States, UN agencies and programs, and other partners to develop and implement further activities at the sub-regional level to promote effective realization of the right to development and economic, social and cultural rights, and offer technical cooperation and advisory services in this regard.

#### National level

1. Technical cooperation and advisory services to assist in the realization of economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development through national development plans or national human rights plans, in cooperation, where possible, with development organizations.

#### e. Preparation for the World Conference Against Racism

1. Regional and sub-regional preparatory activities including expert seminars and a regional preparatory meeting.

#### Future direction

The Workshop on Regional Cooperation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Asia-Pacific Region has truly taken a step-by-step approach in discussing a possible regional arrangement for human rights. There is still a need to build confidence among governments in the region to be able to work together toward this end. Human rights remains a politically sensitive issue that prevents a number of governments from expressing full support for any regional arrangements. The main area requiring much more work is at the level of governments. National institutions have already been working together at the regional level toward a common goal of strengthening their respective institutions and assisting other countries in establishing theirs. Non-governmental organizations and other civil society institutions have already been organizing at the regional level as evidenced by the proliferation of networks and coalitions.

Close scrutiny of on-going, concrete activities of governments, national institutions, NGOs and other institutions which relate to human rights (or to the four main areas under the Tehran Framework) is a major issue that requires serious and greater attention in the next annual and intersessional workshops. Next steps are better planned by building on actual experiences.

Government statements in the workshop are focusing at times on principles and, mostly, on generalities. Concrete reports on ground-level activities in the countries are not given. Neither is there an attempt, on the part of the workshop organizers, to narrow down issues (under each of the four areas) for discussion to be able to take up practical suggestions in a constructive manner and thereby make use of the time much more wisely and fruitfully.

The planned activities listed in the annex to the main conclusions document of the workshop should have been given at the very beginning of the workshop to allow better discussion on the benefit of such ideas to the governments, national institutions and NGOs in the region. Such discussion is a basic, first step in preparing for the eventual holding of the activities.

The manner by which the workshop is conducted is another important aspect. Formalities, based on UN protocol and tradition, prevent a more candid yet positive discussion. While many governments raised the need to avoid confrontation and instead promote dialogue, the formalities of the workshop prevented the dialogue from effectively taking place. The informal meeting among APEC leaders in their annual Leaders' Summit is a good model to follow. The "no-tie" affair stresses greater personal as well as official interaction among leaders of the economies in the APEC region. If confidence-building among governments is important, it should be practiced during the workshop.

Also, representatives of governments should not only be from the ministry of foreign affairs but from other relevant ministries as well.

Lastly, the workshop deserves wider publicity among the general populace in each of the countries represented. Media coverage before, during and after the workshop is needed to sustain public interest on this important activity. Such publicity will hopefully generate a momentum for the people to dialogue with their own government, national institution (if any), and NGOs on human rights issues. The publicity during the workshop in Chinese newspapers is recognized. It can be improved by covering the discussions during the workshop to help keep the public informed. This has been done by Thai newspapers in several international gatherings held in Bangkok. In other words, the workshop should be given the public prominence that human rights meetings properly deserve.

Parallel or prior meetings by NGOs (national and regional) and even by national institutions should be encouraged to help enrich the workshop discussions. In the APEC process, business community leaders do meet before the actual APEC meeting to give them the chance to organize their positions on issues at hand. The very same idea equally applies to the workshop.

Indeed, to be able to facilitate the so-called enhancement of national capacities for human rights, all stakeholders in the countries involved should take part in the opportunities to promote human rights offered by regional-level activities. This workshop offers an invaluable opportunity.

#### Note

*The first two parts of this article are taken from the background note of the workshop prepared by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.*

**Address by Qian Qichen**  
**Vice Premier of the**  
**People's Republic of China**

Your Excellency Mrs. Mary Robinson,  
UN High Commissioner for Human Rights,  
Representatives,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Friends,

First of all, please allow me to extend, on behalf of the Chinese Government, congratulations on the convocation of the Eighth Workshop on Regional Cooperation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Asia-Pacific Region and a warm welcome to Mrs. Robinson, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and other friends present here for coming to China to participate in this workshop.

In recent years, this workshop has become an important forum for Asia-Pacific countries to exchange views and promote cooperation on the question of human rights. Through discussions and exchanges on the basis of equality and mutual respect, these countries, learning from and drawing upon one another's experience, have enhanced their mutual understanding, and consolidated and expanded consensus, thus setting an example of effectively promoting the cause of human rights through international cooperation. They have also identified unanimously at the workshop four regional priorities of human rights cooperation for the current stage, namely, to formulate national plans of action for the promotion and protection of human rights; to establish and strengthen national institutions of human rights; human rights education; and to realize economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development. The current workshop will continue in-depth discussions centering on the above issues. It is my sincere hope that this workshop will help to expand our consensus on the question of human rights, produce more experience that can be shared and contribute to the constant improvement of the level of human rights enjoyed by people in this region as well as the common development and progress in the Asia-Pacific.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Asia-Pacific countries boast a time-honored history and cultural traditions that have many positive elements on respect for human rights. Although the positions and views of these countries on the question of human rights are not exactly the same, what we share obviously outweigh our differences. As close neighbors, we know better than others the history and cultural traditions of the people and the realities of the countries in the region. The Asia-Pacific countries have every reason to step up their cooperation on human rights. Here I would like to share with you the following views and suggestions.

