



Editorial

Exclusion

Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and other forms of intolerance are very much alive in the Asia-Pacific region. They are caused not only by an idea of racial superiority but also by the concept of "purity". This latter cause takes various forms. People discriminated by caste are considered unclean and are relegated to doing certain jobs such as butchering, and taking care of sewage and human waste. People with ethnic backgrounds different from the majority are deprived of equal opportunities and a host of other rights. These victims are normally poor and pessimistic about change in their condition.

The concept of "purity" is linked strongly to traditional culture. Its impact is still deeply entrenched in the present modernizing societies. It victimizes innocent people who happen to inherit such "unclean" background.

What measures are needed to stem this ancient tide of exclusion? How can people's minds be purged of prejudice?

There are examples of lower caste people in India overcoming the prejudice. There are also significant changes in the situation of socially discriminated people in Japan. But the problem still lingers despite the changes. And the danger of resurgence of discrimination cannot be dismissed. The work to obliterate this form of human rights violation must therefore continue.

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.

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Regional Meeting on Anti-Racism

The Asian Regional Preparatory Meeting for the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (WCAR) was held in Tehran on 19-21 February 2001. This is the last UN-organized regional preparatory meeting for the WCAR.¹ A parallel NGO meeting (also supported by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights) was held immediately before (17-18 February 2001).

Ms. Mary Robinson, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, opened the intergovernmental meeting as WCAR Secretary-General. In her speech, she stressed that

No region, no country, no community can fairly claim to be free from racism. Racism, xenophobia and intolerance are found everywhere, both in familiar, deep-rooted forms and, regrettably, in newer, modern forms."

She said that every country should acknowledge "particular shortcomings to be addressed" and avoid the "danger of denial" which results in failure to tackle the problems properly.

She also reminded the participants that the "... spirit of tolerance, of respect and of valuing diversity is more needed than ever" which should be reflected both in the language used in any declaration or program of action and in shaping specific proposals.

She then suggested several concrete actions by the States:

1. While most States in Asia-Pacific have ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, there are still a couple of things remaining to be done. One is the removal of reservations in ratifying the convention. Another is the declaration of recognition of the authority of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to "receive and consider communications from individuals or groups of

individuals...claiming to be victims of a violation by ...State Party of any rights set forth in the Convention..."² (Article 14) Those States which have not ratified the convention are urged to do so.

Ratification of other international instruments is also important, according to Ms. Robinson, because they contain the "core values of the international community in regard to racism." These instruments are: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Conventions and Recommendations of the International Labour Organization on the protection of the rights of all migrant workers and members of their families and on child labour.

2. Incorporation of general constitutional guarantees into "specific and enforceable legislative instruments and administrative practice." She also mentioned that the "process of ensuring systematic and comprehensive incorporation of non-discrimination guarantees can be effectively carried out through the elaboration of National Plans of Action, the implementation of which is a priority of my Office's Technical Assistance Programme."

3. Focus on prevention and education measures. "Governments must renew their efforts to establish sustainable strategies to prevent racism at the community level through comprehensive incorporation of the anti-racism message in schools and community centers."

In recognition of the diverse character of the region, she stressed that the "cultures and communities of the Asia-Pacific region, with their long traditions of philosophy, thought and interaction, are especially well placed to spread the message that diversity is one of the world's strongest assets."

The Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Dr. Kamal Kharrazi, in his opening statement emphasized the need for the "cultural mainstreaming of the current struggle against racism and related manifestations..." He also made a number of suggestions including

- "Taking affirmative action and positive steps to compensate victims of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia."
- "Provision and support [for] favorable atmosphere for the civil society organizations especially the NGOs to enable them to participate actively in different stages in the current process of combating racism,

racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance."

In conclusion, he stressed that the "elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance lies at the deepening and strengthening [of] the culture of dialogue, understanding and partnership at the national, regional and international level[s] on one hand, and formulating and implementing appropriate and action-oriented policies based on global consensus on the other."

The conference declarations

A number of common themes were mentioned in both intergovernmental and NGO declarations. The NGOs declared that the legacy of colonialism is the "roots of many contemporary manifestations of racism and racial discrimination ... which created historical injustices based on ideologies of superiority, dominance and purity." (NGO, para 5) The intergovernmental declaration echoed this idea by saying that

... colonialism and slavery have been the prime sources and manifestation of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and [they] stress the need for all States which were engaged in such practices to acknowledge the grave human suffering caused by colonialism and slavery and the heinous racist acts committed in the context of colonialism and slave trade... (Intergovernment, para 2)

Racism is defined by the NGOs as an "...ideological construct that assigns a certain social group to a position of power over others on the basis of a notion of superiority, dominance and purity, and ... it is 'scientifically false, morally condemnable, socially unjust and dangerous.'" (para 13) The last clause is taken from the draft intergovernmental declaration, which was retained in the final text. (Intergovernment, para 1)

Globalization is another common theme. The NGOs declared that the "processes of globalization that include economic policies which exploit and appropriate local economies and force the implementation of structural adjustment programs actually heightened racism, racial and ethnic discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance." (NGO, para 11) It is seen as an iniquitous structure because it is based on unequal power relations. It promotes institutional racism at national and international levels as a result.

