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**EFFECTIVE FUNCTIONING OF HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS:
NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND REGIONAL ARRANGEMENTS**

**Regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human
rights in the Asian and Pacific region**

**Report of the Secretary-General submitted in accordance with
Commission resolution 2002/82***

* This report was submitted late owing to the date of the Workshop on which the Secretary-General was requested to report.

Executive summary

In its resolution 2002/82, the Commission on Human Rights requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission at its fifty-ninth session a report containing the conclusions of the eleventh Workshop on Regional Cooperation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Asian and Pacific Region held in Islamabad from 25 to 27 February 2003 and information on the progress achieved in implementing the resolution. The present report focuses on the results of that meeting as well as on activities carried out since the 2002-2004 Programme of Action for the Asia-Pacific Framework for Regional Cooperation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights was adopted in Beirut in March 2002. This constitutes the second biennial programme of action adopted by member States of the Asian and Pacific region since the Tehran Framework for Regional Technical Cooperation in the Asian and Pacific Region was adopted in 1998. The first biennial programme of action to implement activities under the four pillars of the Tehran Framework was adopted in Beijing in 2000. The four pillars for regional technical cooperation identified under the Tehran Framework are: national plans of action for the promotion and protection of human rights and the strengthening of national capacities; human rights education; national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights; and strategies for the realization of the right to development and economic, social and cultural rights.

Participants in the eleventh Workshop on Regional Cooperation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights reviewed progress achieved since the tenth Workshop held in Beirut in March 2002 and, among other things, noted the new draft Guidelines on Poverty Reduction Strategies, produced by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the launch of the OHCHR Handbook on National Human Rights Action Plans and the activities conducted under the four areas identified in the Tehran Framework for Technical Cooperation, including the following intersessional workshops:

- Human Rights Education and the Administration of Justice, 25-27 June 2002 (Nadi, Fiji);
- Regional Workshop on National Human Rights Institutions, Human Rights Education, Media and Racism, 15 and 16 July 2002 (Sydney, Australia);
- Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions, Seventh Annual Meeting, 11-13 November 2002 (New Delhi);
- Training Programme for National Human Rights Institutions in Asia, 28 October-8 November 2002 (Bangkok);
- Minority Rights: Cultural Diversity and Development in South-East Asia, 4-7 December 2002 (Chiang Mai, Thailand).

The conclusions of the eleventh Workshop on Regional Cooperation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Asian and Pacific region are attached as annex I to the report, the 2002-2004 Programme of Action for the Asia-Pacific Framework for Regional Cooperation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, as annex II.

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Introduction

1. In its resolution 2002/82, the Commission on Human Rights requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission at its fifty-ninth session a report containing the conclusions of the eleventh Workshop on Regional Cooperation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Asian and Pacific Region (Islamabad, 25-27 February 2003) (hereafter eleventh Workshop) and information on the progress achieved in implementing the resolution. The conclusions are attached as annex I to the present report, which is submitted in accordance with the Commission's request.
2. One of the fundamental objectives of the United Nations is to promote universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms. The World Conference on Human Rights reaffirmed the fundamental role that regional and subregional arrangements could play in this regard. In the Asian and Pacific region, the United Nations has consistently promoted regional cooperation in the field of human rights, inter alia through the consideration of possible regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights.
3. Pursuant to the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) organized in 1982 a first seminar for the Asian and Pacific region which took place in Colombo. Since then OHCHR, in cooperation with the host Governments, has organized 11 regional workshops: in Manila in 1990, Jakarta in 1993, Seoul in 1994, Kathmandu in 1996, Amman in 1997, Tehran in 1998, New Delhi in 1999, Beijing in 2000, Bangkok in 2001, Beirut in 2002 and Islamabad in 2003.
4. Through these workshops, which are now held on an annual basis, a consensus has been reached on a "step-by-step", "building-blocks" approach involving extensive consultation among Governments of the region towards the possible establishment of regional arrangements.
5. The fifth Workshop (1997) in Amman concluded, inter alia, that the sharing of information and the development and strengthening of national capacities for the promotion and protection of human rights are crucial in the step-by-step process of establishing regional human rights arrangements. The fifth Workshop also strongly recommended that a regional technical cooperation programme be designed and implemented as a matter of urgent priority.
6. The sixth Workshop (1998) in Tehran carried this process forward and adopted agreed conclusions for the first time. Underlining its commitment to developing and strengthening national capacities for the promotion and protection of human rights through regional cooperation and sharing of experiences, the workshop adopted the Framework for Regional Technical Cooperation in the Asian and Pacific Region. The Tehran Framework identified States' commitments to four regional priorities: national plans of action for the promotion and

protection of human rights and the strengthening of national capacities; human rights education; national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights; and strategies for the realization of the right to development and economic, social and cultural rights.

7. Since Tehran, government representatives meeting at the annual Workshop on Regional Cooperation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights review progress in these four regional priorities and identify the next steps to be taken.

8. In New Delhi (1999), participants at the seventh Workshop decided to convene intersessional workshops addressing issues under each of the four areas of the Tehran Framework. They also welcomed the decision of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to allocate funds for these activities.

9. The conclusions adopted during the eighth Workshop (2000) in Beijing emphasized the importance of undertaking activities under the Framework at the national and subregional levels with the assistance of the concerned Governments, national institutions and civil society. Parliaments, national institutions and civil society groups were invited to participate in the development and implementation of the Framework. The Beijing conclusions also endorsed “next steps and activities to be considered” in the region to facilitate the process of cooperation for the protection and promotion of human rights (E/CN.4/2000/102, annex) (hereafter referred to as the “Beijing Plan of Action”).

