



Editorial

Globalizing Human Rights

One feature of globalization is the faster and freer circulation of ideas and information on almost anything courtesy of new communication technologies. Sadly, the idea of human rights has not been popular in this global process. Much less is its practice in a globalized sense.

It must be admitted however that new communication technologies greatly help human rights work worldwide.

Business and trade lead the way in the globalization process. They are partly responsible for promoting ideas on good governance, rule of law, transparency, and accountability. Nowadays, protests against excesses of hyper/cyber capitalism are putting into the global business agenda the need for proper balance between profit and people's welfare, between infrastructural development and environmental protection and preservation, between big business conglomerates and small entrepreneurs, among other concerns.

The fruits of globalization escape human rights to a large extent. In fact, many people complain that business-oriented globalization processes are resulting in human rights violations instead of human rights realization.

Many will question the capability of the current globalization process to bring about more democratic distribution of economic benefits. Many more will ask how far can globalization contribute to universal/global practice and realization of human rights. But since globalization is here to stay, these questions need to find some answers.

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.

Marginalization and Globalization: Commercializing Natural Resources in the Mekong Region

Satoru Matsumoto

People's movement against the ADB projects

Thousands of people holding banners criticizing the Asian Development Bank (ADB) surrounded the most extravagant hotel in Chiang Mai, a quiet tourist town in Northern Thailand, in early May 1999. The hotel was the venue of the 33rd ADB Annual Meeting. There were, however, more members of the police force present than protesters. The majority of the protesters are not anti-globalization urban elites but people who are affected by development projects initiated by the ADB and other international aid institutions.

While the Bank has propagated its people's participation policy, the Chiang Mai scene cynically proved that the Bank preferred "police participation" to people's participation. It did not allow the participation in the meeting of direct stakeholders like project-affected people as the protesters pointed out. The ADB President, Mr. Tadao Chino, a former high ranking official of the Ministry of Finance in Japan, did not meet the affected people even though they proposed direct communication with him several times. Tight schedule of meetings with government officials and business representatives was the excuse.

It was the first time for the ADB Annual Meeting to face such a large-scale grassroots protest. One of the banners brought by the protesting farmers was quite symbolic. The banner shows a drawing of fishes. The big fish named "World Bank" swallows the "IMF" fish, which swallows the "ADB" fish, and which swallows in turn "Ratthabaan Thai" (Thai government) fish. At the end of the line is the smallest fish, "Chaunaa Thai" (Thai farmer) leaving behind bones and a farmer's hat.

The protest was organized by the coalition of 38 people's organizations in Thailand. The protest consistently criticized three problematic ADB loans to Thailand: 1) Agricultural Sector Program Loan, 2) Samut Prakarn Wastewater Management Project Loan, 3) Social Sector Program Loan.

The Agricultural Sector Program Loan is being criticized for urging the Thai government to introduce new irrigation service fee as a conditionality of the loan. Small farmers are afraid that it will limit their access to



Nam Theun Hinboun hydropower project (Laos)

irrigation water if they cannot afford the new fee. The Samut Prakarn Wastewater Management Project distresses the fisherfolk living close to the project site because of possible impact on water quality and fishery resources. They claim that the planned facilities are not designed to process heavy metallic wastes from factories. They also claim that there has never been an adequate environmental impact assessment done on the project. The third controversial loan, the Social Sector Program Loan, is alleged by the protesters as imposing the privatization of educational and medical systems in Thailand.

The most controversial issue among the poor farmers in Thailand is the new irrigation service fee contained in the Agricultural Sector Program Loan. Although the ADB provided counter-arguments on each point raised by the farmers, there is one crucial question that has not been properly answered. The question is "why does the ADB, whose new overarching goal is poverty alleviation, prescribe the introduction of irrigation fees not only for agri-business investors but also for the poor farmers?" The Bank explains that the irrigation service fee improves the use and management of water and land for the benefit of the farmers. It also asserts that small farmers, in particular, can increase their access to rural credit. However, the Bank appears to ignore the fact that the poor farmers depend on natural resources such as

water and land not for agri-business but mainly for their own subsistence. Also, a huge number of farmers in Thailand are suffering from debt burdens under existing rural credit schemes. The protesting farmers see that commercialization or privatization of water resources will lead to the control of the water market by the capital-rich business sectors. Deprived of access to water resources, the poor farmers will be marginalized.

This case points to the issue of resource tenure. The system for using a resource whether land, forest or water affects the access right of people. This right is adversely affected even more when resource tenure is defined along political-economic power relations. It is clear that free access to water is indispensable to maintain the subsistence livelihood of the rural population of Thailand and thus it is a right they are entitled to claim. The ADB project will distort such right of the poor.

Globalization and foreign aid to Laos

The World Bank Group Private Sector Development Strategy paper explains globalization in the following manner:

"Economic liberalization, combined with advances in communications and transport, has led to the growing integration of world markets for goods, services, and capital. This process, known as globalization, accelerated in the 1990's as an increasing number of countries embarked on structural adjustment programs-designed to reorient their economies towards private sector production and international trade and to improve their competitiveness."

The paper explains that in 1994 the share of private capital flows and official capital flows in the net long-term capital flows to emerging markets was 178 billion and 46 billion US dollars respectively. In 1997 it was 299 billion and 39 billion US dollars respectively. The outstanding domination by private capital in the capital flows to the emerging markets especially in Asia is partly caused by "aid fatigue" among donor countries. This situation urged the international financial institutions (IFIs) like World Bank and ADB to change their role from aid providers to "catalysts" of private money for development projects.

In Laos, a small land-locked country in the Mekong River Basin and categorized as one of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPCs), projects initiated by the IFIs induced private financing and resulted in marginalizing vulnerable rural populations. The ADB-

financed Nam Theun Hinboun hydropower project is an example.

The communist-led government of Laos initiated its open market economic policy called the New Economic Mechanism (NEM) in 1986. The collapse of the former Soviet block and the peace process in Cambodia in the early 90's triggered the pouring of development funds into the Mekong region including Laos. Consequently, IFIs' lending accelerated during that period. ADB, at the same time, began its own development program for the Greater Mekong Sub-regional Economic Cooperation (GMS) to finance various trans-border projects among the six Mekong countries namely Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Burma and Yunnan province of China. The GMS initiative by ADB and the IFIs' engagement in development projects in Laos and other Mekong countries coincided with globalization trends in the region.