The governments, on the other hand, recognized that "...although globalization, as an ongoing process, remains a powerful and dynamic force with the potential to assist in achieving the goal of development and prosperity of all humankind, there is a need to manage it properly to guard against adverse trends, including

growing economic disparity and cultural homogenization, which, by marginalizing certain countries and groups, could, inter alia, contribute to sustaining and strengthening racist attitudes..." (Intergovernment, para 10)

The NGOs emphasized caste and descent-based discrimination which affect 240 million people in India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Japan (and in some African countries). (NGO, para 27) This view reiterated the 1996 comments of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the report of India that the "term "descent" mentioned in article 1 of the Convention does not solely refer to race. The Committee affirms that the situation of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes falls within the scope of the Convention."³ The governments emphasized that "racist and exclusivist ideologies based on race, colour, descent, culture, language or national or ethnic origin are responsible for fomenting, promoting and spreading racial discrimination, xenophobia and stereotyping." (Intergovernment, para 17)



The NGOs declared that

Governments have a responsibility in the elimination of structural and institutional racism and discrimination on the basis of race, caste, colour, sex, descent, occupation, ethnic origin, national origin and other factors if we are to achieve respect and equality for all human rights for all. (NGO, para 12)

The governments reaffirmed the "right of all peoples to live in a society free of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance as well as the duty of Governments to take prompt, decisive and appropriate measures to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination." (Intergovernment, preamble)

Both declarations singled out women, Palestinian people, indigenous people, migrants and trafficked persons as requiring special attention. The NGOs also mention

people of lower caste, people under foreign occupation (Palestinians and Tibetans), refugees, and internally displaced people.

Both declarations also asked for immediate and comprehensive measures to counter the growing racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance to be undertaken at various levels primarily by governments.

Conclusion

The combined messages of the governments and NGOs in the region are important in understanding the extent and depth of the problem of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. There is unanimity in the view that these problems are, inter alia, both local and global, caused by current economic systems as well as by centuries-old traditions, and complicated by existing armed conflicts, colonial legacy, and patriarchal systems of society.

With the urgency of addressing these problems voiced clearly by governments and NGOs, the challenge lies in translating these declarations into action beginning at the local and national levels.

The intergovernmental and NGO declarations are available in this website:

www.hurights.or.jp/wcarasia.htm

Notes

1. Previous regional meetings were held in Europe (Strasbourg, October 2000), Americas (Santiago de Chile, December 2000, and Africa (Dakar, January 2001).
2. Only one State in the region (Australia) has declared recognition of the Committee's authority in this regard. See Note 28, The Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions, *National Institutions and the World Conference against Racism, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance*, Rotorua, New Zealand: August 2000.
3. CERD/C/304/Add.13 (17 September 1996).

Conference on Dalit Discrimination

The National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR), a network of organizations and prominent individuals in India, organized an international conference (New Delhi, 1-4 March 2001) as part of the campaign for the inclusion of the issue of caste-based discrimination in the forthcoming UN World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (WCAR). The conference organizers note that the draft declaration prepared by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and presented at the Inter-Sessional Working Group for the WCAR (Geneva, March 2001) does not have a single reference to caste discrimination. This is in spite of the fact that a series of UN activities, namely, the Seminar of experts on racism, refugees and multiethnic States (Geneva, 6-8 December 1999), the



First Session of the Preparatory Committee for the WCAR (Geneva, 1-5 May 2000), the Asia Pacific Expert seminar on migrants and trafficking in persons with particular reference to women and children (Bangkok 5-7 September 2000), the Expert seminar on preventing ethnic and racial conflicts (Addis Ababa, 4-6 October 2000), the Bellagio Consultation (Italy, 24-28 January 2000), and the Forum of NGOs' "End Racism Now" held prior to the European Conference Against Racism (Strasbourg, 10-11 October 2000), have all emphasized the need for caste discrimination to be included in WCAR agenda.

The four-day conference presented testimonies of victims of caste-based discrimination from several countries.

**Final Declaration Of the Global Conference
Against Racism and Caste-based Discrimination:
Occupation and Descent-based Discrimination
Against Dalits**

1-4 March, 2001, New Delhi, India

**A conference in preparation for the UN World
Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination,
Xenophobia and Related Intolerance**

The Global Conference Against Racism and Caste-based Discrimination was convened in New Delhi, 1-4 March 2001, and included representatives and victims from India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, South Africa, Japan, Sri Lanka, the Netherlands, Denmark, Germany, Hong Kong SAR, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

The participants of the Global Conference strongly condemn caste (occupation and descent based) discrimination and the practice of untouchability, which is the source of immense human suffering and the cause of gross human rights violations and of dehumanising and degrading treatment of 240 million people.

We, the participants of the Global Conference, have listened to disturbing testimonies from victims of caste-based discrimination who have suffered extreme violence, abhorrent conditions of work, degradation, exclusion and humiliation. We have also heard from experts, activists, academics, and grassroots leaders about their work to end caste-based discrimination. We appeal to governments and the international community to end this crime against humanity, and we strongly endorse the following declaration.

PREAMBLE

1. **Taking note** of the concluding observation of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) "that the situation of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes falls within the scope of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination," and that the term "descent" contained in Article 1 of the Convention does not refer solely to race, and encompasses the situation of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, as cited on September 17, 1996, in the document CERD/C/304/Add.13,

2. **Affirming** that caste as a basis for the segregation and oppression of peoples in terms of their descent and occupation is a form of apartheid and a distinct form of racism affecting victims equally irrespective of religion.

3. **Asserting** that Untouchability is a Crime against Humanity,¹

4. **Recognizing** that caste-based practices - distinction, exclusion and restrictions on social and occupational mobility - which lead to a negation of humanity and the inability to exercise all human rights are affecting at least 240 million persons in South Asia and millions of others in East Asia and West Africa,

5. **Recognizing** that the 52nd United Nations Sub-Commission on Human Rights, given their concerns over caste-based discrimination, passed a unanimous resolution calling for a working paper on occupation- and descent-based discrimination,

6. **Recalling** conclusions drawn by the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the United Nations Special Rapporteur on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the Human Rights Committee that Dalit men, women and children endure severe forms of discrimination, violence and exploitation because of their caste status,

7. **Committed** to the inclusion of caste-based discrimination on the agenda, the declaration and the programme of action of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Forms of Intolerance (WCAR), to be held at Durban, South Africa, from August 31-September 8, 2001,

8. **Calling attention** to the proceedings of the Bellagio Consultation, the European NGO preparatory meeting, and the Asian and African expert meetings in preparation for the WCAR which specifically address the problem of caste discrimination,

9. **Encouraged** by the solidarity expressed by non-governmental organizations in the WCAR preparatory and expert meetings and taking note of the consensus reached in the Asia-Pacific NGO Declaration in Tehran for inclusion of caste-based discrimination in the agenda of the WCAR and the Declaration and Programme of Action,