10. In Bangkok (2001) participants at the ninth Workshop reviewed the evaluation report of Professor Vitit Muntarbhorn on the implementation by OHCHR of activities under the Tehran Framework. For the first time, a consultation of non-governmental actors - national human rights institutions, non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies - took place one day prior to the official opening of the workshop.

11. In Beirut (2002) participants reviewed the implementation of the Beijing Plan of Action and adopted a new Programme of Action for the next two years (annex II) which included specific objectives and activities to be implemented under each of the pillars of the Tehran Framework. The conclusions of the tenth Workshop welcomed OHCHR Regional Representatives’ involvement in advising Asian and Pacific Governments, at their request, on the implementation of the activities under the Framework.

12. In Islamabad (2003) participants reviewed the implementation of the Beirut Plan of Action, noting the launch of the Handbook on National Human Rights Plans of Action. Participants recalled that 2003 was the tenth anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, recognized the important contribution the Millennium Development Goals and Millennium Declaration could make to the promotion and protection of human rights, and noted the report of the Secretary-General, “strengthening the United Nations: an agenda for further change”, (A/57/387 and Corr.1) which stated that the emplacement or enhancement of a national protection system in each country, reflecting international human rights norms, should be a principle objective of the United Nations.

I. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2002-2004 PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE ASIA-PACIFIC FRAMEWORK FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION FOR THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS ADOPTED AT THE TENTH WORKSHOP

A. National human rights plans of action and national capacity-building

1. Regional level

13. The Handbook on National Human Rights Plans of Action, which was made available to participants at the eleventh Workshop, had undergone a review when in draft following the results of the evaluation of the joint programme of OHCHR and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) entitled "Human rights strengthening" (HURIST). HURIST funded and supported, inter alia, many of the initiatives undertaken at the national level to promote and develop national plans of action. Strengthened through this process, the Handbook was finalized and launched in August 2002. It is now available on the OHCHR web site at <http://www.unhchr.ch/pdf/nhrap.pdf>

2. National level

14. Under the HURIST programme, OHCHR and UNDP have supported the development of national plans of action in Mongolia, Nepal, New Zealand and Jordan. In Mongolia, a national workshop entitled "Human rights baseline study/situational analysis" was conducted in May 2001. The study was released on 10 December 2001 and the official launch of the formulation of the National Human Rights Action Plan was announced the same day. OHCHR has supported the broad-based consultative process which has underscored development of the Action Plan, which is expected to be adopted by the Mongolian Parliament in early 2003. OHCHR is continuing support in 2003 in the initial implementation phase of the plan.

15. In Nepal, following needs assessment missions undertaken by HURIST the project document to support the process of developing a National Human Rights Action Plan is expected to be signed shortly by the Government of Nepal. In the Philippines, HURIST is funding the evaluation of the National Human Rights Plan, focusing on improved implementation and monitoring of the Plan.

B. Human rights education

1. Regional level

16. Various worldwide activities conducted by the Office in the area of human rights education which are also of concern to the Asian and Pacific region are illustrated in detail in documents E/CN.4/2003/100 and E/CN.4/2003/101.

17. In particular, a database providing information on organizations, materials and programmes for human rights education, including in the Asian and Pacific region, is available through the Office web site (<http://www.unhchr.ch/hredu.nsf>); a resource centre which includes human rights education and training materials from the region is open to the public at OHCHR

headquarters (Palais Wilson, Geneva); and the section on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on the Office web site (<http://www.unhchr.ch/udhr/index.htm>) makes available the Universal Declaration in as many as 100 languages and dialects spoken in the region.

18. Further human rights education and training activities are funded under the Assisting Communities Together (ACT) Project. In 2002 ACT Projects were implemented in the following countries/territories of the region: Afghanistan, Cambodia, Fiji, Mongolia, occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, Philippines, Samoa, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. A total of 69 activities were supported which provides grants (of up to US\$ 5,000) to grass-roots human rights education and training activities. These are administered by OHCHR in cooperation with UNDP.

2. Subregional level

19. The intersessional Subregional Workshop for Pacific Island States on Human Rights Education and the Administration of Justice, organized in cooperation with the UNDP Governance for Livelihoods and Development (GOLD) programme, was hosted by the Government of Fiji from 25 to 27 June 2002. The workshop included participants from States of the South Pacific (Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu) and included representatives from national human rights institutions in the subregion, as well as a number of subregional human rights non-governmental organizations and resource persons. United Nations agencies and NGOs attended as observers.

20. The aim of the workshop was to offer participants the possibility of discussing measures to strengthen human rights education in the area of the administration of justice and of devising strategies and plans of actions in this regard. Following prior discussion with a number of Governments from the subregion, the workshop emphasized practical steps to strengthen the knowledge and application of human rights among practitioners (lawyers, judges, magistrates, police officers, prison guards, etc.).

21. In her opening address, the representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Helga Klein, stated that human rights education was one of the four key areas identified by States in the Tehran Framework. Mr. Mose Saitala, of UNDP/GOLD, in his introductory comments underlined the interlinkage between human rights education and good governance. Ms. Judy Harm Nam, for the Government of Fiji, welcomed participants to the country and expressed the hope that the deliberations would lead to a useful and fruitful outcome. An address was delivered by Ratu Joni Madraiwiwi on the theme of human rights and cultural values in the Pacific region. The resource persons invited participants to identify national and regional best practices, other experiences and challenges, and further issues which needed to be addressed at both the national and regional levels. The workshop adopted conclusions, the text of which is available at www.unhchr.ch/html/menu6/nadi.htm.