First, while we all respect the basic principles of the UN Charter and the UN human rights instruments, we should build on and carry forward the fine cultural traditions of the region and highlight our own values. As the cradle of some of the world's major ancient civilizations, the Asia-Pacific has a rich store of the humanities. With a long-standing tradition of benevolence, people here value such principles as self-discipline, self-improvement, respect for the elderly, care for the young and harmony of the society and seek a balance between rights and obligations and between individual and collective interests. The Asian financial crisis that occurred in the last couple of years has made quite a few people skeptical about everything Asian. Given the fact that in the 20th century economic crises have occurred in other regions and that the causes for the financial crisis are extremely complex, it is obviously unfair to lay the blame on cultures or values alone for the crisis. Today, as the Asian economy is already on the way to recovery, we are convinced that the people in Asia, with their pioneering spirit, will be able to overcome the many difficulties lying ahead and march forward courageously. They have every reason to keep up their fine cultures and values and promote the all-round development of human rights while attaining economic growth.

Second, efforts should be made to promote international dialogue and exchanges in the human rights field. Countries have different national conditions, therefore it is only natural that they have differences in their approach to the promotion and protection of human rights. These differences should be handled properly through dialogue and exchanges on the basis of equality. The vast majority of the Asia-Pacific countries had in modern times the agonizing experience of being bullied by imperialist powers and hence cherish all the more their sovereignty and national dignity. Moreover, in recent years, the Asia-Pacific countries have stood out as a

major international advocate for dialogue and exchanges, and this workshop is precisely a concrete testament to such a spirit of cooperation based on equality. I believe that in face of the ever-changing international situation, they will be able to make new contributions to the progress of the world cause of human rights along with the rest of the international community.

Third, common action should be strengthened in realizing the economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development. The Asia-Pacific region is mostly made up of developing countries, many of whom are in a crucial period of economic and social development. A considerable proportion of its population which accounts for over 60 percent of the world's total are still living in destitute poverty. To develop the economy, eradicate poverty, promote development and realize prosperity is the common task confronting the Asia-Pacific countries. Clearly it is absolutely necessary for them to discuss and study these issues in an in-depth manner through regional cooperation.

Fourth, we must draw upon all the useful experiences in the world instead of blindly rejecting anything foreign. It can be said that democracy and the rule of law are no country's monopoly and that they do not come under a unified model in the world. To learn from other countries' experience is not to copy it mechanically. Only when appropriate measures suited to the local conditions are adopted in light of a country's specific characteristics and the needs of the people can democracy be effectively broadened and improved and the rule of law be promoted and strengthened. The Asia-Pacific is a populous region, and the countries here are similar to one another in many ways including the level of economic development, so they should boost their cooperation and exchanges in building up democracy and the legal system.

Fifth, the Asia-Pacific countries should seek, to the best of their efforts, common points and the basis for cooperation on the human rights question. At present, four priority areas have been identified for cooperation in this field in the region, and many countries have taken concrete follow-up steps, which undoubtedly is of positive significance for the advancement of the human rights cause in the region. Given the diverse national conditions, different stages of social progress and work priorities, countries may develop, in both content and form, different national institutions of human rights, national action plans and measures for the promotion and protection of human rights. Universality does not

mean blind identity. Every measure that serves to promote and protect human rights effectively and every institution or plan that proves to be truly operative should be encouraged and endorsed.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Chinese nation has always held man's dignity and value in respect. The immense energy China today radiates is a vivid reflection of the broad scope in which the Chinese people give free and democratic play to their creativity. As China is a developing country with a population of nearly 1.3 billion, to realize the people's right to subsistence and development represents a fervent desire of the Chinese people and an objective of the Chinese Government. The size of the Chinese population living in poverty has been cut by over 200 million in China in the past two decades. The vast majority of the rural population now have enough to eat and to wear and the people's living standards have been markedly improved. At the same time, China has been working hard to build up democracy and the legal system and, in recent years, amended the Criminal Law and the Criminal Procedural Law, which has greatly improved human rights protection in the judicial area. The successive promulgation and implementation of the Administrative Procedural Law, the State Compensation Law and the Administrative Review Law have served to better safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of the citizens. China has been making intensified efforts to deepen the building of democracy at the grassroots level in the rural areas, promoting a fair and equitable electoral system, advancing vigorously judicial reforms, enhancing the transparency of the judiciary, strengthening supervision of law enforcement and meting out, according to law, severe punishment to corruption. Our goal is to run the country according to law and build China into a socialist country under the rule of law.

In building a prosperous, democratic and culturally advanced modern country, the Chinese Government and people are ready to work alongside the people in other Asia-Pacific countries and in the rest of the world to promote the human rights cause as well as peace and development in the Asia-Pacific and the larger world.

I wish the workshop a complete success.

Thank you.

**Opening Statement by Mary Robinson  
UN High Commissioner  
for Human Rights**

Excellencies, distinguished representatives, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a pleasure and an honor for me to address you on the first day of the Eighth Asia-Pacific Workshop on Regional Cooperation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. I would like to warmly thank the Government of China for its cooperation in the organization of this event.

In 1998, in Tehran, a consensus was reached on the principles and a step-by-step, building blocks approach, towards the establishment of regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights. Adopted by consensus, the Tehran Framework for Technical Cooperation identifies States' commitment to four regional priorities, namely: 1) National plans of action for the promotion and protection of human rights and the strengthening of national capacities; 2) human rights education; 3) national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights; and 4) strategies for the realization of the right to development and economic, social and cultural rights.

Since the Tehran Framework there have been a number of important developments:

In 1999, in New Delhi, States adopted an Annex to the conclusions of the Seventh Asia-Pacific workshop identifying proposals for the next steps to be taken to facilitate the process of regional cooperation for the promotion and protection of human rights and possible regional arrangements. Much progress have been made since the approval of this document. Inter-sessional activities have taken place on each of the four areas identified in Tehran and agreement has been reached on fundamental principles.