10. **Taking note** of governments' obligations to uphold universal standards of human rights under the UN treaties and covenants,

11. **Commending** those governments that are supporting the inclusion of discrimination based on caste on the agenda of the WCAR,

12. **Noting** that many countries have recognized that certain communities, such as Dalit peoples in India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh, Buraku people in Japan, and other communities in Senegal, South Mauritania and other countries, face caste-based discrimination,

13. **Recognizing** that governments have undertaken constitutional, legislative, and policy initiatives, as well as set up administrative bodies to combat discrimination based on caste and race, but also that, due to lack of political will, these efforts have been insufficient and are being diluted, subverted, and not properly implemented,

14. **Noting** that women - especially Dalit women - represent the most oppressed sections of all societies, and that they face multiple forms of discrimination, including caste-based, religious and patriarchal ideology and practices;

15. **Taking note** of the support of some public leaders, the media, non-governmental organizations, and concerned citizens from various walks of life who have condemned the

existence and perpetuation of caste-based discrimination,

16. **Strongly condemning** the attempts of the government of India to oppose the inclusion of caste-based discrimination in the agenda of the WCAR, and urging other governments to support the inclusion of caste-based discrimination in the WCAR agenda,²

17. **Denouncing** governments - particularly India- that refuse to comply with or recognize their legal obligations as defined by the CERD,³

The participants of the Global Conference adopt the following:

PROGRAMME OF ACTION

The participants of the Global Conference Against Racism and Caste-based Discrimination call upon Governments to:

I. Measures at the national level

1. **Enforce and implement** an effective and time-bound program to abolish untouchability and similar practices in all spheres.

2. **Enact and enforce** laws related to compulsory primary education and the elimination of child labour, bonded labour, manual scavenging, caste-bound free labour, the decades system of temple prostitution, and other similar practices.

3. **Ensure** that all necessary constitutional, legislative, and administrative measures, including appropriate forms of affirmative action, are in place to prohibit and redress discrimination on the basis of caste, and that such measures - including those in Japan and India - are continued until discrimination is eliminated.

4. **Monitor and publicize** the extent to which existing laws have been implemented.

5. **Monitor and analyse** educational syllabi and textbooks that perpetrate caste-based oppressions and exclusion, and glorify worldviews that have contributed to the continued existence of a system of "hidden apartheid." Implement alternatives that emphasize human rights education at the school and university levels.

6. **Allocate** adequate funds for and effectively implement programs for the socio-economic empowerment of communities discriminated against on the basis of caste or descent.

7. **Ensure** full proportional representation based on percentage of national population size of Dalits, Buraku, and other groups excluded on the basis of caste in all sections of society including police, judiciary, public service, media, and private industry.

8. **Urge** statutory and constitutional bodies such as national human rights commissions, on women, race, minorities, and other relevant groups, as well as the Asia-Pacific Coordinating Committee of National Institutions, the African Coordinating Committee of National Institutions, and the International Coordinating of National Institutions, to take up the issue of caste-based discrimination and to

support its inclusion in the WCAR.

9. **Urge** national and state governments to take all measures to combat caste-based discrimination against women.

10. **Urge** governments not to deny passports to people wishing to attend the WCAR in Durban, particularly Dalit activists.

II. Measures at the United Nations level

11. **Demand** that the WCAR agenda specifically address caste-based discrimination and that the WCAR Platform for Action identifies concrete measures for ending this form of discrimination;

12. **Demand** that the caste system be included in the WCAR documents as a major source of discrimination.

13. **Call** upon the WCAR to underline the necessity for States to adopt immediate concrete measures to eradicate the widespread discrimination and persecution targeting Dalits, Burakumin, and other communities facing discrimination on the basis of caste or descent.

14. **Call** upon CERD and the Special Rapporteur on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Forms of Intolerance to reaffirm their position that caste-based discrimination comes under the purview of the CERD and to state that caste should be addressed in the WCAR.

15. **Call** for a declaration by the United Nations that untouchability constitutes a crime against humanity.

16. **Call** for intensified efforts at educating the public about the extent of caste discrimination and about the contributions of Dalit culture and history.

17. **Urge** the appointment of a United Nations Special Rapporteur on caste discrimination.

18. **Declare** April 14 (Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's birthday) as the International Day of Dalit Solidarity.

19. **Recommend** that United Nations development agencies pay particular attention to caste violence and caste discrimination, assess the impact of their existing programs with regard to caste, and develop programs and strategies designed to curb abuse and encourage accountability.

Notes

1. Untouchability is the subjugation and denial of the basic human rights of people labelled as "impure," a practice sanctified by religious tradition.

2. The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka does not subscribe to this section of the declaration.

3. The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka does not subscribe to this section of the declaration.

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Malaysian Plantation Workers: Bittersweet Story

S. Arutchelvan and Mohanaran

After decades of struggle, the Malaysian plantation workers finally got some relief. They will now be receiving monthly wage. The story however has not ended.

Historical background

The demand for the change from daily to monthly wage system started in the 1940s. Massive strikes organized by the powerful labor movements of those days resulted not in hefty pay increases for workers but small five cent increases. But they were still considered victories since they showed how a united workforce can present a serious challenge to the capitalists. More than 50 years later, a support group was formed to continue the struggle for change in the wage system. The Estate Workers Support Group (EWSG) launched the Wage Campaign on Labor Day 1996 in Bukit Rajah Estate, Klang in the state of Selangor. The past four years since then have been marked with numerous press conferences and demonstrations, culminating in a 3000-strong demonstration outside Parliament in April 1999, and recently, an ultimatum that if the issue remains unresolved, a national strike will be held.