22. A subregional Workshop on Enhancing National Capacities for Human Rights Education in Gulf State Schools is planned for May 2003, to be organized jointly by OHCHR, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations

Children's Fund, in cooperation with the Arab Institute for Human Rights. The workshop will gather education policy makers, officers responsible for teacher training institutions and for education faculties, developers of materials and curricula, and members of organizations active in the area of human rights education in schools from six Gulf States - Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The workshop aims at supporting, within and among the countries concerned, the promotion of a common understanding, the identification of key components and subregional and national priorities, and the elaboration of strategies, based, inter alia, on lessons learned from other countries, towards the effective incorporation of human rights education in the school system.

3. National level

23. During the period under review, and through its programme of technical cooperation and advisory services, OHCHR has undertaken or been involved in human rights education and professional training activities in Afghanistan, Cambodia, China, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Malaysia, Mongolia and Thailand.

C. National human rights institutions

24. Activities relating to human rights institutions are described in document E/CN.4/2003/110.

1. Regional level

25. OHCHR supported and participated in the seventh Annual Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Right Institutions (New Delhi, 11-13 November 2002).

26. During the period under review, OHCHR, in cooperation with the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions and the host human rights institution, has conducted the following regional workshops:

(a) Regional Workshop on National Human Rights Institutions, Human Rights Education, Media and Racism (Sydney, 15-16 July 2002);

(b) Training Programme for National Human Rights Institutions in Asia and the Pacific (Bangkok, 28 October-8 November 2002);

(c) Seventh Annual Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (New Delhi, 11-13 November 2002);

(d) Asia-Pacific Regional Training Programme in Human Rights Investigations (Canberra, 11-22 November 2002);

(e) A training programme for national human rights institutions in Asia, (Bangkok, 28 October-8 November 2002) was supported by OHCHR and the Swedish International Development Agency and undertaken by OHCHR and the Raoul Wallenberg Institute.

2. Subregional level

27. During the seventh Annual Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions, the Forum welcomed the agreement of the National Human Rights Commissions of India and Nepal to work together on the issue of human trafficking. The Forum further warmly thanked the members of the Advisory Council of Jurists for their expertise and the comprehensive scope of their report on human trafficking which included items on:

(i) ratification; (ii) implementation; (iii) enforcement; (iv) victim protection; (v) research and policy; (vi) education; and (vii) cooperation. The Advisory Council advises the Forum and its member national human rights institutions on the interpretation and application of international human rights law.

3. National level

28. There are currently 12 national human rights institutions in the Asian and Pacific region which are members of the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions: those of Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka and Thailand. In addition, there are similar institutions in Hong Kong, the occupied Palestinian territory and the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Governments of Bangladesh, Japan, Myanmar and Papua New Guinea are in the process of establishing national human rights institutions.

29. During the reporting period, the National Institutions Team at OHCHR, including the Special Adviser to the High Commissioner on National Institutions, have provided advisory services to the Governments, national institutions or civil society of Fiji, Japan, Mongolia, the Republic of Korea and Sri Lanka.

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

1. Regional level

30. Activities relating to the right to development are described in document E/CN.4/2003/7.

31. Activities relating to economic, social and cultural rights are described in document E/CN.4/2003/46.

32. OHCHR is currently developing human rights indicators. The move from advocacy - based on the normative and ethical appeal of the human rights discourse - to operationalizing a framework for realizing universal enjoyment of human rights and freedoms is inextricably linked to the issue of building and identifying indicators and instruments that are reflective of a rights-based development process. Through this process OHCHR hopes to develop indicators, necessary for situational analysis, to inspire public policy, to monitor progress and to measure performance and overall outcomes of identified activities.

33. Indicators and targets are identified in the draft guidelines on a human rights approach to poverty reduction strategies, developed by OHCHR in 2002. The elaboration of this document created a space for dialogue among various development actors involved in the drafting process,

including the international financial institutions, the United Nations system, development agencies, Governments, academics and civil society. This project has taken up the challenge of bridging the divide between a normative approach and a development economics approach and has helped to clarify what a human rights approach to development means in practice. OHCHR and various partners are looking forward now to the piloting of the draft guidelines, through substantive consultation and field testing with a view to revising this document in the course of the year 2003.

34. The draft guidelines on poverty reduction strategies are available at:
<http://www.unhchr.ch/development/povertyfinal.html>

2. Subregional level

35. The workshop for the Melanesian States on “Universal adherence to the principal international human rights instruments” was held in December 2002 in Nadi, Fiji. The meeting was organized by the regional UNDP/GOLD programme and was partly funded by NZAID. The workshop was attended by government representatives as well as non-governmental and civil society organizations from Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. The workshop was facilitated by the Regional Rights Resource Team and OHCHR. Presentations were made by the Pacific Concerns Resource Centre, the Tonga Democracy Movement and the Fiji Women’s Rights Movement.

37. The objectives of the workshop were:

(a) To enhance understanding and raise awareness of the main provisions of the treaties, the mechanisms that monitor their implementation, and the implications of ratification;

(b) To provide an opportunity to participants from Governments as well as civil society to discuss the substantive, administrative or other obstacles to ratification of the treaties;

(c) To develop a strategy for overcoming those obstacles; and

(d) To offer information about the concrete assistance that States can request from the United Nations system for the purposes of ratification of international treaties, fulfilling reporting obligations, as well as other forms of technical cooperation.