ADB-financed Nam Theun Hinboun hydropower project

The most advanced project under the ADB's GMS initiative is the Nam Theun Hinboun hydropower project located in central Laos. The project began to generate 210 MW of electricity in March 1998. Ninety-five percent of the electricity generated is exported to Thailand in order to increase the foreign currency earning of the Laotian government. This is the first dam project in the Mekong region where ADB catalyzed private funding for a large-scale infrastructure project. The executing agency is a joint venture company named Theun-Hinboun Power Company (THPC), which is 60 percent owned by Electricité du Laos (EdL), 20 percent by MDX Company Limited (Thailand), and 20 percent by Nordic Hydropower AB (Sweden and Norway). ADB provided 60 million US dollars to complement the sharehold of EdL. But it constitutes only 20 percent of the total project cost. ADB is proud that its relatively small funding support to this project inspired private financing. It also believed that the project would have little social and environmental impact.

An NGO investigation however revealed that there are negative impacts occurring just after completion of the dam. The investigation found serious "unexpected" damage on affected people's lives. The reduction of fish capture and the flooding of the vegetable gardens along the original riverside were found to be calamitous. After organizing a few missions to the affected area, ADB finally realized the extensive damage caused by the "environmentally sound dam project." The newly-

defined project-impact zone covers 53 villages instead of 21 as originally considered, and includes an estimated 4,283 households of about 25,000 persons (0.5 percent of the total population in Laos).

Despite the ADB admission of the wide-ranging negative impact of the dam in early 1999, the affected people received very little compensation for the damage suffered. The responsibility for providing appropriate compensation is unclear. The agreement provides that THPC is obligated to bear the costs of providing compensation, resettlement, and environmental mitigation up to one million US dollars only. According to ADB, the amount of dividends and royalties that THPC paid to the government of Laos reached 36 million US dollars from April 1998 to February 2000. And yet THPC does not intend to compensate the affected people beyond one million US dollars. Since this project is mainly privately financed, ADB has been reluctant to take the responsibility for providing compensation. While the stakeholders of THPC received economic benefits in more than expected amount, the unexpected damage the poor fisherfolk face remains unsolved.

This is a typical case of commercialization of water resources to generate more money rather than help the rural fisherfolk in Laos. More than 20 middle and large-scale hydropower projects are either being constructed or studied in this country. These projects may not only destroy the physical environment but also marginalize a large portion of the population of Laos, especially the vulnerable people making a living through free access to natural resources in rural areas.

What is the real target: globalization and marginalization?

Many more cases can be cited in the Mekong region related to commercialization of natural resources. An example is the Nam Theun 2 project, another hydropower dam project in Laos. The project has been waiting for a financial guarantee from the World Bank in order to mitigate the political risk on the investment by foreign private financiers. Relying on the expected World Bank guarantee, the Laotian government gave a logging concession to a military-owned logging company to clear 450 square kilometers of forest in the Nakai Plateau (considered to have rich-biodiversity). This logging concession caused the loss of livelihood on forest products of local people. In Cambodia, ADB recommended the amendment of the land law. NGOs criticized the draft amendment for supporting foreign investors and undermining the right of indigenous peo-

ple to possess and utilize land. The draft amendment would limit the access of the indigenous people to natural resources.

These criticisms against foreign aid (especially funds from the IFIs) indicate the increasing influence of globalization in the Mekong region, where the majority* of rural people still rely on natural resources for their subsistence. Rural people fear that the commercialization of natural resources and the private financing of projects will marginalize their livelihood.

Activists criticizing destructive projects of IFIs cannot be considered promoting "anti-globalization" however. Bureaucrats in the Mekong countries often criticize globalization because it appears to be imposing "Western" standards. Anti-globalization can sometimes be understood in this region as legitimacy or justification for government control and intervention in economic activities.

One social activist in Thailand, Mr. Witoon Permpongsacharoen, the co-director of the NGO Towards Ecological Recovery and Regional Alliance (TERRA), insisted at the International Conference on ADB and Mekong Development held in Sydney last June 1999 that "We are not anti-globalization activists. We are just concerned about the development projects which marginalize the people living [in the project areas by] undermin[ing] their livelihood." He suggested avoiding the discursive arguments about symbolic terms such as globalization. Instead, energy should be focused on the institutions marginalizing people. These institutions are visible compared to globalization. While the great influence of globalization is admitted, it should be kept in mind, at the same time, that real institutions affect people's lives and their involvement in specific projects should therefore be monitored as a matter of necessity.

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Asia-Pacific Women's Informatization Networks

Mylene Soto

Media and the new forms of information communication technology (ICT) have become significant means to promote the advancement of women in the Asia-Pacific. The Beijing Platform for Action (Fourth World Conference on Women, 1995) declares the need to "Increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication."

A number of critical issues arise in this regard:

- women's right to equal and democratic access to ICT;
- greater women's and citizen's participation in negotiations relating to the future of the information and communications industry and the international distribution of the Internet;
- empowerment of women by enhancing their skills, knowledge and access to information technology;
- involvement of women in decision-making regarding the development of new technologies in order to participate fully in their growth and impact;
- increased access and participation of women to expression and decision-making in the media and ICT in order to overcome negative portrayals and stereotypes of women in media and communications; and
- necessity of challenging instances of abuse of power of an increasingly important industry and encouraging the presentation of balanced, non-stereotyped and diverse images of women. [1]

In September 1995, 40 women from 25 countries took on the pioneering responsibility of setting-up, training and facilitating global information support during the Beijing conference. The Association for Progressive Communicators - Women's Networking Support Programme (APC WNSP) organized this first women-spearheaded activity of this sort in a major United Nations parallel conference.

Since then the growth of women's information networks in the world have been propelled by the accelerated development of information technology and the increase in women's access and use of electronic networking. A 1996 APC WNSP survey shows that women are not just receivers or end users of online information. Women's resource and information centers along with other information providers that have long been active in print, broadcast and audio-visual media are increasingly venturing into electronic networking to expand their reach. Groups from the South, in particular, repackaged "offline" information into electronic formats to share widely with women online. [2]

Regional information networks

The Isis International's regional initiatives and the Asian Women's Resource Exchange (AWORC) are two initiatives in Asia-Pacific that focus on women and infor-



mation communication.

The work of Isis International in this field can be seen best in its regional program relating to the Beijing+5 Review. It has the following activities:

1) Local information-communication focal points in the region.

Women's networks as focal points are tapped to help disseminate information. There are now ten focal points covering South Asia, Southeast Asia, Central Asia and the Pacific. Information on the pre-review, review proper, and post review activities is disseminated by Isis through these focal points. Experience shows that the timely distribution of the *Beijing+5 Primer* published by Isis for the region can be credited to these focal points. They also collect information on the BPFA review process at the national level.