The Malaysian government has long been ignoring the issue. It is recently argued that since the agricultural plantations in Malaysia are now part of the "twilight industry" and dominated by foreign labor, the fundamental issue of monthly wage for plantation workers is not an important one.¹

The issue

The issue of monthly wage for the plantation workers is rather simple and the reason why it was not resolved for a long time is quite obvious. The plantation industry has been very consistent in giving low wages as well as maintaining the status-quo in the wage system. In addition to the low wage issue, housing, health and education facilities issues have also been pending for a long time. The arguments expressed by the workers and groups' fighting to resolve these issues during the last eighty years seem to be same. All 5-year Malaysian National Economic Plans recognize these shortcomings. But still the gov-

ernment has failed to resolve them for a long time.

An examination of the three main players in the plantation industry can provide light on this problem. The three players are plantation labor, plantation capital and the state.

The plantation labor has been represented most of the time by the National Union of Plantation Workers (NUPW). The plantation work force was previously composed mostly of workers of southern Indian origin. In certain cases, non-Indian Malaysian workers represent as much as forty percent of the workforce. Currently, foreign labor such as Bangladeshi and Indonesian workers dominate the workforce. The present character of the workforce makes the issue less sensitive to the ruling party dominated by the Malay-based United Malay National Organisation (UMNO) party and Chinese-based Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA). This can explain why the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC) seems to be highlighting this issue and passing one resolution after another indicating that the issue of the plantation workers is an issue of the Indian community rather than simply a workers issue. This likewise explains why the plantation community has not received the same privilege as other rural communities such as paddy farmers, Federal Land Development Agency (FELDA) settlers, etc.

Poverty eradication program has also missed the plantation communities. Almost all plantation schools are still not fully government-aided, while health facilities are in dilapidated conditions. The government for many years has remained uninterested in extending these facilities to the plantation community arguing that this is the obligation of the estate owners. Nevertheless, no serious action has been taken on plantation companies who neglect to fulfill their responsibility. One wonders why the double standard and why was there no will to improve these communities.

The plantation capital is currently composed of the big plantation companies such as Guthrie, Golden Hope Plantations, Highland and Lowlands, KLK and Sime Darby. The major shareholder in these compa-

nies (and consequently controls them) is the government. The government invests in these companies through government-supported institutions, namely, Permodalan Nasional Berhad (PNB) and Amanah Saham Raya. The government, therefore, has a very visible hand in the whole relationship. Works Minister Datuk Samy Vellu, and also MIC President, was correct in saying that the government must give monthly wages because it is the actual owner of these companies.

This monthly wage issue is not solely a question of monetary benefit. The daily wage system is used by almost all agricultural companies in the world. This system is feudal in every aspect and just a few steps ahead of the slave reward system. This colonial wage system practiced in Malaysia and other parts of the world is highly unfair and unjustified because the risk is borne by the workers rather than by the plantation capital. The struggle to replace this unfair system to a much fairer wage system has been going on for ages. It has taken place in other countries as well. A big strike on this issue was held a few years ago in Sri Lanka. If the daily wage system collapses in Malaysia, then its global system counterpart will also have similar pressure. Replacing the daily wage system, therefore, is an uphill task.

It is also argued that the replacement of the daily wage system will have little effect on the overall earnings of the plantation workers. This is not true because under a monthly wage, the workers will receive a fixed monthly wage and this is not linked to external factors beyond the control of the workers. The argument is based on the notion that wage is linked to productivity. Labor is paid in proportion to the amount of production. This is correct generally speaking. Can it apply to plantations? Production in plantations is not entirely in the hands of the plantation workers. There are external factors to consider. Weather, price in the world market, stimulants, etc. are not within the control of the plantation workers. The unjustness of the daily wage system in the context of plantations has been proven by numerous researches.

The plantation capital argument over the years is the same. They talk about losing profit and losing competitive advantage over other countries. In other words, their argument only points to one direction, i.e., cheap labor policy and maintenance of competitive advantage. In this manner, the one who pays the cheapest is ultimately the champion and the most successful in the business. The Plantation Workers Support Committee has repeated many times before that if the cost of maintaining the current system is cheap labor policy,

then the industry is not needed in the first place. Labor needs respect and full appreciation. If the Malaysian government concludes that the only way to save the plantation industry is by neglecting its workers, then the industry must be rejected in the first place. Why glorify an industry that lives on people's misery? *

The government cannot justify cheap labor policy because it is inhumane and cruel.

New development

On 7 February 2001, a day before the plantation workers were planning a big demonstration at the industrial courts, the Human Resource Minister Datuk Fong Chan Onn announced that plantation workers will now be paid monthly wages. A minimum wage of 325 Malaysian dollars (RM) was agreed between MAPA and NUPW.

This however falls dismally short of the demand of EWSG for a RM 750 minimum wage. "That is a poverty line wage," remarked a palm oil harvester from Teluk Intan. He added, "How could the union agree to it?"

The government, represented by Dato Fong Chan Onn, who mediated at the negotiations between MAPA and NUPW, was weak in this negotiation process. MAPA was clearly in control. It rationalized the paltry sum of RM 325, and moaned how it will get RM 210 million over three years to make ends meet!

The minimum wage of RM 325 has to be seen in the context of the reality of the economic and political structure of the day. Only political change that leads to a greater say for workers in the decision-making levels of government can bring real and meaningful change to the pay structure of estate workers. Until then, the workers will have to make do with concessions, and these too will not come easy.

At the moment, both the Union and MAPA claim that the minimum wage agreed upon is a big breakthrough. EWSG will be monitoring the situation for two months to see if the breakthrough materializes in the workers' wage slip or if it is just another scam!

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1. See Prof. P. Ramasamy, "Labouring over wage issues," *Sun*, January 5, 2000.