37. This workshop was the third and final one in a series of workshops to raise awareness and encourage ratification of the main international human rights instruments for the Pacific Island countries. Previous subregional workshops had been held in 2001 for the Micronesian and Polynesian countries.

38. OHCHR further organized a Workshop on Minority Rights: Cultural Diversity and Development in South-East Asia (Chiang Mai, Thailand, 4 to 7 December 2002). The report of the workshop will be submitted to the meeting of the Working Group on Minorities to be held in May 2003.

3. National level

39. Within the framework of the HURIST project, a workshop for government officials was held from 28 to 30 August 2002 in Ulaanbaatar, focusing on training on reporting under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The workshop also contained a segment on the right to work and adequate conditions of work under existing conventions of the International Labour Organization as well as a component devoted to examination of the draft National Programme of Action for Human Rights from an economic, social and cultural rights perspective. A follow-up workshop for representatives from over 20 national non-governmental organizations was held at the beginning of September 2002.

40. Also through HURIST, UNDP and OHCHR have undertaken initiatives in the region in relation to economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development:

(a) HURIST is supporting the development of Nepal's National Human Rights Action Plan, which is linked to that country's tenth National Development Plan and poverty reduction strategy paper;

(b) In the Philippines, HURIST is funding a UNDP/ILO project on the application of human rights principles in the informal sector and a rights-based evaluation of the Philippines Commission on Human Rights;

(c) In Yemen, HURIST is funding a project focusing on a human rights approach to food, basic education and health.

II. ELEVENTH WORKSHOP ON REGIONAL COOPERATION FOR THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE ASIAN AND PACIFIC REGION

41. The eleventh Workshop was held in Islamabad from 25 to 27 February 2003. The objectives of the workshop were:

(a) To review progress achieved since the tenth Workshop (Beirut, March 2002) in the four areas identified in the Tehran Framework for Regional Technical Cooperation. In particular, the Workshop:

- (i) Reviewed the results of the intersessional workshops: (see para. 26 above);
- (ii) Took stock of national, regional and subregional initiatives within the four areas identified in the Tehran Framework;
- (iii) Received updates on the forthcoming subregional workshops on human rights education in schools for the Gulf States;

(b) To review current initiatives for the development of regional or subregional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights in the Asian and Pacific region;

(c) To identify the next steps in the context of the Tehran Framework.

42. In preparation for the Workshop, an open-ended team, comprising Geneva-based representatives of interested Member States from the region, held consultative meetings, after which invitations to the workshop were sent to States of the region. National institutions which are members of or observers at the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions, non-governmental organizations, the United Nations, and intergovernmental organizations and agencies, including the United Nations Resident Coordinators and UNDP Resident Representatives in the Asian and Pacific region, were also invited to participate as observers.

43. The Workshop was attended by representatives from the following 29 Governments: Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Japan, Kiribati, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Palau, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Timor-Leste. A representative of Palestine also attended. Representatives of 11 national institutions from the region participated in the workshop, together with a representative of the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions. A number of NGOs participated as observers, as did representatives of United Nations agencies and programmes.

44. The Workshop was opened by Mr. Mohammad Raza Hayat Haraj, Minister of State for Law, Justice and Human Rights of Pakistan, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello. As resource persons, the workshop drew on the expertise of Professor Vitit Muntarbhorn, Faculty of Law, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok and Mr. Jefferson R. Plantilla, Chief Researcher, Asia-Pacific Human Rights Information Centre, Japan. Reports were provided by the Hon. Michael J. Rosenthal, Minister of Justice, Palau, on the Fiji subregional workshop and Mr. Kedar Prasad Poudyal, Acting Secretary, National Human Rights Commission of Nepal, on the results of meetings of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights held since the tenth Workshop in Beirut.

45. The Workshop was divided into six substantive sessions:

1. National institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights.
2. National plans of action for the promotion and protection of human rights and the strengthening of national human rights capacities.
3. Human rights education.
4. Strategies for the realization of the right to development and economic, social and cultural rights.

5. Review of current initiatives for the development of regional or subregional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights in the Asian and Pacific region.
6. Framework for Regional Cooperation for Asia and the Pacific: next steps and conclusions.

46. The Workshop adopted conclusions, the text of which is annexed to this report. In the conclusions, the representatives of Governments participating in the Workshop, among other things, expressed their commitment to enhance subregional, regional and international cooperation to promote universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms, while reaffirming that the primary focus for the promotion and protection of human rights is at the national level and that it is therefore the primary responsibility of States. With regard to participation in the Workshop, the conclusions acknowledged the importance of participation by national institutions, non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations, and the private sector; acknowledged also the initiative of holding a consultation of non-governmental actors prior to the official opening of the Workshop and their reports to the plenary; and called on OHCHR to establish partnerships with these actors in the implementation of the Tehran Framework.

47. The conclusions further encouraged the United Nations country teams to support the implementation of activities at country level under the Tehran Framework and the strengthening of national human rights capacities, at the request of Member States. The role of the OHCHR Regional Representatives in advising Governments, at their request, on the implementation of their activities under the Framework was also welcomed.

National human rights action plans and national capacity-building

48. In its conclusions the Islamabad Workshop took note of the Handbook on National Human Rights Plans of Action available at http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu/plan_action.htm and recognized the desirability of including in national human rights action plans, as appropriate, a component to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. It also noted the importance of developing such plans through a broad participatory process, recognizing the value of sharing useful practices and methodologies from the region with regard to the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national human rights action plans and capacity-building.