In July 1999, at the inter-sessional workshop on National Human Rights Action Plans held in Bangkok, Thailand, States recognized the desirability of developing national human rights action plans in a participatory and pluralistic manner, and affirmed that such plans contribute to significantly advance the promotion and protection of human rights at the national level.

At the Seoul sub-regional workshop on human rights

education in Northeast Asian schools and at the Tokyo Workshop on National Plans of Action for Human Rights Education, participants recognized the role of human rights education in enhancing respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and in contributing to the prevention of human rights abuses and to the promotion of human rights and sustainable human development.

At the two meetings on National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, held in Kandy, Sri Lanka, and Manila, the Philippines, States reaffirmed that national institutions, established through an inclusive process of consultation with all sectors of society, play an important role in addressing human rights violations and in establishing a culture of respect for human rights.

In February 2000, at the Sana'a Workshop on Strategies for the Realization of the Right to Development and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, States committed to developing and strengthening national capacities for the realization of economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development and reaffirmed that effective public participation is an essential component of successful development and of the implementation of the right to development.

This forum has a particular significance and a special responsibility. It is particularly significant because it symbolically closes the phase initiated with the adoption of the Tehran Framework and implemented through the organization of inter-sessional activities under each one of the four priority areas of cooperation identified under that framework; and it has a special responsibility because, taking stock of what has been achieved throughout this phase, as well as of the obstacles encountered, helps to identify next steps in order to further the process of regional cooperation for the promotion and protection of human rights.

Through a long process of consultations, in the form of annual and inter-sessional workshops, agreement has been reached on principles. Time has come now to move ahead and further the process of cooperation towards the further realization and implementation of those principles. The objectives of this workshop are to review progress made in each one of the four areas identified in Tehran; identify next steps to be taken by government of the region in order to facilitate the process of regional cooperation for the promotion and protection of human rights and action at the regional, sub-regional and national level, including through national institutions and representatives of civil society and; to discuss issues relating to the regional preparatory meeting for the world conference on racism. It is my hope that, following your deliberations, the workshop will be able to consider and agree on the launching of a new regional framework for cooperation in the Asian and Pacific region identifying next steps for regional, sub-regional and national action.

Previous workshops have recognized the crucial role of civil society in developing effective national human rights and human rights education action plans, in establishing national human rights institutions and in guaranteeing a successful and sustainable development. The importance of ensuring a pluralistic and participatory approach in all activities aimed at strengthening national capacities for the promotion and protection of human rights has also been strongly emphasized. It is really encouraging to have representatives of national institutions and non-governmental organizations participating together in this workshop - I offer to you my warm appreciation for your attendance. It is my sincere hope that national institutions and the civil society will be increasingly involved in future activities under the framework of regional cooperation and eventually become full participating parties with government.

I should like to emphasize at the outset that my Office is committed to strengthen its capacity to support national government and institutions in their efforts to promote and protect human rights and that I will continue to pay particular attention to ensuring that this region benefits from all the activities under the programme of technical cooperation and advisory services in the field of human rights. My Office will spare no effort to assist in the process of translating your conclusions here into measures that will further promote and protect human rights in the Asian and Pacific region.

Excellencies, Distinguished Representatives, Ladies and Gentlemen

I was glad to learn that one of the declared objectives of this workshop is to discuss issues relating to the regional preparatory meeting for the World Conference Against Racism. Racism, xenophobia, racial discrimination and intolerance are all malign influences which are at the root of many of the world's conflicts. Despite some impressive victories in the post-War period, racism remains a persistent and stubborn problem. No country is free from at least some people who are intolerant of difference, whether ethnic or religious, and whose intolerance finds violent expression. We are witness to many conflicts where ethnic or religious differences are invoked. There is persistent, and in some cases, escalating discrimination against minorities, indigenous peoples and migrants. Harsh immigration and asylum policies are enforced. And new, insidious forms of racial discrimination have appeared such as the dissemination of hate messages through the Internet.

The World Conference Against Racism will take place in South Africa in 2001. The first preparatory conference will be held in Geneva next May. There will be numerous national and international events associated with the Conference - indeed, some are already underway or have taken place. I hope that there will be regional conferences throughout the world as part of the build up to the main Conference.

For the Conference to be successful it will need inputs from and the wholehearted support of a variety of actors. I hope that in all of your future activities a special attention will be given to issues relating to racism and racial discrimination and that all these inputs will be fed into a regional preparatory meeting.

The year 2000 also represent a benchmark for the realization of the rights of women, it is in fact the year of the fifth anniversary of the adoption, here in this great city, of the Beijing Platform and Programme of Action. Unfortunately 5 years after the World Conference, women's rights are still widely violated: everywhere women still suffer domestic violence each day; increasingly, women are targeted in armed conflicts; the majority of the world's refugees are women; female illiteracy is invariably higher than male illiteracy; women and girl children are becoming commodities in cross-border prostitution rackets and the pornography industry. In many countries, women are not treated as men's equals, whether in property rights, rights of inheritance, laws related to marriage and divorce, or the rights to acquire nationality, manage property or seek employment. This is an important opportunity to renew States' commitment to the promotion and protection of the rights of women. I encourage the Governments and Institutions present here to take up this issue with renewed vigor and commitment in all your future activities, at the regional, sub-regional and national level.