South Asians for Human Rights

An introduction

Human rights activists in South Asian countries have for a long time supported the concept of evolving collective mechanisms on many issues of common concern, particularly in view of the fact that many human rights issues demand bilateral and regional solutions. Recognizing this need a five-member committee comprising Mr. I. K. Gujral from India, Dr. Kamal Hosain from Bangladesh, Dr. Devendra Raj Panday from Nepal, Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy from Sri Lanka, and Ms. Asma Jahangir from Pakistan met to discuss the possibility of a South Asian regional initiative on human rights. In order to ensure that the proposed initiative enjoys broad support in all countries of South Asia, it was decided to hold a convention of about 100 people. The delegates were drawn from recognized human rights organizations and included jurists, academics, public figures, media persons, etc. Special attention was paid to ensure gender balance and to allow representation of ethnic minorities/indigenous people. The convention was held in Neemrana Fort, Rajasthan, India on July 21-22, 2000. After extensive discussions, they adopted the Neemrana declaration and decided to set up an organization under the title South Asians for Human Rights (SAHR).

South Asians for Human Rights is a democratic regional body with a large membership base of people committed to addressing human rights issues at both national and regional levels. According to the organization structure its members, both institutions and individuals, form the network's general body. The organization will elect a bureau to function as its executive body at its first general body meeting which is likely to be held in 2001. Till then an interim bureau, comprising three members each from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka will work as the organization's executive body. A membership committee has also started functioning and, under the rules adopted by it, membership process has begun.

Neemrana Declaration

We, the peoples of South Asia — human rights activists, groups, network, and initiatives — belonging to civil society in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, met at Neemrana, Rajasthan, India, on July 21 and 22, 2000.

Affirming our belief in the inalienable human rights and dignity of every individual in our region;

Recognising the grave human rights situation in South Asia, with its terrible legacy of persistent poverty, deprivation, illiteracy, inequality, caste and social hierarchy, discrimination against women and exploitation of children, itself further aggravated by authoritarian, militarist and sectarian tendencies amidst violence and state repression;

Concerned at the encroachment on human rights through unequal globalisation and pursuit of elitist domestic policies which harm the interests of the working people and their right to survival, security and a life with dignity;

Acknowledging that human rights violations in one country often spill over into the other countries in the region and potentially generate bilateral/regional tensions and hostility, thus threatening peace;

Recognising the existence in South Asia of diverse communities, linguistic and ethnic groups, indigenous people (Adivasis and tribals), and socially and economically disadvantaged sections of society, and widespread discrimination against numerous classes;

Accepting that human rights are indispensable to balanced social and economic development, and affirming civil society's role in guiding and assisting the state in all matters, including human rights, governance and creating a culture of peace, tolerance, secularism and pluralism;

Conscious of the similarities of the human rights deprivation faced by South Asian peoples as well

as their common culture, resources and legacies, and shared experiences and aspirations;

Inspired by the substantial achievements of the numerous existing human rights movements in South Asia, and realising the need for more effective participation and networking;

And affirming concepts enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, our constitutional documents, and various international covenants such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Convention on the Rights of the Child, treaties for the protection of working people, minorities, migrants and refugees, and against torture and genocide;

Agree to establish a voluntary, democratic, people's organisation under the title, 'South Asians for Human Rights', with the following objectives:

To foster the concept of multiple South Asian identities by enabling people to realise their ideals and aspirations for peace, democracy, secularism and human security, while promoting pluralism in approaches towards social, political, economic and cultural development of different communities, ethnic, linguistic, religious and other groups.

To campaign for the creation of regional instruments for:

- Uniform enjoyment of human rights;
- Realisation of gender equality and justice;
- Strengthening regional economic and technological cooperation and resisting predatory globalisation;
- Promoting regional interaction and mutual enrichment in the spheres of education, literature, culture and the arts;
- Sharing experiences and developing platforms to assert the rights of labour and other working people, and to eliminate poverty and disparities;
- Challenging all forms of communal and parochial prejudice, bigotry and violence;
- Humane treatment to migrant workers and refugees and other vulnerable groups which often face discrimination;

To struggle collectively for the uniform realisation of the South Asia people's right to participatory democracy, good governance and justice;

To review laws, practices, social and political trends and economic policies which adversely affect human rights and to suggest remedial measures;

To monitor and resist the violation of human rights, by state authorities and non-state elements;

To oppose usurpation of people's sovereign power and derogation of human rights by state terrorism, religious fanaticism, communalism, militarism and nuclearism, and to fight for a nuclear weapons-free South Asia as a step towards a world free of weapons of mass destruction;

To demand constitutional and legal guarantees necessary to usher in a just society consistent with international human rights norms;

To oppose customs whose practice in the name of the "community" or traditional "morality" creates hatred, prejudice and sectarianism; and to assert the primacy of reason, tolerance and mutual respect;

To advocate and work towards ensuring adherence to humanitarian norms in all conflict situations;

To encourage the building of peaceful border areas between and among the countries of the region without resorting to conflict and violence;

To resist and remove all forms of crime including traffic in women and children;

To maintain mutually beneficial relations with international agencies such as the UN and SAARC and to promote dialogue and mutual cooperation;

To campaign for a common strategy to protect the environment in the region and promote ecologically sound development.

For further information contact: Provisional secretariat, South Asians for Human Rights, c/o Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, 107 Tipu Block, New Garden Town, Lahore, Pakistan, ph (92-42) 583-8131, 586-4994; fax (92-42) 588-3582; e-mail: sahrhr@yahoo.com

Dialogue on Human Rights Education



While international documents may have defined human rights education clearly, "redefining" it for the sake of taking stock of its value in the context of one's society is still necessary. Educators from Japan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, south Korea, Mongolia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Taiwan and Thailand undertook a review of the meaning of human rights education in the context of Asia in a Dialogue held on January 27-29, 2001 in Osaka city.

The participants view human rights education as an essential component in building a better society. Human rights education in schools generally

- prepares students for their future role in society as adults;
- provides them with guide on how to live life in full (humane and dignified life);
- encourages them to act on their problems;
- empowers them (especially those belonging to a minority group¹ or with certain disability) to change things such as the relationship between students and teachers, and resolve conflicts.

It is linked to the education reform movement that advocates change from examination-oriented education system to one that promotes total human development. It is not separated from the human rights movement (or its predecessor, the democracy movement as in the case of Korea) existing in society.

Values education, multicultural education, development education, peace education, among others, are related to human rights education. They are steps leading to human rights education. They cover concepts/issues that impinge on human rights.