Human rights education

49. The Islamabad Workshop encouraged Governments to promote the development of national plans and strategies for human rights education which are comprehensive, participatory, effective and sustainable, and to accelerate the pace of implementation of such plans and strategies within the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004), so as to realize significant achievements by the end of the Decade. With regard to human rights

education in schools, the development of textbooks and teaching methodologies and the training of staff in human rights was also recognized. It further noted that priority should be given to human rights education for all those involved in the administration of justice. The important role non-governmental actors can play in furthering human rights education was also acknowledged.

National human rights institutions

50. The Islamabad workshop encouraged continued cooperation among national human rights institutions, civil society and United Nations agencies, programmes and funds and invited OHCHR to promote and facilitate such cooperation and provide advice and appropriate support to existing national human rights institutions. It reaffirmed that the status and responsibilities of national institutions should be consistent with the Principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (resolution 48/134). It noted the support provided by OHCHR in establishing individual web sites of national institutions within the region and encouraged the use of the Internet. It also noted the important role national institutions can play in following up on the recommendations of human rights treaty bodies.

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

51. The Islamabad workshop affirmed the importance of the human rights treaty system in providing a legal framework within which States parties could address the positive and negative impact of globalization and in creating processes which enabled the harmonization of law and policy needed to achieve progressive realization of economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development. It also recognized the important link between international economic, commercial and financial spheres and the right to development. Good governance and the rule of law at the national level were recognized, with member States noting the value of strengthening good governance practices, including transparent, democratic, accountable and participatory government. It further recognized the important role of the rights of women and the application of a gender perspective as a cross-cutting issue in the process of realizing the right to development. It invited all States to consider signing and ratifying the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and noted the importance of its implementation. It also noted the ongoing discussion on the question of a suitable permanent follow-up mechanism for the realization of the right to development and the various views expressed thereon in United Nations forums.

52. Participants at the Workshop noted that it is the responsibility of all States in the region to implement the activities envisaged under the Framework. They expressed their appreciation for the efforts made by OHCHR to implement the Beirut Plan of Action and for its proposal to continue the implementation of the activities under the Framework in close cooperation with regional, subregional and national partners, and called on United Nations agencies, global and regional financial institutions and bilateral donor agencies to examine how they could support the implementation of the Framework. Whilst welcoming contributions already made to

OHCHR, participants invited States of the Asian and Pacific region to consider making a contribution for the first time, or increasing their contributions, to OHCHR so that the strengthening of national capacities and infrastructures in the field of human rights, as outlined in the Annual Appeal 2003, might be realized. With regard to upcoming workshops, participants encouraged all States in the region to host intersessional subregional workshops, welcoming the offer of the Government of Qatar to host the upcoming workshop on human rights education in schools for the six member States of the Gulf Cooperation Council, and further welcomed the offer of the Government of Palau to host an annual or an intersessional workshop within the Framework for Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region.

Annex I

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

(Islamabad, 25-27 February 2003)

Representatives of Governments of the Asian and Pacific region participating, together with representatives of national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations attending as observers, in the eleventh Workshop on Regional Cooperation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Asian and Pacific Region, held in Islamabad, Pakistan from 25 to 27 February 2003,

Recalling the important contributions made and recommendations and conclusions adopted by previous workshops, in particular, the Beirut workshop held in 2002 and the intersessional workshops on the four areas identified under the Tehran Framework for Regional Technical Cooperation,

Reaffirming the universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelatedness of all human rights - civil, cultural, economic, political and social - and the right to development,

Reaffirming that the primary focus for the promotion and protection of human rights is at the national level and that therefore it is the primary responsibility of States to ensure that human rights are promoted and protected,

Recognizing that democracy, development and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing,

Committed to enhancing subregional, regional and international cooperation to promote universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms, in conformity with international obligations, particularly through strengthening the rule of law,

Mindful of the vastness of, and diversities within, the Asian and Pacific region,

Recalling the tenth anniversary of the unanimous adoption of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action by the World Conference on Human Rights on 25 June 1993,

Recalling the Millennium Declaration adopted unanimously by the United Nations General Assembly on 8 September 2000, in particular section V regarding human rights, democracy and good governance, in which States undertake to spare no effort to promote democracy and strengthen the rule of law, as well as respect for all internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development,

Recognizing that realization of the Millennium Development Goals would contribute significantly to the promotion and protection of human rights and vice versa,

Recalling the outcomes of the International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Monterrey, Mexico, in March 2002, as well as the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in August/September 2002,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General entitled “Strengthening the United Nations: an agenda for further change”, (A/57/387) in which he states that the emplacement or enhancement of a national protection system in each country, reflecting international human rights norms, should be a principle objective of the Organization,

Encouraging United Nations Country Teams to support the implementation of activities at country level under the Tehran Framework and the strengthening of national human rights capacities, at the request of Member States,

Reiterating the importance of an inclusive, step-by-step, practical, building blocks approach towards enhancing regional cooperation for the promotion and protection of human rights,

Having reviewed progress achieved so far in implementing the Framework for Regional Cooperation in the Asian and Pacific region, concerned about the limited resources available to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and reaffirming the importance of technical cooperation and the role Member States can play to support the activities of OHCHR,

Taking note of the current initiatives taken by the countries of the region, including by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), for the strengthening and development of regional or subregional endeavours for the promotion and protection of human rights in Asia and the Pacific,