2) Information channels from the official level processes to the NGOs and vice versa.

Information from the official channels of the BPFA review (basically the United Nations system and its agencies focused on women, and national governments) are disseminated to NGOs through the focal points. Likewise, Isis ensures that information from the NGO level is transmitted to the official channels.

3) Info-Com Dispatch Advisory

Women in the region receive "news" dispatches or advisories through the following means:

a) On-line reporting

Updates on the national, sub-regional and global activities on BPFA relevant to the Asia and Pacific are regularly done through the web sites of Isis (www.isis-women.org), AWORC (<http://www.jca.apc.org/aworc>), and globally through the WomenAction 2000 web site (www.womenaction.org). The APWomen 2000 is a discussion list on activities and lobbying plans of

women in the Asia-Pacific for the June 2000 United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS). The UNGASS was convened to assess progress achieved in the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, and of the Beijing Platform for Action. This special session entitled "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-First Century" was held on 5-9 June 2000 at the UN Headquarters in New York. The success of the short five-month preparation for the Asia-Pacific Regional NGO Symposium held in Bangkok on 31 August to 3 September 1999 is attributed to the use of electronic networking tools such as mailing lists.

b) Print Media

Printed materials on Beijing +5 Review are also sent out to focal points that circulate the information within their countries and sub-region.

Printed Media Packs or information packs are being developed to reach mainstream and women's radio outlets on the Beijing +5 Review processes. An information pack on the Institutional Mechanisms for Women's Advancement, Women and Human Rights, and BPFA+5 Review had been produced.

c) Radio

Recognizing radio's reach to a wide audience of women listeners, a bimonthly news Radio News Dispatch reports on activities and initiatives related to the BPFA Review. It is transmitted to 18 radio stations and networks in Asia-Pacific. A live radio coverage was undertaken during the major activities. Isis provided a live global radio coverage and broadcast during the UNGASS.

AWORC is a product of women's search for innovative ways to facilitate networking and information-sharing. It was conceived during the workshop entitled "Electronic Networking and Resourcing: Strategies for Women's Information Centres" initiated by Isis International-Manila in April 1998. As the AWORC web site explains, "AWORC is an Internet-based women's information service and network in Asia. It is an initiative geared towards developing cooperative approaches and partnerships in increasing access and exploring applications of new information and communication technologies for women's empowerment." It is also a channel to promote the different advocacies of the member-organizations on such issues as violence against women, women and globalization, development of the status of women, women's health and reproductive rights, concerns of the girl-child and elderly or older women, women and the environment, women's movement in Asia and how to address the gaps on women's access to information.

The network now has the following women's information centres and providers of information on women as members. These are:

1. Asia Japan Women's Resource Center (AJWRC) - Japan
2. Asia-Pacific Women's Information Network Center (APWINC) - South Korea

3. Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW) - Malaysia
4. Association for Progressive Communication - Women's Networking Support Programme (APC-WNSP)
5. Gender Centre for Sustainable Development (GCSD) - Mongolia
6. Institute of Women's Studies (IWS) - Philippines
7. Isis International-Manila (Isis Manila) - Philippines
8. JCA-NET (JCA-NET) - Japan
9. Korean Women's Development Institute (KWDI) - South Korea

Strategies

1. Multilingual Search System

Acknowledging that language is one of the barriers to communication and information-sharing, AWORC's web site (www.jca.ax.apc.org/aworc//index/html) integrates a multi-lingual search system as a main feature. This helps more women to access the print and non-print materials collected by the resource and information centres in the language they speak and understand. Currently, English, Japanese and Korean are the languages used. More widely-used Asian languages will be included soon. The development of this multi-lingual search system will take effect as soon as funds and skills are available. Concurrent with this is a bibliographic database that will house the databases of the members' on-line and off-line information. This search system will serve as a gateway to the resources of the AWORC members.

2. Training Capacity

AWORC just held its Asian Women's Electronic Networking Training (WENT2000) Workshop (www.jca.apc.org/aworc/went2000/) on 19-25 June 2000 in Seoul, Korea. This year's training workshop has three parallel tracks: Web-based Information Service, Working Online, and Basic Course in Database. Each track has ten to fifteen participants.

On 21-26 June 1999, AWORC held the 1999 Asian Women's Electronic Networking Training (WENT99) Workshop (www.jca.apc.org/aworc/went99/index.html). The training focused on the use of electronic networking tools and web site development for the advancement of women's concerns and advocacies in relation to the upcoming Beijing Platform for Action or Beijing+5 Review. Twenty-three participants from women's organizations in Northeast, South and Southeast Asia learned how to set up and use mailing lists, and put women's information in the web.

The e-mail list set up for the pre-workshop coordination is now being actively used by the participants, trainers and AWORC members for information sharing and dissemination on the review process, post-training technical support, and coordination for review activities.

3. Information and communication technologies for B+5 women's campaign

AWORC dedicated the "Beijing +5: Reviewing the Platform for Action" web site (www.jca.apc.org/aworc/bpfa)

as its contribution to the review process. This site is a conduit for information about women's groups, the United Nations and government mechanisms regarding the BPFA-related preparations and activities in the Asia-Pacific. It makes information about the Beijing Declaration Critical Areas of Concern, calendar of activities, resources, reports and alternative declarations made by women available.

On 2 September 1999, during the Asia-Pacific Regional NGO Symposium, AWORC along with Isis International-Manila and Asia-Pacific Women's Information Network Center (APWINC) convened a special interest group workshop called "Information and Communication Technologies: An Agenda for Women." The workshop discussed the rapid development of ICT and its impact on women's advancement. The panel speakers covered the issues of women's rights to equal and democratic access to ICT, including women's experiences in working for gender equality in the design, implementation, access and use of these technologies and in the policy decisions and frameworks that regulate them.

This workshop was held as an initial activity in the regional review of five years of women and ICT. Entitled "Status of Women and ICT in Asia, Central Asia and the Pacific - A Review" it will start on July 2000. The findings of this research will help identify the information and communication gaps and needs of women in the region which will also be valuable in determining the developmental direction of AWORC. The research is also geared towards producing a report and policy recommendations.

AWORC and Isis International-Manila provided on-site reporting during the major events leading up to Women 2000 such as:

- Commission on the Status of Women Meeting last March 2000 held in New York, USA
- Asia-Pacific Women 2000 NGO Symposium.

The reports include News Dispatches prepared by Isis International-Manila, plenary speeches, and national and sub-regional reports presented during the conference, and the declaration and final report of the symposium.