Developing the curriculum

A human rights curriculum starts with understanding human rights-related values (primary level) that leads progressively to understanding human rights concepts (secondary level). Human rights issues should be understood at various contexts: personal, societal, and national and international. These contexts may correspond to the age levels of the students.

International human rights standards are already taught in a number of programs in Asia. There are materials that

explain the provisions of international human rights instruments. Translation in easy language of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child has been done in several countries.

Understanding international human rights standards* is important because of the following reasons:

- these standards support the idea that all human beings are the equal and therefore share common standards (not sharing a common concept will lead to inward-looking attitude);
- they can be used to protect human rights;
- they are needed as members of the international community.

But this view does not apply to all countries. In Japan, international human rights standards are seen by many people as foreign and irrelevant for a number of reasons: the international human rights instruments use legal language, they do not apply to daily lives of people, there is no international pressure for their use, and even lawyers are not interested because they cannot be used in local courts. Though many Japanese travel outside the country, they consider international human rights standards as dispensable. For the Thais who travel abroad, however, they see the international human rights standards as important in protecting themselves.

In addition, human rights education should consider the hidden curriculum, that is, conditions in the schools should adhere to human rights principles.

Institutionalizing Human Rights Education

Experiences in institutionalizing human rights education in schools make use of the following:

- support from national constitutions, human rights law/policy/guidelines;
- partnership among NGOs, government educational institutions and schools, as well as with national human rights institutions, and the academic sector;
- support from international institutions such as the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNICEF, UNESCO;
- program for teacher training, support from the community, partnership system among the different players;
- support program for the teachers - raising salary, lessening teaching load, providing incentives, undertaking measures to change behavior or attitude of teachers that violate human rights.

Institutionalization based on current experiences is not enlarging or creating bureaucracies but building relationships among the different players. One lesson learned is that no single institution is capable of implementing human rights education programs in all schools.

Notes

1. Minority groups referred to here cover the Buraku (socially discriminated people in Japan), foreigners, and female students.

First State Conference on Human Rights Education in Schools

"Human Rights Education: - A Shared Responsibility"

31 January 2000, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

Message from Mary Robinson

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

It is a pleasure for me to send greetings to all of you - authorities and political leaders, students, teachers, school personnel and human rights educators - gathered for this Conference in Chennai. I would also like to express my congratulations to People's Watch-Tamil Nadu and the Indian Social Institute for having developed such a broad campaign in the State of Tamil Nadu for the introduction of human rights education in schools, which is culminating today with this meeting.

Human rights education is a learning and participatory process by which we understand together our common responsibility to make human rights a reality in our lives and in our communities. Its fundamental role is to empower individuals to defend their own rights and those of others. It is education for action, not only about human rights but also for human rights.

In schools, human rights education should take account of the developmental stage of children and their social and cultural contexts, in order to make human rights principles meaningful to them. Teachers, administrators, outside resource persons and parents should be involved in this process as well as the students themselves. The "human rights climate" that exists in the classroom and the school is also important: it should be based on reciprocal respect between all parties involved.

Factors that will help to promote human rights education within the school system include

- The incorporation of human rights education in national educational legislation;
- Appropriate provision for human rights issues in curricula and textbooks;
- Pre-service and in-service training for teachers on human rights and human rights education methodologies;
- The organization of extracurricular activities, both at the school level and reaching out to the family and the community;
- The development of educational materials;
- The establishment of support networks of teachers and other professionals from human rights groups, teachers' unions, non-governmental organizations or professional associations.

The state campaign you are carrying out is a valuable contribution to the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004), during which Governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, professional associations, all sectors of civil society and individuals are especially encouraged to establish partnerships and to concentrate efforts for human rights education, training and public information.

Recent evaluation of progress made in the Decade's first five years, conducted by my Office, has shown that much greater efforts are needed at all levels, if the Decade's remaining years are to leave a strong foundation of achievement for human rights education beyond the Decade.

I would like to encourage all of you to continue to further human rights education and ultimately, the realization of human rights of your communities, and to get involved and support such efforts. The realization of human rights is our common responsibility. Its achievement will entirely depend on the contribution that each and everyone of us willing to make.

My best wishes to all attending this Conference

Songs for Human Rights

"*Sieng Kammakorn*" is the first music video and multimedia project in the Thai labor movement. This multimedia program presents a collection of progressive songs of the movement. It is designed for narrowcasting via video tapes, video CDs or DVDs as well as for broadcasting on terrestrial, cable and satellite television and for webcasting via internet television networks. Produced by the **Thai Labor Museum** and videographed by WAYANG, the initial phase of this project presents three key songs of the movement: (i) "Saksri Kammakorn" (Dignity of Workers), (ii) "Kidthueng Tuk-kata" (A Doll at Kader), and (iii) "Sai Lerd Reng-ngan" (Spirit of Labor).

According to the well-respected and veteran unionist, **Somsak Kosaisook** (Secretary-General, **Labor Coordination Center of Thailand**), "Songs and music express the culture of workers. It is a powerful tool to build unity and solidarity in the trade union movement to fight against exploitation by employers. The trade union movement should nurture this unique culture, to promote the dignity of workers and to continue this practice for our future generations."

Arunee Srito (Advisor and former President) of the **Thai Women Workers' Unity Group** adds, "Songs and music can raise consciousness among workers, bringing workers together and building empowerment."

Paisal Puech-mongkol – who wrote the "**Saksri Kammakorn**" song about 25 years ago – explains that the lyrics are in four parts. The first part narrates the hardship and injustice faced by workers. The second part touches on their dignity as they struggle to feed their families. The third part is directed towards their struggle for justice -- they are the people who have built the world, and they have nothing to be ashamed of being workers. The last part calls on workers of the world to unite and fight for a better world for all.

The melody and musical composition of this song about the dignity of workers is actually a direct adaptation from a folk tune known as "Sri-Nual". This popular tune is for a dance traditionally performed by farmers and peasants in Thailand to celebrate a good harvest or some occasion worthy of a big gathering with a spirit of unity.