Excellencies, Distinguished Representatives, Ladies and Gentlemen

In concluding, let me reiterate that I attach great importance to this workshop and its ability to achieve tangible results for the promotion and protection of human rights in the Asia and Pacific region. I would in particular emphasize the following:

1. The strong commitment of my Office to support the implementation of your deliberations with regard to future activities at the regional, sub-regional and national level to further the process of regional cooperation for the promotion and protection of human rights.
2. My encouragement to all participants to consider organizing and/or hosting regional, sub-regional and national initiatives with a greater involvement of national institutions and civil society.
3. My invitation to all of you to identify here in Beijing - if possible - a candidate for hosting the next Asia/Pacific workshop which will take place in the year 2001 and to continue having consultations by the open-ended working group in Geneva so as to follow-up on the concrete proposals emerging from this meeting.

The goal that has brought us here today is to increase and coordinate our efforts to help improve substantively the quality of life of the peoples of this region. I believe that this workshop can help us to advance in the achievement of this objective.

# The Trickle-up Approach to Building Peace in Korea

*Karin Lee*

Last year, in Berlin, the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) made a breakthrough in high-level talks. Meanwhile, negotiations at the Four-Party Talks in Beijing continue to try to bring peace to the Korean peninsula. The United Nations is coordinating large-scale humanitarian relief for North Korea. And the U.S. government is working with U.S. NGOs to revitalize North Korean agriculture.

In the midst of these multiple, high-powered international initiatives to address humanitarian concerns and reduce tensions in North Korea, what does a small Quaker-based agency bring to its work with the DPRK? As with our work around the world, the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) brings a faith in the transforming power of human relationships at all levels of society. Alongside Track One and Track Two diplomacy, Track Three or people-to-people diplomacy has an important role to play. We believe that the power of these relationships has a "trickle up" effect, creating more opportunities for reconciliation at all levels of society. As more contacts are made between the peoples of two countries in conflict, this bottom-up reconciliation can lead to or strengthen peaceful relations between the governments.

In 1993, an AFSC delegation to North Korea determined that AFSC might play a useful role in increasing DPRK/US understanding. The AFSC then began a new International Affairs Program, based in Japan, with the intention of playing two roles. One was to continue creating opportunities for dialogue and increased understanding between the US and the DPRK through people-to-people exchanges. The second focus was to strengthen regional dialogue between North Korea and its neighbors.

The AFSC soon found that our partners in North Korea were most interested in improving relationships with the United States. While regional events were well-received and attended by a wide range of Japanese, Chinese, and South Korean participants, we were not successful in including North Koreans in these events. As a result, the program currently has two foci. The first is a continuation of AFSC's efforts to increase communication between Korea and the United States through delegations and exchanges on a range of issues. Professional exchanges are one way to build relationships among people: the common interests of professionals in the same field have the power to erode barriers. The second focus of our East Asia program is support for peace and reconciliation efforts in the region, with a particular emphasis on South Korea. The AFSC looks forward to a time when these two areas of work can be integrated.

## US-DPRK Exchanges

The International Affairs Program staff of AFSC facilitate professional exchanges between North Korea and the US at a people-to-people level as part of our "trickle up" approach.

One exchange in July 1999 focused on cardiology and cardiac surgery. According to a 1987 WHO assessment, North Korea ranked high in the delivery of primary care services. However, recent hardships have seriously reduced the capacity of the medical system. During a visit to the North Korean Ministry of Public Health in the fall of 1998, we discussed the possibility of medical exchanges on a range of topics, including epidemiology, public health, pediatric medicine and cardiac care. Our North Korean counterparts were most interested in cardiac care.

In July we brought a delegation of men, ranging in age from 36 to 60, to the United States for two weeks, during which they visited seven hospitals and two medical organizations in four cities. Through it all, the Korean doctors were resourceful, energetic, adaptable and gracious. They won our respect for their ability to keep their focus throughout the tour, despite its overwhelming pace.

The tour gave the North Korean doctors an overview of the health care system in the United States. They learned about the technology available, the patient care process, and about the continuing education of certified doctors. Many US doctors showed a high level of interest in follow-up work with North Korean doctors.

All of the North Korean doctors appreciated the connections they made with US doctors and several of the US doctors deeply appreciated the opportunity to make contact with North Korean doctors. In addition, many Korean-Americans, doctors and lay-people were grateful for the opportunity to meet the delegation and to assist in the work. AFSC was fortunate to be the conduit of such deep commitment to medical sharing and reconciliation. As we move forward, we hope to build on these exchanges to provide additional opportunities for North Koreans to study and share information in the United States in a variety of fields.

Advocacy on policy issues is another key element of our Korea-related work in the U.S. AFSC's Philadelphia and Washington offices work together to interpret and respond to Congressional and administration stances and legislation on North Korea. AFSC heads a committee of NGOs responding to a recent Congressional initiative that threaten to derail any progress in improving U.S. government relations with North Korea. We also write articles and opinion pieces that help to dispel the one-sided picture of North Korean concerns that too often dominate the US press.

## AFSC Humanitarian Program in North Korea

In addition to the International Affairs Program, AFSC has undertaken a program of direct humanitarian aid to North Korea. In 1995, our North Korean partners asked for our assistance in coping with the effects of severe flooding. At that time, AFSC contributed funds to buy rice. Then, in 1997, a new phase began, in which we work directly with farmers on food production. AFSC now has relationships with three cooperative farms, working with them to provide

inputs to increase their ability to produce food. Through discussions with farming cooperative staff, AFSC determines the most useful inputs, such as fertilizer, plastic sheeting for seedbeds, and seeds to produce crops which improve soil fertility.