AWORC provided on-site reporting during the UNESCAP High Level Intergovernmental Meeting held on 26-29 October 1999 in Bangkok. The meeting discussed the five-year regional review of the BPFA.

AWORC's involvement in the various meetings/events leading up to Women 2000 included setting up Public E-mail and Internet Access Centres. Representatives from AWORC run these centers and provided assistance and training on e-mail and Internet use for participants.

4. Radio and Internet

While ICT is gaining ground as a major mode of information dissemination, it covers "only 3% of the world's population and ... leaves out 97% of the world's population [that] still depend on other forms of media. Radio is still considered to be the most widely accessible, most affordable and definitely most powerful medium across the world especially in the developing world..." [3] On the other hand, only a few radio networks broadcast programs aimed at female audiences. There is no single radio program that focuses on the BPFA.

The complementary relationship of radio broadcasting

and the Internet is now being explored. The Women and Media Workshop which Isis International - Manila organized during the Regional NGO Symposium in Bangkok and the International Institute of Communication (IIC) pre-conference discussion on "Broadcasting and the Internet and the Developing Countries" held in Kuala Lumpur on 3-9 September 1999 recommend the development of efficient and culturally-sensitive softwares on voice recognition and translation. This responds to the lack of common language in a region of diverse languages. Isis International - Manila is planning a news digest service for radio. It hopes to involve mainstream radio stations (government and private). Also, in the absence of voice recognition and translation softwares, training of a pool of translators apart from the pool of writers will be done as a temporary solution.

Future direction

The development of ICT for the advancement of women hinges on the resolution of several issues. They mainly relate to policy issues on women and science and technology.

Governments should implement the training and education of women and girls in science and technology. Women should participate in the design and development of machines and softwares, as well as in formulating policies and projects from the ground level up. The BPFA review was a venue to pursue policies regarding:

- "Access to knowledge and technology for poverty alleviation to enable poor countries and poor people gain the knowledge and information required to move out of poverty. These efforts to bridge knowledge gaps should be gender-sensitive to include women and girls.
- Science and technology education for women and girls. The barriers that women and girls face when they seek science and technology training should be overcome. There should be more women in science and technology career.
- Threats to women as traditional sources of knowledge. Access to basic communications technology is still very limited and costs are high. Women have often been seen as a source of traditional knowledge for which there was a high demand, but modern life's disruption of traditional communities is dissipating informal channels of information exchange and knowledge is flowing to those who are already privileged in other ways.
- Women's participation in shaping information technologies. Women need to influence the development of science and technology and be actively involved in the definition and development of the new information technologies in order to create a space that is conducive to the discussion of their concerns, and represents their perspectives and abilities in a non-threatening and non-stereotypical manner. AWORC is aware of the kind of information in the web and passively disengaging from it will be losing the battle without struggle. A search for information with the keywords "Asia" and "women" will show web sites of

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HURIDOCs and the Asia-Pacific

Manuel Guzman

Early Years

HURIDOCs, a network of human rights organizations involved in systematic monitoring, information handling and communication of human rights issues, was formally established in 1982. The founding organizations agreed that information is power, and that modern technology should and could be harnessed for the defence and promotion of human rights. And to this end, standardization of tools to strengthen information handling and exchange is important.

It was seen that there was a lot of expertise and experience among the founding - as well as potential - members of the network from all over the world. The task at hand then was to bring together such expertise and experience to produce universal tools that can be used everywhere.

The first tool that HURIDOCs introduced was the set of Bibliographic Standard Formats for use by small human rights libraries. But since much of the early activities of HURIDOCs revolved around Europe, it was felt that HURIDOCs needed to do more. It needed to: 1) conduct more training in the South; and 2) develop a tool that NGOs can use in monitoring human rights violations.

Any effort to monitor human rights requires capable, accurate, and skilled NGOs who can inspect the data included in government reports on its human rights performance. The credibility and effectiveness of human rights organizations is based on their ability to collect, verify, analyze, and disseminate timely information on human rights violations. Scientifically collected and interpreted data can be used by human rights groups to authoritatively publicize the extent and character of human rights violations, find out which population groups are most affected, and identify people responsible for violations. Careful documentation of individual cases of human rights violations is critical for successful prosecution. Swift communications to the media and international human rights organizations can be decisive in bringing attention to urgent cases. Sophisticated quantitative analyses of large amounts of data can reveal patterns of abuse that reflect government policies rather than individual aberrations.

In November 1988, HURIDOCs held in Manila its biggest training activity so far, the training course "Human Rights Information Handling in Developing Countries." It was a month-long training course with about 20 participants from various parts of the globe. Discussed were such fundamental topics as the basics of human rights, the international protection system, and the importance of information, as well as specific tools and techniques like

the Bibliographic Standard Formats and the technique of indexing.

Also in Manila in November 1988, HURIDOCs convened the first meeting of the Task Force on Events. The Task Force was given the job of producing a tool for monitoring human rights violations. It drew its membership from national NGOs from various regions (for Asia, it was the Task Force Detainees of the Philippines) together with international NGOs like Amnesty International and S.O.S.-Torture. The Task Force went on to produce the Events Standard Formats. These formats now have computer application called WinEvsys.

Since then, the Asia-Pacific region has always been a beehive of activity for the HURIDOCs network. Many key HURIDOCs activities had been held in the region. For instance, HURIDOCs organized the "Meeting on Human Rights Information and Exchange in the Asian Region" in New Delhi on 8 to 10 December 1990.

Another very important HURIDOCs event was the international workshop "Towards More Effective Information Handling: An International Workshop on HURIDOCs Training Services," held in Pattaya, Thailand in 1994. The workshop discussed means of strengthening the training services of HURIDOCs. One proposal is the development of a trainers' manual. A subsequently drafted manual was used in a recent trainers' training course held in Manila in April 2000.

Information Work in Asia-Pacific

A very dynamic NGO movement exists in the region led by many frontline human rights groups that were created in response to crisis situations. These groups have shown a strong interest in exchanging experiences in collecting, processing and disseminating information in countries confronted with civil war, repression, destitution and neglect, and where working conditions for human rights NGOs are difficult. They are also concerned about the possibilities and constraints for human rights work in countries that are going through democratization process.

The needs of the various organizations have been addressed by some regional and international organizations. For instance, the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-Asia) successfully organized training courses in different Asian countries. These training sessions are complementary to the courses held by HURIDOCs. In several instances, HURIDOCs held training courses on fact-finding for NGOs previously trained by FORUM-Asia.