So, when presented with new lyrics, reflecting their hardship and struggles in the cities, the workers immediately identify with this composition. "Saksri Kammakorn" is now regarded as the workers' anthem! Workers at every picket line, sit-in, protest march or rally, including during May Day every year sing it with dignity.

Somsak Kosaisook adds, "Saksri Kammakorn reaffirms that workers have inalienable rights. So they must be fairly treated and justly paid. The dignity of workers should be respected."

Wichai Narapaiboon, who is a progressive singer and cultural activist well respected for his commitment and contributions to the Thai labor movement, composes the lyrics and music of "Kidthueng Tuk-kata". He firmly believes that songs and music are powerful media for people to communicate with one another. Traditionally, a lullaby is sung by a mother to communicate with her baby – for example, to tell that it is time to sleep well. Likewise, labor movement songs and music can also tell stories about hardships, poor living conditions, exploitation, inhumane treatment, sickness and death. These songs can serve as a collective voice to tell the world that these miserable conditions exist. At the same time, these songs can encourage workers themselves to reclaim their own dignity and demand their rights.

"Kidthueng Tuk-kata" was composed following the tragedy in May 1993 at the Kader toy factory in Thailand that burned down with the loss of 188 lives – the majority of whom were young women workers. 469 other workers were injured. Many of the workers died simply because the fire doors were deliberately locked to keep workers in – due to a management policy against theft. Other workers died because the poorly-built structure collapsed minutes after the fire broke out.

Tienruen (Kader worker): "As I ran around, I saw many friends gathered at the window. Some friends pushed the other friends down. I was one of them being pushed down. I fell... hurt my stomach. I could not move. Somebody pulled me out. I felt sharp pain in my legs. I had to crawl. I said to them, please help the people at the back. After I crawled a bit more, the whole building collapsed."

Tumtong (Kader worker): "I jumped and landed on the bodies of my friends. If not for the support of my friends whose bodies cushioned my fall, I might not have survived!"

Boon (Kader worker): "Factory employers should provide insurance for workers. They have insurance for their factory dolls but not for the workers. The lives of workers are less valuable than their dolls! They can die for nothing!"

Tienruen: "Until now, I still have nightmares. When I hear loud sound and smell smoke, I get frightened and feel like fainting."

PARADON, an all-women workers' band was formed after the Kader tragedy on 25th July 1993. "Paradon" in the Thai language means friendship or sisterhood. Being young, gifted and workers, they were quickly recognized as **The Workers' Band** performing for the cause. **PARADON** is still the only all-women workers' band in Thailand.

For the past seven years, **PARADON** has been playing a very vital and active role (especially during workers' demonstrations and strikes) by singing and disseminating messages and building social awareness. Their songs and music not only entertain but also motivate workers to come

out and get involved in the struggle for workers' rights and other social issues.

Virtually all the six founding members (Sumalee Lailuad, Kanchana Boonmathan, Patcharee Lailuad, Suwanna Thanlhek, Prakhop Yoddamnern, Kanokwan Kongkeuy) were full-time factory workers at the time. At present, PARADON is made up of three women workers who are all excellent vocalists as well as musicians. Two sisters of PARADON have recently joined the Thai Labor Museum, as part-time staff while the third sister is still a full-time factory worker. All three of them are committee members of a local trade union and all live in a union premises together with other women workers in the sprawling Omnoi Omyai Industrial District in the outskirts of Bangkok.

With persistence and hard work -- together with the guidance and support of Wichai Narapaiboon -- PARADON released their first cassette album in 1995. Over the years, PARADON has participated in several other cassette albums featuring progressive Thai labor songs produced by the Thai Labor Museum.

PARADON is famous for their touching rendition and popularizing of the "Kidthueng Tuk-kata" song.

Sumalee Lailuad (lead vocals & bass): "We sing about workers' lives and hardships, their aspirations as well as their demands. We make workers reflect that there are people who care. They are not alone in their struggles. We have taken the tasks as our cultural responsibility to carry on with various cultural activities, designed to support the struggle of workers, becoming part and parcel of the labor movement."

Sumalee: "Whenever we perform our song about the Kader tragedy, the sad melody really moves us. We can see the image of workers being trapped in that factory, screaming for help, trying desperately to get out of the burning building with little air left. It was hopeless! It was a horrible inferno! Some were trying to jump out from windows, but all the windows and doors were barred with iron rods. They were trapped like animals in cages. Just think how their families back home in the villages would feel. How would they react to this tragic loss, being informed that their daughters -- earning meager wages at this factory making dolls for export -- were burned to death. It must have been very painful..."

Patcharee Lailuad (vocals, keyboard, lead guitar & "pin"): "In this particular song, I see the employers so greedy and selfish that they don't take the safety and lives of the workers into consideration at all. Yet these workers had helped them to prosper financially with their sweat and labor. This song urges that we should never allow this horrible thing to happen again. All concerned parties should figure out how this tragedy can be prevented in the future. Rules and regulations must be strictly enforced for the safety of workers."

Kanchana Boonmathan (lead vocals & percussion): "It has been 8 years but I have not yet forgotten the horrible fire at the Kader factory. It was a most terrible thing ever

to happen to any factory and to workers. Nothing could possibly replace the loss of lives and aspirations. We know that the Kader company was well compensated by their insurance companies. But this Kader company is far from adequately responsible for the loss of young lives and welfare of the injured workers and their dependents. No adequate assistance has come. Meanwhile, the Government itself is not helping the workers much! We, the workers, wish to see that the Government seriously and quickly establish an independent Occupational Health and Safety Institute or any similar agency mandated to strictly inspect the working environment in all workplaces for the sake of safety. We hope that these official agencies could be depended on in the future."