The AFSC also works with the North Korean Academy of Agricultural Science (AAS) to explore new seed varieties and fertilizing techniques. The AFSC brings AAS delegations on study tours to different countries. For example, last fall (1999) the AFSC brought three scientists to the US for two weeks to study corn, rice, and soybean production. Exchanges such as these provide DPRK scientists with information on current research and production methods, so that they may determine what might be applicable to the DPRK system. In the spring of 1999, AFSC brought a delegation of DPRK scientists to China to research True Potato Seed, in response to the DPRK decision to focus on potato production. With support of agencies such as Mennonite Central Committee and Quaker Hilfe Stiftung, the humanitarian program has supplied over US\$1.2 million, with the majority of funds going toward direct inputs to improve farming.

In both North Korea and South Korea, working with doctors and peace activists, addressing gender equality and agricultural sustainability, AFSC works through different means to support a common vision -- of a world in which people can live together in both peace and justice.

In the words of the AFSC Mission statement, "We nurture the faith that conflicts can be resolved nonviolently, that enmity can be transformed into friendship, strife into cooperation, poverty into well-being, and injustice into dignity and participation."

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### **More on the AFSC...**

The AFSC is an American organization founded by Quakers in 1917 as means to provide Quakers and other conscientious objectors a means of aiding civilian victims of World War I. Since they believe that there is "that of God" in each human being, Quakers embrace a philosophy of non-violence and refuse to participate in war. Over eighty years later, the AFSC is staffed by a diverse group of people, only a small percentage of whom are Quaker, but all of whom find common cause in AFSC concerns.

### **The East Asia Quaker International Affairs Program**

AFSC's work in relation to Korea began in 1953 at the end of the Korean war when we sought ways to provide humanitarian assistance to both North and South Korea. Ways were not found to help people in the north at that time. Later, in the 1970s, by working with Koreans in Japan, AFSC opened a line of communication with North Korea. The first AFSC delegation visited North Korea in 1980, followed by five more delegations over the next ten years. These delegations created a small, unofficial means of dialogue at the height of Cold War tensions. After each trip, AFSC staff shared with ordinary Americans and policy makers what they had learned about the North Korean perspective. Lack of contact between ordinary people in the United States and ordinary people in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea allowed for the demonization of the North Korean people in the United States, and vice versa. A series of AFSC conferences in the 1980s on reuni-

fication of Korea promoted dialogue in the U.S. on Korean reunification and led to publication of the book *Two Koreas - One Future?* It was AFSC's conviction that the goal of reunification "is not visionary; it is an attainable goal whose achievement should command the efforts of all men and women of good will."

### **East Asia Regional Peace Work**

AFSC's work in East Asia hopes to strengthen efforts for peace and reconciliation in the region. This at times can be as small as making connections among like-minded people that we meet in the course of our travels in the region.

At other times it takes the form of conferences to exchange views and coordinate political actions. In mid-August, we participated in a series of events that wove together reunification concerns and previous work done on security issues. A two-day conference, organized by the Korean National Congress for Reunification, was a useful exploration of the security issues specific to Korea (U.S. bases, land mines at the demilitarized zone, North-South relations) as well as the international/regional factors that influence events on the Korean peninsula (arms trade, U.S.-Japan security relations, the lack of multilateral security institutions in Northeast Asia). We will be working together on an arms trade project that focuses on the flow of weapons from Europe to Korea as well as several other initiatives leading up to the Third Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM) to be held in Seoul in October 2000.

Our program also supports regional working groups, such as a recent meeting integral to regional efforts toward gender equality. In preparation for an Asia-Pacific NGO Symposium on the upcoming Beijing +5 Review, nine women from China, Japan, Mongolia and Korea came together in Seoul for two days in August 1999 to prepare an East Asian sub-regional report. The result of the group's hard work is an "executive summary" for the region, which provides a quick overview of the main issues facing women in the North East Asia, and the differences and similarities behind the issues. The report can be viewed in English at <http://women.or.kr/EastAsia-BPFA>.

Our work often takes the form of workshops to explore new methods of analysis and problem-solving. In Seoul, during the first weekend in September, AFSC and three Korean civic groups co-sponsored a workshop on conflict resolution skills for 23 young Korean activists. It was an experiment in both style and content. Led by Jan Sunoo, a professional mediator from the United States, we spent two days learning about and practicing various conflict resolution skills, such as active listening, interest-based problem-solving, and mediation. We also explored the relevance of conflict resolution to the Korean context, at the interpersonal, group, and international levels. The workshop resulted in some very interesting conclusions. For example, some participants pointed out that because they were fighting against an authoritarian system, many Korean activists are very good at confrontational politics, such as protests and strikes. They are not, however, as well-versed in negotiating skills. This workshop was a first step toward practicing these skills.

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## APF Workshop on Women's Rights

A paper presented by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to the Fourth Meeting of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (APF) in September 1999 described the general problem as follows:

*Equality is the cornerstone of every society, which aspires to democracy, social justice and human rights. In virtually all societies and spheres of activities, women are subject to inequalities in law and in fact. This situation is both caused and exacerbated by the existence of discrimination in the family, in the community and in the workplace. While causes and consequences may vary from country to country, discrimination against women is widespread. It is perpetuated by the survival of stereotypes and of traditional cultural and religious practices and beliefs detrimental to women.*

(A Case Study on Trafficking in the Asia Pacific Region, OHCHR)

The World Conference on Human Rights in 1993 and the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China in 1995 strongly urged relevant human rights organizations to take action to advance the human rights of women. More specifically, the Fourth World Conference on Women Platform for Action identified twelve Critical Areas of Concern for women - one of which related to the 'Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women'.