Improving the skills of frontline local, national, and regional human rights organizations in the fields of monitoring and documentation remains high in the Asia-Pacific agenda. The need has increased because of new organizations emerging in the region, as well as due to the refocusing of work by older groups. Initially, numerous human rights organizations built up expertise in the field of civil and political rights, but activities in the fields of economic, social and cultural rights and collective human rights are fast increasing.

The strengthening of the information handling capacity of human rights organizations in the region can best take place through a coherent program consisting of training (both courses and on-site training), provision of tools and equipment, and sustained support service.

Regional Network and Focal Point

To address training needs in the area of information work, HURIDOCS convened the "Asian Regional Meeting on Human Rights Information Exchange and Networking" in Hong Kong, from 24 to 28 September 1993. The participants of the meeting decided to set up a regional network, called HURIDOCS Asia, and designated a focal point to implement its activities. Focal points refer to human rights NGOs within the HURIDOCS network which agreed to act as regional resource centers that do such tasks as distribution of tools, providing advice and assistance in and conduct of training. The first Asia-Pacific focal point was RAHAT - Voice Against Torture in Pakistan.

During the Fourth HURIDOCS General Assembly held in Tunisia on 26 March 1998, HURIDOCS Asia was transformed into a committee for training of trainers. This responds to the most urgent need of having more resource persons who can provide training, advice and support to human rights organizations in the region. This committee, named Asia-Pacific Committee for the Training of Trainers (ACTT),

1. Determines the training needs of human rights NGOs in the region;
2. Studies and adapts the various training modules of HURIDOCS to meet the identified training needs;
3. Ensures that a sufficient number of trainers are identified and adequately trained to cover among themselves the various relevant topics for training;
4. Facilitates regular contact among the trainers for continuous updating of skills and knowledge and for their involvement in actual training activities; and
5. Guides the operations of the HURIDOCS regional focal point to meet these goals.

The General Assembly delegates from the Asia-Pacific region elected four members of the ACTT:

1. Aurora Javate De Dios (Philippines), a member of the HURIDOCS Continuation Committee and Chairperson of the Coalition Against Trafficking in



Women - International;

2. Agnes Camacho (Philippines), a member of the HURIDOCS International Advisory Council and program officer of the Psychosocial Trauma Program of the University of the Philippines Centre for Integrative and Development Studies;
3. Ayesha Iqbal (Pakistan), a member of the HURIDOCS International Advisory Council and Director of the Education & Information Development Programme in Pakistan ; and
4. Kathleen Maltzahn (Australia), a member of the HURIDOCS International Advisory Council and representative in Australia of the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women - Asia Pacific.

In a related development, HURIDOCS designated the Coalition against Trafficking in Women - Asia Pacific (CATW-AP) as the current regional HURIDOCS focal point.

ACTT formulates plans and oversees their implementation, while CATW-AP provides the secretariat services and carries out day-to-day activities.

ACTT Activities

ACCT has planned a number of activities to be carried out in 2000 and beyond. Among these is a needs assessment survey of Asia-Pacific NGOs. A major activity undertaken recently is the regional workshop "Developing Regional Training Resources" held in Manila from 27 April to 4 May 2000. The workshop was deemed very successful with the following results:

1. *Equipping a number of representatives of Asia-Pacific NGOs with skills and knowledge on training in general and on teaching HURIDOCS tools in particular.*

Sixteen participants from Australia, Cambodia, East Timor, India, Malaysia, Nepal, Philippines and Thailand attended the training. Four of them served as resource persons. These are HURIDOCS Executive Director Manuel Guzman, (a co-author of *Training the HURIDOCS Way*, the manual for HURIDOCS trainers); Agnes Camacho and Kathleen Maltzahn, both of ACTT, and Jean Enriquez,

Deputy Director of CATW-AP.

2. Establishing the regional pool of trainers and putting in place mechanisms to sustain it.

The participants agreed to initiate training activities in their respective areas, and to make themselves available as resource persons where needed, as well as perform other functions such as the following:

- Provide on-going back-up and technical, conceptual and other support to groups that they have trained;
- Promote monitoring, information handling and communication tools that can improve the work of NGOs; and
- Act as bridge between ACTT and local organizations.

A listserv has been set up to keep the participants in contact.

3. Development of a four-year plan for ACTT

The participants also enumerated the future activities of ACTT such as training courses in their own countries. Other features of the four-year plan are:

- a. Adaptation or development of training modules which are appropriate for the region (this process was started in the training course itself); and
- b. Production of training materials which are appropriate for the region.

Other Activities

For its 2000 Annual Program, HURIDOCS plans to conduct training courses in East Timor, Sri Lanka, India and Indonesia. The partners have been identified and the planned courses are in varying levels of preparation. One training activity that is on-going (May to June) is a course for the staff of the Cooperation Centre for Afghanistan (CCA), an Afghan NGO based in Pakistan. CCA requested HURIDOCS for a one-month on-site training to support the establishment of a human rights violations documentation system. The HURIDOCS resource person provides training on skills development, and then oversees the application of skills in the establishment of the system.

Since mid-1996, HURIDOCS and the Science and Human Rights Program of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) have been implementing a project to develop resources for monitoring economic, social and cultural rights. Among the tools that have been produced or about to be finished are:

1. Thesaurus of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

It consists of a large number of terms related to economic, social and cultural rights, and offers cross-references among them. It is the foundation of a monitoring system and serves as an educational tool at the same time. It has been published and can also be accessed at

<http://shr.aaas.thesaurus/>.

2. Handbook of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

It explains economic, social and cultural rights and related matters in a popular way, with national-level NGOs as the main audience. Its writing was completed at the end of 1999.

3. Rights-specific manuals.

The development of a series of rights-specific resource manuals is one of the most exciting parts of the project, especially because they are being produced in cooperation with partner NGOs. Each manual focuses on a particular right, and discusses the most appropriate methods of monitoring, (e.g., what indicators to use). Partner organizations were identified to produce each of these manuals, and the actual writing has begun.

Philippine NGOs, such as the Philippine Human Rights Information Center (PhilRights) have helped in the project by reviewing and providing feedback on the tools in the course of their development.

One of the rights-specific manuals is on the right to housing. The Habitat International Coalition based in New Delhi is the project partner.

Conclusion

One of the earliest goals of HURIDOCS was to develop universal tools. But it does not end there. There is a need for the tools to be made appropriate to the specific needs of users.

HURIDOCS and CATW are currently partners in the development of gender-responsive human rights monitoring systems. This partnership started in 1996 in a training course where HURIDOCS introduced its tool for monitoring violations. Since then, members of CATW have been reviewing and adapting the tool to the monitoring of violence against women.