Hereby,

1. *Express appreciation* to the Government of Pakistan for hosting the eleventh annual workshop and for the statements made by Mr. Muhammad Raza Hayat Hiraj, the Minister of State for Law, Justice and Human Rights as the representative of the Government of Pakistan;
2. *Welcome* the participation of Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in the Islamabad workshop, as well as his statement;
3. *Express appreciation* to the Governments, national institutions, experts, representatives of civil society and OHCHR for the implementation of the proposals made at previous workshops;
4. *Invite* Governments of the Asian and Pacific region to consider acceding to the relevant human rights instruments and urge States parties to make every effort to meet their reporting obligations under United Nations human rights instruments;

5. *Take note* of the report of the Secretary-General entitled “Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration” (A/56/326), outlining comprehensive cross-cutting strategies to be pursued both at the national and international levels, which would lead to the promotion of human rights;

6. *Welcome* the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on progress made in the implementation of goals outlined in the Millennium Declaration;

With regard to national human rights plans of action and national capacity-building:

7. *Welcome* the efforts of those States that are already implementing or have adopted, national human rights plans of action, including Australia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand, and the efforts of those States which are in the process of developing national human rights plans of action, including Jordan, Nepal, New Zealand and Mongolia;

8. *Recognize* the desirability of including in national human rights plans of action, as appropriate, a component to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;

9. *Reaffirm* the desirability of developing national human rights plans of action through a process which ensures the participation of a wide range of relevant national, provincial and local actors and of monitoring and evaluating these plans;

10. *Recognize* the value of regional cooperation in sharing useful practices and methodologies in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national human rights plans of action and capacity-building;

11. *Take note* of the Handbook on National Human Rights Plans of Action launched by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in August 2002, available on the www.ohchr.org web site;

With regard to human rights education:

12. *Recognize* that human rights education can play a crucial role in enhancing respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and can contribute to the promotion of human rights, the prevention of human rights violations and the achievement of a culture of peace;

13. *Also recognize* that human rights education should benefit from diverse social and cultural values and traditions that enforce the universality of human rights, having the aim of promoting a multicultural understanding of human rights;

14. *Further recognize* the desirability of including human rights education as a component of national human rights plans of action, development plans and other relevant national plans of action;

15. *Encourage* Governments to promote the development of national plans and strategies for human rights education which are comprehensive, participatory, effective and sustainable, and to accelerate the pace of implementation of such plans and strategies within the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004), so as to realize significant achievements by the end of the Decade;

16. *Note* the implementation of the conclusions of the Subregional Workshop for Pacific Island States on Human Rights and the Administration of Justice, held in Fiji in June 2002;

17. *Recognize* the important role of national human rights institutions in human rights education and encourage a sharing of lessons learned and best practices among them in this regard;

18. *Also recognize* that human rights education in schools is a comprehensive process which concerns not only the inclusion of human rights elements in the curriculum, but also the further development of textbooks and teaching methodologies, the human rights training of teachers and school administrators, and the fostering of learning environments which encourage the full development of the human personality;

19. *Note* that priority should also be given to human rights education for all those involved in the administration of justice, including judges, lawyers, prosecutors, police, prison officials and relevant government officials as well as for the marginalized, vulnerable and illiterate sections of the population;

20. *Acknowledge* the important role that non-governmental actors can play in furthering human rights education, and stress the need for governmental and non-governmental actors to enhance partnership to this end;

With regard to national human rights institutions:

21. *Welcome* the further strengthening of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights in many countries of the Asian and Pacific region and the entry of the national institutions of the Republic of Korea, Malaysia and Thailand as new members to the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions;

22. *Reaffirm* that independent national human rights institutions should be established following an appropriate and inclusive process of consultation;

23. *Also reaffirm* that the status and responsibilities of national institutions should be consistent with the Principles Relating to the Status of National Institutions adopted unanimously by the United Nations General Assembly (resolution 48/134, annex) 10 years ago;

24. *Welcome* efforts to encourage and assist national human rights institutions which are not yet members of the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions to become so;

25. *Also welcome* the efforts of the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions in supporting national human rights institutions within the Asian and Pacific region and encourage it to enhance its activities in the West Asian region;

26. *Encourage* OHCHR to continue to provide technical cooperation for the development of national human rights institutions in the Asian and Pacific region, at the request of Governments;

27. *Also encourage* continued cooperation among national human rights institutions, civil society and United Nations agencies, programmes and funds and invite OHCHR to promote and facilitate such cooperation and provide advice and appropriate support to existing national human rights institutions;

28. *Note* the implementation of the outcome of, and substantive reports and conclusions relating to, the Regional Workshop on National Human Rights Institutions, Human Rights Education, Media and Racism (Australia, July 2002); the Training Programme for National Human Rights Institutions in Asia and the Pacific (Thailand, November 2002), the seventh Annual Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (India, November 2002); and the Asia-Pacific Regional Training Programme in Human Rights Investigations (Australia, November 2002);

29. *Also note* the support provided by OHCHR in establishing individual web sites of national human rights institutions within the region and strongly encourage the use of the Internet;

30. *Further note* the important role which national institutions can play in following up the recommendations of human rights treaty bodies;

31. *Welcome* the offer of the Nepalese and Mongolian human rights commissions to host respectively the eighth and ninth annual meetings of the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions and request OHCHR to support the meetings adequately;

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

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

33. *Also reaffirm* that States have the primary responsibility for their own economic and social development, and the role of national policies and development strategies cannot be over-emphasized;

34. *Affirm* that peace and security as well as a fair international economic climate are essential elements for the realization of economic, social and cultural rights, and the right to development;

35. *Reaffirm* that the human person is the central subject of development and that development policy should make the human being the main participant and beneficiary of development;