The promotion and protection of women's human rights fall squarely within the mandates of the individual national human rights institutions within the Asia Pacific region. These institutions have an obligation to demonstrate leadership in this area by actively and effectively exercising its mandate and by publicly articulating the rights of women within their own countries. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have played an active role in encouraging national institutions to pursue this course. For example, the international NGO, the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) based in India, has actively lobbied regional national institutions, through the APF, to give a higher priority to women's issues within their own jurisdictions. It has also encouraged national institutions to examine their own internal policies, programs and resource allocations to reflect the interests and views of women as well as men.

The APF supports this view. As a regional organization, the APF has an important role to play in the cultivation and fostering of its member institutions towards the more effective promotion and protection of women's human rights at the national and regional levels. It can do this by providing a forum that will draw upon a

diverse range of expertise and experience that will stimulate discussions, ideas, networks and practical activities. However it can only do this effectively with the continued support of the OHCHR.

Over the past several years the APF Secretariat, at the request of APF Members, has developed background papers on the rights of women for its annual meetings. In 1998 it produced the paper, *'The Role of National Institutions in Addressing Discrimination Against Women'*. In 1999, it produced the paper, *'The Role of National Institutions in Advancing the Human Rights of Women'*. At this meeting, the OHCHR tabled its paper on *'A Case Study on Trafficking in the Asia Pacific Region'*. The OHCHR paper called upon member institutions of the APF to use their mandate and functions at the national level to give higher priority to the rights of women, particularly in relation to the issue of trafficking of persons. It also encouraged the APF to take up the issue of trafficking at the regional level. The Forum agreed to this recommendation and is currently in the process of working in conjunction with its member institutions and the OHCHR to develop a regional focal point network on trafficking. However, the APF also decided to hold a workshop in 2000 to further discuss ideas and develop practical activities that will advance the human rights of women.

The year 2000 is important for international human rights. The UN General Assembly will be convening a Special Session from 5-9 June 2000 in New York to review and assess the progress achieved in the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, and the Beijing Platform for Action five years after its adoption.

The APF Workshop on the *'Role of National Human Rights Institutions in Advancing the Rights of Women'* will complement this international activity at the regional level. It is envisaged that it will also have a flow-on effect at the national institutional level. Given the broad and almost overwhelming number of issues that affect the human rights of women to be discussed at the international level, the APF decided to have a specific focus on the activities of national institutions in relation to women. This focus will provide a realistic framework for constructive discussion and practical outcomes. In addition, the Workshop's objective reflects the APF's commitment to encouraging the development of 'institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women' identified as a strategic objective in the Platform of Action. In accordance with this strategic objective, the APF with the support of the OHCHR aims to

- encourage governments to create or strengthen national machineries for the advancement of women;
- encourage governments to integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programs and projects;
- encourage NHRIs to generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation.

Workshop recommendations will be referred to the 'Beijing +5' meeting for discussion and endorsement at the international level in June 2000, the OHCHR and to the APF's fifth annual meeting to be held in Rotorua, New Zealand, in August 2000.

Included in the Workshop program is an item on 'World Conference Against Racism, women and racism'. This is in preparation for the *'World Conference Against Racism'* to be held in South Africa in 2001. The issue of racism is of great concern to national institutions. Members of the Forum look forward to independently presenting their work on this issue at the Conference next year. The Forum is particularly pleased to note the inclusion of 'national institutions: examples of good practice' and 'the problem of double discrimination based on race and gender' on the program of the *'Expert Seminar on Remedies Available to the Victims of Acts of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and on Good National Practices in the Field'* held in Geneva in February 2000. The Forum firmly believes that gender discrimination and racism brings a unique set of human rights challenges that require concerted attention.

In particular the Workshop, to be held in Suva on May 5-7, 2000, will

- encourage existing national institutions to actively promote and protect the international human rights of women in addition to promoting the objectives of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action;
- encourage governments, with a special focus on those within the Pacific region, to develop independent national institutions in accordance with international human rights standards and the Paris Principles;
- promote and encourage more effective cooperation and collaboration between the OHCHR, other UN agencies, national institutions, international, regional and national NGOs on issues relating to the human rights of women, including trafficking.
- encourage established national institutions to, *inter alia*, systematically examine its gender representation at Commissioner and staff level, internal policies and resource allocations that reflect the interests and views of women. This also includes examining internal structures to directly and indi-

rectly encourage and promote gender equality, including training for staff and members on gender issues.

The Workshop under the auspices of the OHCHR will primarily be organized and facilitated by the APF Secretariat with the assistance of the Fiji Human Rights Commission (FHRC). The FHRC will host the Workshop with assistance from the Institute of Justice and Applied Legal Services at the University of the South Pacific (IJALS). The FHRC was established in 1999 and in September 1999 became the APF's seventh member. The IJALS has long supported the establishment of a national institution in Fiji. In February 1998 it organized a one-day workshop at the University of the South Pacific on the *'Importance of National Human Rights Commissions'*. Funding for the Workshop is also being sought from the New Zealand and Australian governments.

The participation of IJALS will ensure the active involvement of civil society in the development and implementation of the Workshop. It also gives effect to the APF's commitment, as outlined in the *Kandy Program of Action: Cooperation between National Institutions and Non-Government Organizations*, to work more cooperatively, and wherever possible, in partnership with NGOs in its activities.

The Workshop is unique because it represents the first major regional meeting of the APF to be held in the Pacific region. Previous meetings have been held in South and South-East Asia.

The two-day Workshop will include approximately 80 participants from Forum member institutions, NGOs, regional governments considering establishing a national institution and Pacific countries. It is anticipated that representatives from the OHCHR will also attend and actively participate in proceedings.