This illustrates a very important process -- the adaptation of tools. Organizations in the Asia-Pacific region have been among the first to get hold of the generic tools developed in the HURIDOCS network. Now, they are again in the forefront in refining these tools further. HURIDOCS is proud and grateful to have them as committed partners.

In other words, thanks to Asia-Pacific organizations, HURIDOCS is living up to its mandate of making things happen as a network.

Manuel Guzman is the Executive Director of HURIDOCS. He can be contacted in this address: huridocs@comlink.org

South Asia Training Workshop

on Human Rights Education

in Schools

HURIGHTS OSAKA held the South Asia Training Workshop on Human Rights Education in Schools in Bangkok on June 23-26, 2000. This is a follow-up activity discussed in the South Asian Workshop on Human Rights Education in Schools also organized by HURIGHTS OSAKA and held in New Delhi in 1998.

Curriculum developers, teachers, teacher trainers and education ministry officials from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka attended the workshop.

The main agenda of the workshop is the institutionalization of human rights education in South Asian schools.

It was emphasized in the workshop that the curriculum is the sum total of the students' learning experience in the school. It is not limited to the formal curriculum. It extends to the so-called hidden curriculum. The behavior, attitude, and language of the teachers and school administrators, and the whole school environment form the unwritten/hidden curriculum that the students learn as much as, if not more than, the formal curriculum. Otherwise, what is taught in the formal curriculum is negated by what is learned from the hidden curriculum.

It was also stressed that the understanding of human rights cannot be limited to a specific area of study or level of education. It must be a continuing process that covers the whole period of school education (primary, secondary and tertiary). The effectiveness of human rights education programs cannot be measured by having a few years of learning the subject.

It was suggested that the two approaches in human rights education in schools - integration and separation - can be applied sequentially. Considering the level of the students, primary level curriculum may adopt the integration approach. But secondary level may have specific subjects on human rights. It is likewise suggested that students at the primary level may have to learn values related to human rights rather than human rights concepts. The latter will be taught at the secondary level.

In case the formal school curriculum does not yet include human rights, one possible way of integrating human rights into the curriculum is the use of subjects that can discuss human rights.

Another important issue discussed is the need for a pragmatic approach to institutionalizing human rights education. Total education reform that can incorporate human rights education in the curriculum is not possible at least in the short term. In the meantime, existing spaces in the current curriculum can be used for human rights education. Related curricular subjects can cover human rights without curriculum change. Extra-curricular subjects can also be used as shown by the experience of some groups in the region.

In the presentation and discussion on human rights issues in South Asia, the issue on the role of culture was raised. This issue was linked to the need for an examination of local cultures in promoting human rights. The presentation on a review of human rights education in schools programs in the region pointed out the various inter-governmental, NGO and UN specialized agency activities during the past year. National or local programs complemented these regional activities. In most cases, national or local programs developed way ahead of the regional initiatives.

The workshop had three small group discussion sessions. They covered three separate topics, namely, institutionalization of human rights education in schools programs, guidelines for developing human rights curriculum, and developing sample curriculum. Following are the reports made by the participants.

In the small group discussion on guidelines for curriculum development, two groups presented the following reports:

Group	Group I	Group II
Perspectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding human life - Living life fully 	
Approach		Integration on the basis of class/grade/learning level
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protection of human rights and promotion of human rights culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop Skill, Knowledge, Attitude, Awareness
Subject modules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Child rights, women's rights, minority rights, right against discrimination, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human rights values, such as Non-discrimination Dignity of the child/person/others Respecting others without discrimination Tolerance Patience Justice Sharing Empathy Questioning Dialogue Communication Freedom of speech and expression Freedom of religious belief Respect for life Respect for other religions Cooperation Preservation of culture Spiritualism Protection of environment Respect for others Honesty Openness Physical integrity Conservation of natural resources Rational thinking Curiosity Solidarity with each other Self-esteem
Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participatory method - Classroom exercise - Home exercise, writing project, discussion, chart-making, picture posting, news cutting and card demonstration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Activity-based - Joyful learning
Type of materials		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interesting stories - Songs - Street play, drama - audio/video program <p>Materials for teachers, parents, community leaders, school administrators, etc.</p>
Other needs		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Detailed analysis of existing textbooks - Sensitization of teachers, government administrators, all stakeholders
Impact assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessment of impact on - teachers, students, guardians, family and school authority - campus - by preparing a checklist of impact indicators 	

The two reports have similarities as well as differences. The most obvious difference is on the subject modules. While Group 1 proposes specific rights to be discussed, Group 2 suggests "human rights" values. To reconcile the two suggestions, the approach suggested by Group 2 was used. Human rights values can be learned during the primary or elementary level while specific human rights issues can be learned during the secondary level. It should be noted that it is difficult to put an exact year coverage for primary/elementary and secondary levels due to the differences in the school system among South Asian countries. But for purposes of this group work, it was agreed that the elementary level would cover 5 or 6 year-old to 14 year-old students, while the secondary level covers 15 to 16 year-old students.

Prior to the division of the participants into two groups for the exercise on curriculum development, the following were agreed upon:

- a. The objectives of the curriculum on human rights would be:
 - to promote the knowledge and understanding about human rights
 - to foster positive attitudes
 - to develop skills for making human rights practice as a way of life.
- b. The curriculum will focus on the following themes:
 - equality
 - freedom (of choice, speech)
 - dignity
 - solidarity
 - life
 - dialogue
 - integrity (physical, cultural, moral)
 - honesty
 - justice.

Time constraint however limited the development of sample curriculum to equality and cooperation. Below are the results of the group work.

Group 1 - secondary level

Objective	To understand the meaning of equality of man
Concepts	I. Equality before the law II. Common humanity
Contents	I. Equality before the law <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. brief history of the law <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - law of the jungle - law in society b. Order in society <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - weak vs. strong - equal relationships c. anti-discrimination law d. commonality of laws II. Common humanity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. common heritage of humanity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - evolution - ecological diversity (human development) (color, ethnicity, tribe, race, language) - common capacity for self-actualization (scientific evidence, education) - socio-economic inequalities in society - discrimination based on gender, caste, class, etc.

Activities	1. case studies - simulation - inference 2. Projects - visit to jails, police stations, etc. - interview of members of police, activists, victims, * ex-convicts
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Group 2 - elementary level

The members of this group decided to list down the learning competencies corresponding to each human rights value listed.

The group also suggested adopting the integration approach for the elementary level. Subjects such as Language, Environmental Studies and Mathematics can be infused with human rights values. Activities such as role-play, drama, debates, exhibition, use of charts, posters, drawings and sketches, and cartoons are recommended.