36. *Also reaffirm* that respect for all rights - civil, cultural, economic, political and social - is necessary to ensure enjoyment of the right to development;

37. *Further reaffirm* that development is a comprehensive economic, social, cultural and political process, which aims at the constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population;

38. *Reaffirm* the indivisibility of and interrelatedness between the national and international dimensions of the process of development;

39. *Also reaffirm* that States should take steps to address the economic and social development of marginalized or socially excluded groups;

40. *Recognize* the importance of good governance at national and international levels to ensure that human rights are protected, freedoms respected and development resources properly and efficiently utilized for implementing the right to development;

41. *Also recognize* that poverty and unemployment are among the major obstacles to the realization of the right to development and economic, social and cultural rights and emphasize the need for increased international cooperation to tackle these problems, as well as the need for action at the national level;

42. *Note* the ongoing discussion on the question of a suitable permanent follow-up mechanism for the realization of the right to development and the various views expressed thereon in United Nations forums;

43. *Affirm* the importance of the human rights treaty system:

In providing a legal framework within which States parties may address the positive and negative impact of globalization;

In creating processes which enable the harmonization of law and policy needed to achieve progressive realization of economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development, and which contribute to maximizing the benefits of globalization for all;

In clarifying the content of specific rights and in promoting public awareness of the provisions and principles concerning economic, social and cultural rights;

44. *Recognize* the important link between the international economic, commercial and financial spheres and the realization of the right to development; in this regard the need for broadening the base of decision-making at the international level on issues of concern to development and to fill organizational gaps was highlighted, as was the strengthening of the United Nations system and the other multilateral institutions; the need to broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries and economies in transition in international economic decision-making and norm setting was also stressed;

45. *Also recognize* that good governance and the rule of law at the national level assist all States in the promotion and protection of human rights, including the right to development, and agree on the value of ongoing efforts by States to identify and strengthen good governance practices, including transparent, democratic, accountable and participatory government, that are responsive and appropriate to their needs and aspirations, including in the context of agreed partnership approaches to development, capacity-building and technical assistance;

46. *Further recognize* the important role and the rights of women and the application of a gender perspective as a cross-cutting issue in the process of realizing the right to development and notes in particular the positive relationship between women's education and their equal participation in the civil, political, economic, social and cultural activities of the community, and the promotion of the right to development;

47. *Invite* all States to consider signing and ratifying, and the States parties to implement, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;

48. *Call upon* States further to secure progressively, through national development policies and with international assistance and cooperation, the full realization of economic, social and cultural rights, and the right to development, paying particular attention to the individuals, most often women and children, especially girls, and communities living in extreme poverty and therefore most vulnerable and disadvantaged, as well as the issue of human trafficking;

Participants in the Islamabad workshop thus:

49. *Recognize* the close relationship between and the mutually supporting nature of the four pillars of the Framework for Cooperation in the Asian and Pacific region and call on States of the region to take concrete steps, as appropriate, at the national level in connection with the implementation of the Tehran Framework;

50. While noting that the Tehran Framework for Regional Technical Cooperation is mainly a governmental process, *acknowledge* the importance of participation by national institutions, non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations, and the private sector; the initiative of holding a consultation of non-governmental actors prior to the official opening of the workshop; and their reports to the plenary; and *call on* OHCHR to establish partnerships with these actors in the implementation of the Tehran Framework;

51. *Note* that the implementation of the activities envisaged under the Tehran Framework for Regional Technical Cooperation, including the programme of action for 2002-2004 adopted in Beirut, is the responsibility of all States in the region and *agree* to strengthen joint efforts, including through cooperation with OHCHR and the various United Nations Country Teams, within the Asian and Pacific region towards the implementation of these conclusions;

52. *Express their appreciation* for the efforts made by OHCHR to implement the 2002-2004 programme of action for the Asia-Pacific Framework for Regional Cooperation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and encourage OHCHR to continue implementing the activities under the Framework;

53. *Call on* United Nations agencies, global and regional financial institutions and bilateral donor agencies to examine how they could support the implementation of the activities, including in poverty reduction strategies under this Framework, including through financial and technical support and the provision of human resources;

54. *Welcome* the role of OHCHR Regional Representatives in advising Governments of the Asian and Pacific region, at their request, on the implementation of their activities under the Framework;

55. *Request* OHCHR to submit, for the consideration of the next Workshop, a paper containing concrete ideas in connection with further strengthening regional and subregional endeavours;

56. *Agree* to disseminate widely the results of the present Workshop, as appropriate, among relevant government ministries and institutions, national human rights institutions, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and other partners at the national, subregional and regional levels;

57. *Call upon* OHCHR to report at the next Workshop on progress achieved in the implementation of the Framework for Regional Technical Cooperation;

58. *Welcoming* contributions already made to OHCHR by States of the Asian and Pacific region, invite them to increase their contributions, and other States of the region that have not yet done so to consider contributing for the first time, particularly with respect to activities in the area of technical cooperation and the strengthening of national capacities and infrastructures in the field of human rights as outlined in the 2003 Annual Appeal;

59. *Invite* all States of the Asian and Pacific region to host intersessional subregional workshops within the Framework for Regional Technical Cooperation and welcome the offer made by the Government of Qatar to host the forthcoming subregional workshop on human rights education in schools, for the six members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and in cooperation with GCC;

60. *Welcome* the offer of the Government of the Republic of Palau to host an annual or an intersessional workshop within the Framework for Regional Technical Cooperation.