The Workshop will incorporate both plenary and working-group sessions, with an emphasis on exchanging knowledge and information. It will also have a practical output focus that will seek to develop concrete proposals for action at both the national and regional levels.

For more information, please contact: Ms Pip Dargan at the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions c/o Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Level 8 Piccadilly Tower, 133 Castlereagh Street, Sydney NSW 2000 Australia, ph (612) 9284-9644; fax (612) 9284-9825; e-mail: pipdargan@hreoc.gov.au; website: www.apf.hreoc.gov.au

## Events

### Recently-Held Events

1. The 10th Annual Training of the Diplomacy Training Program (DTP) was held on 24 January-11 February 2000 at Northern Territory University, Darwin, Australia. Thirty-five participants from sixteen countries including India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Mongolia, Burma/Thailand, Malaysia, Philippines, Indonesia (including West Papua and Aceh), East Timor, PNG, Fiji, Kiribati, Hong Kong, Australia, and Ethiopia attended the training.

There were sessions on various aspects of international law, the UN, treaties and globalization, as well as practical training in lobbying, using the media, strategic planning, and running an NGO. The course ended with a role play of a meeting of the UN Commission on Human Rights in which the participants played relevant countries, NGOs and a mining company to gain insights into the operation of the Commission and the reality of international strategic diplomacy.

DTP is now finalizing the venue for the next Annual Training in early 2001 and planning courses this year for the Pacific and Tibet. Check the DTP website for updates: [www.law.unsw.edu.au/centres/dtp](http://www.law.unsw.edu.au/centres/dtp)

2. The Collective of Active Members (CAM), an advisory body of the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW), held a meeting on February 14-16, 2000 in Bangkok. The meeting discussed the traffic in women situation in various regions of the world, and the strategies for the future activities of GAATW. Participants from Cambodia, Colombia, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Poland and Thailand attended the meeting. The CAM concluded that GAATW should take a pro-rights approach based on human rights principles rather than an anti-trafficking approach. It also suggested that GAATW should create an alliance with sex workers and migrant workers as well as trafficked persons. For further information contact: Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW) 191 Sivalai Condominium Itsaraphap Rd., Soi 33 Bangkok 10600 Thailand; ph (662) 864-1427, (662) 864-1428; fax (662) 864-1637; e-mail: [gaatw@mozart.inet.co.th](mailto:gaatw@mozart.inet.co.th)

3. The Cambodia Prostitutes Union in cooperation with Cambodia Women's Development Agency (CWDA) and GAATW held a regional meeting of sex workers in Siem Riep on 21-23 March 2000. The meeting discussed issues relevant to the life and working condition of sex workers and their family. The discussion included the issue of impact of national and international laws on their lives. The participants from Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Japan, India, Bangladesh, Hong Kong and Indonesia shared how they are working to achieve their rights and how they can empower each other. The meeting aimed to make a network and a movement to ensure their human rights including the right to work. For further information contact: GAATW International Coordination Office.

### Events

1. The International Movement of Catholic Students (IMCS) and the Asian Regional Resource Center for Human Rights Education (ARRC) will be holding the Southeast Asian Youth Human Rights Education Workshop on May 1-8,

2000 in Bali. The workshop will focus on capacity building in the promotion of human rights through human rights education. There will be participants from Hong Kong, Malaysia, Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia and Australia. For further information please contact: Ann in IMCS through this e-mail: [imcs@phil.gn.apc.org](mailto:imcs@phil.gn.apc.org)

2. The Asia-Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD) will be holding in Chiangmai the following meetings and workshops:

a. April 4-5 - Working Group on Women's Political Participation Processes (WPPP). This meeting will discuss the preparation for the development of a training module for WPPP.

b. April 22-30 - WPPP Working Group on WPPP training module. This meeting will develop the training module for WPPP.

c. May - Skills Training for Feminist Legal Theory and Training Practice (FLTP). As the second phase of the FLTP training of trainers, the training aims to equip the trainers with skills on facilitating and designing training programs, and other skills.

d. May - Labour Attaches Training. This is a training on gender, human rights, and migrant women issues for labour attaches in the Asian region.

For more information, please contact: Asia-Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD), 3F, Satitham YMCA Building, Room 305-307, 11 Sermsuk Road, Soi Mengrairasm, Chiangmai 50300 Thailand, ph (6653) 404-613 to 14; fax (6653) 404-615; e-mail: [apwld@loxinfo.co.th](mailto:apwld@loxinfo.co.th); <http://www.apwld.org>

3. The Advanced Course and Training Program in Peace and Human Rights will take place from June 5 - 23, 2000 on O'ahu, Hawai'i and Maui. The theme of the three-week advanced summer seminar in Hawai'i is "Deepening the Discourse of Human Rights; Developing Nonviolent Strategies for Direct Action and Diplomacy."

The Hawai'i Institute for Human Rights will organize a specialized, summer study session focusing on international human rights law and the power of nonviolence geared for

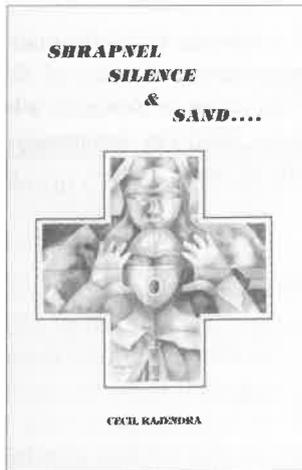
- advanced students in international law, political science and peace studies; and
- professors and professionals in the field of international human rights law and peace.