Core Values	Competencies
I. Equality	- cooperation - mutual sharing - respect for others - human relations
II. Dignity	- self-esteem - self-respect - empathy - understanding - tolerance
III. Freedom	- problem solving - questioning - expression (creative) - self-confidence - rational thinking - listening - decision-making
IV. Solidarity/unity	- unity - participation - adaptability - acceptability - respect for others - understanding - ability to dialogue - flexibility
V. Justice	- equity - non-discriminatory - rationalization - kindness
VI. Truth	- courage - uncompromising

In order to provide a specific sample curriculum the following was presented:

Core Value - Cooperation

Content	Material	Indications for assessment	Method of assessment
I. Making an activity in small groups - Choosing the activity collectively - Doing the activity collectively - Emphasizing the human rights value through discussion after the activity	- Students decide on materials with teacher's assistance	a. Process indicators - expression of ideas by individual students - collective decision - active participation - creation of an attractive item with a good finish b. Impact indicator - expressing ideas about collective effort	a. Observation b. Questioning and listening
II. Making improvised musical instruments individually and singing a song collectively - Deciding on a particular song collectively - Deciding on necessary instruments collectively - Making instruments individually - Playing instruments and singing collectively - Emphasizing human rights value through discussion after the song	- Students decide on materials with teacher's assistance (depending on type of instrument)	a. Process indicators same as above except last indicator - attractive, harmonious singing b. Impact indicator same as above	same as above
III. Choosing a game for winning collectively - Preparing playing area in/by group - Playing the game for winning or losing collectively - Emphasizing human rights value through discussion after the game	Students decide on materials depending on the game (with teacher's assistance)	a. Process indicators - playing as a team - winning/losing collectively with tolerance (facial expressions) - friendly dismissal after game is over b. Impact indicator same as above	same as above

Several comments were raised on the reports. One comment refers to the use of the phrase "law of the jungle" which seems to discriminate against indigenous systems. It

was pointed out that the supposed civilized European laws permitted the colonization of peoples in various parts of the globe which subsequently caused deaths to many and destruction not only of property but of existing social systems. Another refers to training teachers to be able to make use of human rights curriculum. It was emphasized that teacher training alone will not guarantee the actual use of the curriculum. Training sessions may be successful but the employment of the ideas learned may not be so successful (some may do the activities suggested while others may not). In other words, there are other factors to consider in introducing and effectively using human rights curriculum. Also, it was commented that being uncompromising about the truth may mean intolerance of other ideas.

The workshop ended with statements of support for networking among the participants. Some participants expressed their willingness to undertake joint projects for the South Asian region through their respective institutional programs.

The workshop was held in cooperation with the Asian Regional Resource Center for Human Rights Education (ARRC).

Events

1. A regional seminar entitled " Towards an Establishment of National and Regional Human Rights Mechanism" will be held on July 6-8, 2000 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. This seminar aims to a) create a better common understanding of the importance of national and regional human rights institutions; b) promote the exchange of information and experiences among participants representing government agencies, regional organizations and NGOs; c) identify activities and measures to be undertaken by Government, NGOs and Civil Society in favour of the establishment and strengthening of national and regional human rights systems; d) survey ways and means by which National Working Group on national and regional human rights mechanism can be initiated. For more information please contact: Working Group for an ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism, Ateneo Human Rights Center/ LAWASIA Human Rights Committee, School of Law, Ateneo de Manila University, Rockwell Center, Rockwell Drive, Makati City, Philippines, ph (632) 729 6583, 7296585, 729 2002, fax (632) 899 4349, e-mail: ahrc@acc.aiti.admu.edu.ph; lawasia@acc.aiti.admu.edu.ph; ahrm@planet.net.ph

2. A discussion on the social and psychological implications of unification in the Korean peninsula will be held on July 25, 2000 in Seoul. A delegation of German resource people will participate along with several Korean presenters. The discussion will look at the conflicts that have occurred in Germany during and after unification, the methods that have been used to deal with those conflicts, and the implications for the future of the Korean peninsula. For more information contact: Karin Lee and John Feffer, East Asia Quaker International Affairs Program, American Friends Service Committee, Tokyo Friends Center, 4-8-19 Mita Minato-ku, Tokyo 1080073 Japan, ph/fax (813) 3452 5715, e-mail: eaqiar@aol.com

3. The 5th annual meeting of the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions will be held on August 7-9, 2000 in Rotorua, New

Zealand. The proposed theme of this meeting is "National Human Rights Institutions and the Protection and Promotion of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: International, regional and national strategies." The meeting will also discuss the World Conference Against Racism. For further information contact: Mr. Kieren Fitzpatrick, Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions, c/o Australian Human Rights Commission, Level 8 Piccadilly Tower, 133 Castlereagh Street, Sydney NSW 2000 Australia, ph (612) 9284-9644, fax (612) 9284-9825, e-mail: apf@hreoc.gov.au; website: www.apf.hreoc.gov.au

4. A conference entitled "Religion and Culture in Asia-Pacific: Violence or Healing?" will be held in Melbourne on October 22-25. It is being organized by the International Movement for a Just World, Pax Christi Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia. This conference aims to explore several key questions on the link between the many conflicts in the region and the religious and cultural traditions. For more information contact: Religion and Culture Conference, Uniting Church Centre, 4f 130 Little Collins Street, Melbourne Vic 3000 Australia, ph (613) 9251-5271, fax (613) 9650-4490.

5. The Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW) will hold a training entitled "Training in Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR) Methodology in the Context of Trafficking in Women" on 30 October to 5 November 2000 in Bangkok. The training aims to a) enable participants to discuss and understand principles and methods of feminist participatory action research (FPAR) on issues relating to trafficking in women, and b) discuss the application of FPAR and planning of the future research/survey/actions relating to trafficking in women in participating countries. For more information contact: Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW) 191/1 Sivalai Condominium, Itsaraphap Road, Soi 33, Bangkok 10600 Thailand, fax: (662) 864-1637, e-mail: gaatw@mozart.inet.co.th

World Conference Against Racism

The World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (WCAR) is scheduled to be held from 31 August to 7 September 2001 in South Africa. The UN General Assembly Resolution 52/111 (December 12, 1997) lists the objectives of this conference as follows:

- "(a) To review progress made in the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, in particular since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and to reappraise the obstacles to further progress in the field and ways to overcome them;
- (b) To consider ways and means to better ensure the application of existing standards and the implementation of the existing instruments to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;
- (c) To increase the level of awareness about the scourges of racism and racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;
- (d) To formulate concrete recommendations on ways to increase the effectiveness of the activities and mechanisms of the United Nations through programmes aimed at combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;
- (e) To review the political, historical, economic, social, cultural and other factors leading to racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;

(f) To formulate concrete recommendations to further action-oriented national, regional and international measures to combat all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;

(g) To draw up concrete recommendations for ensuring that the United Nations has the financial and other necessary resources for its actions to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance."