Somboon Srikamdokkhae, President, Council of Work and Environment Related Patients' Network of Thailand (WEPT): "We are a group of workers who are affected by occupational health hazards. There are many work-related diseases but we do not get legal protection. The employers and even the Government do not acknowledge that there are work-related diseases. We have proposed the establishment of an independent "Occupational Health and Safety Institute" to enable the affected workers to participate in the process of prevention of work-related diseases. But the Government and the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare did not respond. So we collected 50,000 signatures and, under the new Constitution of Thailand, we submitted a petition to Parliament to debate the issue. The Government still does not respond. The bill for the establishment of this proposed "Institute" has not been passed." The struggle continues...

Wichai Narapaiboon also composed the music and lyrics of "Sai Lerd Reng-ngan." Around 1987, there were only a few movement songs and music performed during labor activities. At the time, there were disunity and personality conflicts among labor leaders. Subsequently, the labor movement as a whole was not able to effectively represent the interest of the workers. Wichai Narapaiboon was eager to see the movement regaining its vitality and momentum: "I really wished that the labor movement could again speak with one voice, moving on to the same direction and with the same ultimate goal. I wished to see that the movement could at least serve and function as the consolidating force to rebuild the labor movement -- making the movement a strong and dynamic force to be reckoned with. With this wish and concern, I started to work on this song."

In Somsak Kosaisook's assessment, the "Sai Lerd Reng-ngan" song represents a piece of workers' cultural heritage - a voice of the workers calling for unity and solidarity. "We believe that all workers are fraternal brothers and sisters, regardless of the color of their skin, creed, sex or religious belief. The statement that 'labor creates the world' means that workers of the world must take more participatory roles in social, economic, political and cultural developments."

For further information, please contact: Alternative Video Resource Network - WAYANG, P.O.Box 52, Bungthonglang, Bangkok 10242 Thailand; e-mail: "wayang" wayang@ksc.th.com; waying@yahoo.com

Damn the Dams

by Cecil Rajendra

Straddling the river
like a Colossus
the Millenium Dam
stands tall, arrogant
its broad shoulders
stemming a field
of water the size
of a small country.

The Dam's offered vision:
cheap electricity to
every household & family;
guaranteed relief & control
of farmlands once flooded;
vital piped water to

fields once arid; reservoirs
were touted as rich
breeding grounds teeming
with fish to feed the hungry.

The unedited version
tells a different story:
butterflies were flooded out
as were cobra & python;
tiger, tapir, elephant
the rare sumatran rhinoceros
& mousedeer are homeless;
the orang utan is an orphan
while salmon face extinction.

Ecosystem and people alike
were dismantled by this icon
of pride, progress & power.
But neither the hillside tribes
farmer, fisherman or peasant
(displaced by the million)

received a cent of compensation;
only the contractor & politician
- often the same person -
reaped the rich rewards gen-
erated by megawatts of corruption*

Narmada, San Roque
Sardar Sarovar
Pak Mun, Bakun
Three Gorges in China...
Vision or delusion?
saviour or destroyer?
what future do your
waters hold for our children?
Narmada, San Roque
Sardar Sarovar
Pak Mun, Bakun
Three Gorges in China
what future do your
waters hold for our children?

Events

Recently-Held Events

1. The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights held the Ninth Workshop on Regional Cooperation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Asian and Pacific Region on 28 February - 2 March, 2001 in Bangkok. The workshop reviewed activities sponsored by OHCHR in the region since the last regional workshop in Beijing (March 2000). It also reviewed national, subregional and regional initiatives held within the four areas under the Tehran Framework. For further information please contact: The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 8-14 Avenue de la Paix, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland; ph (41-22) 917-9000; fax (41-22) 917-9016; e-mail: webadmin.hchr@unog.ch

Events

1. The Asian Regional Resource Center for Human Rights Education (ARRC) will hold the Asian Human Rights Education Trainers Colloquium on April 1-5, 2001 in Chiangmai. There will be participants from several countries in South, Northeast and Southeast Asia. The colloquium will, among several objectives, bring together Asian trainers for consultation, sharing and learning from each other's experiences in relation to a publication of ARRC entitled *HRE Pack* (1995). For further information contact: Ms. Theresa Limpin, ARRC Coordinator, CPD Court Room 210, 86/12 Ratchadapisek Road, Ladyau Bangkok 10900 Thailand; phone/fax: (662) 512 5685; email: arrc@ksc.th.com; www.hr-alliance.org

2. The Advanced Course and Training Program in Peace and Human Rights will take place from June 4 - 22, 2001 in O'ahu and Maui, Hawai'i. 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." 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; <http://www.hihr.org/>

3. The South Asia Forum for Human Rights (SAFHR) is organizing the second peace studies orientation course in Kathmandu on 1-15 September 2001. The course is intended for peace and human rights activists, media persons, researchers, academics, students, and diplomats involved in policy making, and conflict resolution. The course will include examination of themes related to Justice, Reconciliation, Peace and the Practices of Non-Violence. The course will draw on the experiences of human rights and peace activism in the conflict zones of South Asia and elsewhere and will deal with the long history of moral resistance in the pursuit of justice and reconciliation in the region since the colonial days. The course will take into account various forms of violence including state violence, structural violence, hate speech, intolerance, and the gender orientation of the structure of violence. Issues of legality, non-violent mobilization, pacific but coercive policies, forms of justice, and the ethics of reconciliation will be included in the course syllabus. For more information please contact: South Asia Forum for Human Rights (3/23, Shree Durbar Tole, Patan Dhoka, Lalitpur, Kathamndu, Nepal; GPO Box 12855, ph (9771) 541026; fax (9771) 527852, e-mail: south@safhr.org

HURIGHTS OSAKA ACTIVITIES

HURIGHTS OSAKA received an Honorable Mention award in the 2000 UNESCO Prize for Human Rights Education. The award is a "recognition of its noteworthy activities concerning the development of human rights education in the Asia-Pacific region." The main award was given to the City of Nuremberg in Germany. Two other Honorable Mention awards were given to Ms. Flor Alba Romero (Colombia) and UNESCO's Associated Schools Project (Pakistan) respectively. The awarding ceremony will be held in the City of Nuremberg on April 21, 2001.



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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 in meeting 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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