The summer seminar focus is to:

- educate about the international instruments and institutions, the regional mechanism and national institutions that aim to promote and protect human rights, as well as the established generations of human rights and the emerging generation of collective rights;
- organize to challenge the current judicial and political systems to improve and be innovative in their approach; and
- mobilize participants to move beyond basic understanding and to build skills and strategies for future nonviolence and human rights campaigns

For more information, please contact: Joshua Cooper, Hawai'i Institute for Human Rights, Pacific Peace Palace, 3524 Campbell Avenue, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96815. Phone: 808 734-0117, Fax: 808 956-5708, e-mail: [joshua@hawaii.edu](mailto:joshua@hawaii.edu); <http://www.geocities.com/hihrmaui/index.html>

## Publications Review



### **SHARPNEI SILENCE & SAND...**

by Cecil Rajendra  
Bogle-L'Ouverture Press, London:  
1999

#### **The Romantic Patient**

The report said, he had been suffering from strange delusions of justice and equality; that he believed in such myths like love brotherhood and liberty.

Worse, the man in question had visions of an open society: free from poverty bigotry and corruption.

He also had a long history of dreams of a friendlier environment for his children.

These hazardous hallucinations (the report went on to say) precipitated the patient into speaking out at public forums and writing a series of articles which forced our authorities' hand in stopping the propagation of such an inflammable material.

After three short months in a Government facility, followed by another nine of counselling and therapy,

the patient can be deemed (the report concluded) to have been truly rehabilitated;

he is now in a position to take his rightful place in the ranks of the establishment - fully cured of all his romanticism!

#### **AIDS**

*Bucharest* : - Romanian villagers stoned an eight-year-old AIDS victim and her family and tried to drive them away from their home. -Reuters -

Caught in the crossfire between myth and reality she has nowhere to turn to escape the stigma of this latter day 'leprosy'.

It matters not if she be innocent or a toddler tainted by a transfusion; in our shuttered minds she is beyond redemption.

Driven by purblind ignorance we have lumped our fears of sex, sin and superstition and made of this misfortune a mountain of misconception.

And, how shall we atone?  
Let he, who is without guilt, cast the first stone...

Cecil Rajendra has once again displayed through poems his sharp criticism of today's society. His latest poem collection entitled *Sharpnel, Silence & Sand...* provides a review of the problems besetting almost all countries in the world not just Malaysia. His call for accountability for those in power as well as for ordinary people who contribute in one way or the other to societal malaise comes out clear in the witty lines of his poems.

Cecil, as he is known to many social activists, non-traditional lawyers, NGO workers, and socially-committed academics in Southeast and South Asia, put in few words what others have been trying hard to explain in various ways through the years. His poems are potent medium for self-

reflection as well as societal action.

Here below is the publisher's note about Cecil's background:

*"Cecil Rajendra has long been acknowledged as one of Asia's finest poets if also its most controversial. In 1993 the Malaysian Government impounded his passport ostensibly for his "anti-logging activities" which, in substance, was the writing and performing of several environmental poems at home and abroad. After an international campaign spearheaded by his London publishers and the poet Adrian Mitchell, Mr. Rajendra's passport was summarily returned to him.*

*Cecil Rajendra's poem have been published and broadcast in over 50 countries and been translated into several languages including German, Japanese, Chinese, Bengali, French, Malay, Tamil, Urdu, Danish and Tagalog.*

*His poems have also appeared on records, cassettes, greeting cards, posters, environmental kits, hymnals, tourist handbooks, human rights dossiers, cantata, lieder and school and university texts in Asia, Africa, Europe and the United States. Amnesty International (U.K.) based its 1997 calendar on his celebrated poem 'The Animal and Insect Act' which parodies security laws.*

*However, in his native country he is constantly pilloried by both local academics, critics and political establishment who regard him as a 'non-poet' and 'trouble-maker'. A leading local journalist, who recently attempted to put his work in perspective, received a death threat!*

*Mr. Rajendra is a London-trained barrister; and, after coming down from Lincoln's Inn, he returned home to pioneer Malaysia's first rural legal aid center for indigent farmers, fishermen and factory workers.*

*He is a member of the Malaysian Bar Council and chairs its Human Rights Committee. Cecil Rajendra now lives in Penang, Malaysia where he is in private law practice."*

For copies of the publication please contact: Bogle-L'Ouverture Press, P.O. Box 2186, W13 9QZ England.

## HURIGHTS OSAKA ACTIVITIES

HURIGHTS OSAKA is now preparing several English and Japanese publications on human rights/human rights education. The third volume of *Human Rights Education in Asian Schools*, the Japanese translation of *Schools, Human Rights and Society - Report of the 1998 Asian Workshops on Human Rights Education in Schools*, a booklet on the fifth anniversary of HURIGHTS OSAKA (in Japanese), *Human Rights Review 2000* (in Japanese), and a report on the first five years of the center (in Japanese) will be available from the month of June 2000.



**PRINTED MATTER**

**AIR MAIL**

May be opened for inspection by the postal service.

HURIGHTS OSAKA, inspired by the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, formally opened in December 1994. It has the following goals: 1) to promote human rights in the Asia-Pacific region; 2) to convey Asia-Pacific perspectives on human rights to the international community; 3) to ensure inclusion of human rights principles in Japanese international cooperative activities; and 4) to raise human rights awareness among the people in Japan to meet its growing internationalization. In order to achieve these goals, HURIGHTS OSAKA has activities such as Information Handling, Research and Study, Education and Training, Publications, and Consultancy Services.



**HURIGHTS OSAKA**

**HURIGHTS OSAKA**

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