Annex II

2002-2004 PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE ASIA-PACIFIC FRAMEWORK FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION FOR THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The main responsibility for implementation of this Programme of Action lies with all States in the region. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights will facilitate the implementation of the activities in close cooperation with regional, subregional and national partners.

1. National human rights plans of action and national capacity-building

Main objectives: to gather lessons learned and best practices in the region and to develop tools for the development of national plans of action

Finalize the handbook, containing “possible elements to facilitate the development of national plans of action for the promotion and protection of human rights that could be considered by countries which wish to include a national plan of action as part of their approach to human rights observance”, to States, national institutions and NGOs in the Asian and Pacific region. Translate the handbook into relevant languages and disseminate it to States, national institutions and NGOs in the region;

Make available, upon request, technical cooperation and advisory services to develop national human rights capacity, especially to promote ratification of human rights instruments and to support States parties in fulfilling their reporting obligations;

Make available, upon request, technical cooperation and advisory services to support the development, implementation, evaluation and monitoring of national human rights plans of action, including with the aim of integrating economic, social and cultural rights and action plans to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;

In collaboration with relevant Governments, evaluate the experiences of all countries in the Asian and Pacific region which have completed national plans of action in order to gather lessons learned and best practices.

2. Human rights education

Main objective: to strengthen national capacities for human rights education with a focus on the incorporation of human rights education within the school system

In the framework of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004), prepare, publish and disseminate a compilation of initiatives undertaken in the Asian and Pacific region in the area of human rights education, training and public information;

Conduct and publish a study on popular and non-formal human rights education methodologies used in the region, paying particular attention to those which are directed to vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalized groups;

Compile existing materials (textbooks, curricula, legislation, etc.) for human rights education in schools, consistent with the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, for dissemination;

Organize, in partnership with regional/subregional partners, a series of workshops in various subregions aiming at the inclusion of human rights education in the school system and including such elements as training of teachers and the development of curricula and materials. The workshops will build on the methodology developed at the Subregional Training Workshop on Human Rights Education in North-East Asia held in Seoul in December 1999. The workshops will target education policy makers, officers responsible for teacher-training institutions, officers responsible for education faculties of universities, developers of teaching materials and curricula, parents' associations, NGOs active in the area of human rights education in schools and other relevant national organizations and institutions;

Link national efforts to follow up the subregional workshops into a regional network, including through the use of the Internet, to promote information sharing;

Support research on various aspects of human rights education in schools, such as comparative studies and development of guidelines concerning education policies, school and teacher-training curricula, extracurricular activities, innovative classroom/school management experiences, and the evaluation of the impact of human rights education programmes;

Request the United Nations to develop appropriate video materials for the promotion of human rights in schools;

Make available, upon request, advisory services to develop and implement further activities to promote effective human rights education in schools, underlining the benefits of human and cultural diversity and religious tolerance and combating discrimination.

3. National human rights institutions

Main objective: to support regional initiatives to strengthen the role of national institutions and their regional association in the Asian and Pacific region

Support the annual meetings of the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Institutions with a view to sharing best practices, and request the Forum to report to the annual regional workshop;

In cooperation with States, continue to make available, upon request, technical cooperation and advisory services to support the establishment and strengthening of national institutions;

Support follow-up activities relating to the implementation of the Programme of Action of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance;

Provide support to the workshop on media, racism and education to be organized, in cooperation with the Asia-Pacific Forum, in Australia in June 2002, with special emphasis on the need to encourage media to avoid, indirectly or directly, fostering racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, as proposed in the Programme of Action of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance;

In cooperation with national human rights institutions, continue to develop and implement training programmes, including in the area of investigation techniques;

Organize a series of regional and national initiatives aiming at strengthening national institutions' work at the national level concerning economic, social and cultural rights, building on the methodology developed at the workshops held in Manila and Hong Kong;

Assist national institutions to follow up the conclusions of the Regional Workshop on the Role of National Human Rights Institutions in Advancing the International Human Rights of Women, held in Fiji in May 2000, particularly as concerns the need to provide effective training courses that will ensure satisfactory awareness of the rights and special needs of women;

In collaboration with UNAIDS and in consultation with national human rights institutions, develop guidelines to assist national human rights institutions in addressing HIV/AIDS-related discrimination and stigma, and in promoting and protecting human rights in the context of HIV/AIDS;

Organize a workshop to consider ways and means by which national institutions can contribute to preventing trafficking and protecting the rights of trafficked persons, and develop a pilot project between at least two national institutions of the region to promote cross-border cooperation in this area.

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

Main objective: to strengthen national capacities to develop the justiciability of economic, social and cultural rights

Organize, in partnership with regional/subregional partners, a series of workshops in various subregions for judges and lawyers on the justiciability of economic, social and cultural rights, building on the methodology developed at the Workshop for Judges on the Justiciability of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in South Asia, held in New Delhi in November 2001;

Link judges and lawyers participating in these workshops into a regional network, including through the use of the Internet, to follow up on the subregional workshops and to promote information sharing;

Establish a database on jurisprudence on economic, social and cultural rights, building on the network facilities and national task forces established at the workshops;

Organize a workshop involving national planning authorities, relevant ministries, national institutions and representatives of civil society at which information on national experiences can be exchanged, with a view to compiling good practices with regard to responses to globalization;

Organize, in cooperation with a host State and regional partners, a regional meeting to undertake a dialogue on the causes and consequences of migration that would focus not only on law enforcement and border control, but also on the promotion and protection of the human rights of migrants and on the relationship between migration and development;

Make available, upon request, technical cooperation and advisory services to assist in integrating human rights in national poverty reduction strategies.