The UN created regional preparatory committees with participants from South Africa, Tunisia, Senegal, USA, France, Macedonia, Georgia, Brazil, Mexico, Iran and Malaysia. The committees met in Geneva last May 2000.

The inter-governmental Asia-Pacific Regional Preparatory Conference for the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance will be held in Teheran in January 2001.

WCAR was discussed in the Eighth Workshop on Regional Cooperation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Asia-Pacific Region held in Beijing (1- 4 March 2000). It will also be taken up in the 5th annual meeting of the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions which will be held on 7-9 August 2000 in Rotorua, New Zealand.

A parallel NGO conference is planned to be held during the world conference. In view of this, NGOs in the Asia-Pacific region will be holding preparatory activities soon.

Ms. Laurie Wiseberg of Human Rights Internet was appointed as the NGO Liaison for WCAR for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). She created a listserve for NGOs to facilitate dissemination of information. Interested NGOs may sign up their institutions to this list.

For more information contact: Laurie Wiseberg, e-mail: lwiseberg.hchr@unog.ch; listserve address: listserv@server.unog.ch

(Continued from page 7, Women's Information Network)

trade on Asian women and children under the guise of "Asian women seeking foreign men for love, friendship, romance and marriage."

- Gender and telecommunications policies. Further actions and initiatives need to be explored and implemented to ensure that women and girls have equal opportunities in science and technology and equitable and affordable access to new technologies, as well as training in their use and application." [4]

Today, we note with pride that women do not simply employ e-mail in their daily communications. They also tremendously utilize mailing lists and online work groups for planning and information-sharing.

Let the next millennium be the era of women producing and disseminating their own information to get more women to acquire and use knowledge, and move other

women to action.

Notes

1. Ramilo, Concepcion, 1999. "Empowering Filipino Women in the Global Information Era." March 1999. APWIN Vol. 1.
2. Association for Progressive Communications Women's Networking Support Programme. 1997. "Global Networking for Change: Experiences from the APC Women's Programme."
3. Interview with Isis International-Manila's Communications Programme Manager, Mavic Balleza (Quezon City, September 1999)
4. Ramilo, Concepcion, 1999. Unpublished document.

Mylene Soto is a Resource Centre and Information Program Associate of Isis International-Manila. For further information, please contact: mylene@isiswomen.org



Farewell Message*

Professor Dong-hoon Kim

Director, HURIGHTS OSAKA - 1994-2000

Thank you very much for the many encouraging words and expectations on HURIGHTS OSAKA. I hope you will understand that HURIGHTS OSAKA has two faces just like Janus. One face is the inner society. HURIGHTS OSAKA is expected by the inner society - meaning the citizens, the local governments of the city and prefecture of Osaka - to do more for them. The other one is the Asian face.

I am of Korean origin who have been living in Japan for many years. My wish is to contribute to the realization of human rights and democracy in Asia. As you know, after the establishment of HURIGHTS OSAKA, the Japanese economy became stagnant. So we have difficulty in realizing our purpose. But after participating in this kind of workshop for the past three years, I felt that South and Southeast Asia subregions are facing much more difficulties. But I have been encouraged by the participants' efforts and fascinating work. Many governments or governmental organizations are still reluctant or negative not only about human rights education but human rights itself. To the governments, the concept of human rights is still anti-government. In Japan too, action plans at national and local levels have been made. I have been involved in making some of the local plans. But still, the plans are not fully implemented. We are now trying to implement them at the local level. At the national level, the Ministry of Education still does not give attention to the national plan. For example, in the 1999 Northeast Asian Training Workshop in Seoul, Korea organized by the UN there was not a single person from the Ministry of Education. Only people from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were present. Thus it is important for NGOs and human rights experts to speak about human rights education themselves.

I have been involved in HURIGHTS OSAKA since its preparatory phase and establishment. This means that I have been involved in HURIGHTS OSAKA for more than ten years actually.

I have been struggling for the elimination of discrimination against Koreans and other minorities in Japan. I have also been involved in the campaign to institutionalize ethnic education. We have been asking the local government people what they think about ethnic education for Koreans and what will they do about it. While they express nice statements about the situation of the Koreans in Japan, their sufferings and all, there is still the problem of fulfilling such statements.

HURIGHTS OSAKA celebrated its fifth anniversary last year. We are now thinking of plans for the next five years. What is clear is that for the next five years, we should continue human rights education activities. We are thinking of more concrete projects. I am leaving HURIGHTS OSAKA as its Director but I was requested to become an adviser. And thus I may still be able to participate in its future activities. We need your help and cooperation to be able to implement our projects in the future.

Regarding networking, in the Delhi workshop (1998) there was a designation of representatives from each South Asian country who can network with each other. But it did not work well. This time I hope the networking will come true.

I told the Japanese local government in Osaka about the importance of the subregional workshops. I told them that the more important thing, the most precious property as I describe it, is the networking, solidarity and friendship among the experts, NGOs and government institutions working for human rights or human rights education in Asia-Pacific.

I therefore sincerely hope that your networking will be implemented in the future. Even though I am leaving HURIGHTS OSAKA, human rights is my lifetime work. I will be involved in human rights work even after coming back to Korea. The country still has a difficult situation, and so I would like to work with my Korean friends to promote and protect human rights in Korea.

* Closing remarks of Professor Kim given at the South Asian Training Workshop on Human Rights Education in Schools (23-26 June 2000 Bangkok).

HURIGHTS OSAKA ACTIVITIES

Professor Yoshio Kawashima assumed the post of Director of HURIGHTS OSAKA in July 2000. He has been teaching international law in Osaka University for many years with a focus on refugee law. He has been involved with several foundations in Japan that work on international activities. HURIGHTS OSAKA welcomes Professor Kawashima and appreciates his willingness to contribute to the fulfillment of its objectives.

HURIGHTS OSAKA finished several publications. The five-year report on HURIGHTS OSAKA activities (in Japanese language) is now in print along with the Japanese translation of the publication *Schools, Human Rights and Society*. HURIGHTS OSAKA in collaboration with the Osaka city government published a magazine about foreign residents in Japan. The publication, entitled *A City of Dream - Osaka* (in Japanese language) is being distributed widely in the city. The magazine stresses the idea of living together with foreigners.



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.



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