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

**Albania*, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belarus*, Bosnia and Herzegovina*,
Cameroon, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus*, Democratic Republic of the Congo,
Denmark*, Dominican Republic*, Ecuador*, Finland*, Georgia*, Germany,
Greece*, Guatemala, Iceland*, India, Indonesia*, Ireland, Israel*, Italy*, Japan,
Kazakhstan*, Latvia*, Madagascar*, Malta*, Mauritius*, Mexico, Morocco*,
Nepal*, New Zealand*, Nigeria*, Norway*, Philippines*, Poland, Republic of
Korea, Republic of Moldova*, Romania*, Senegal, Slovakia*, Slovenia*, Spain*,
Sri Lanka, Switzerland*, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*,
Tunisia*, Turkey*, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland,
United States of America and Venezuela: draft resolution**

2003/... National institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights

The Commission on Human Rights,

Recalling the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, notably resolution 48/134 of 20 December 1993, and its own resolutions concerning national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights,

* In accordance with rule 69, paragraph 3, of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

Welcoming the rapidly growing interest worldwide in the creation and strengthening of independent, pluralistic national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights,

Convinced of the important role such national institutions play in promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms and in developing and enhancing public awareness of those rights and freedoms,

Recognizing that it is the prerogative of each State to choose, for the establishment of a national institution, the legal framework that is best suited to its particular needs and circumstances to ensure that human rights are promoted and protected at the national level in accordance with international human rights standards,

Recalling the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted in June 1993 by the World Conference on Human Rights (A/CONF.157/23), in which was reaffirmed the important and constructive role played by national human rights institutions and their role in remedying human rights violations and in the dissemination of human rights information and education concerning human rights,

Recalling the Programme of Action (see A/CONF.157/NI/6) adopted by national institutions meeting in Vienna from 14 to 16 June 1993 during the World Conference on Human Rights, in which it was recommended that United Nations activities and programmes should be reinforced to meet the requests for assistance from States wishing to establish or strengthen their national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights,

Welcoming the strengthening of international cooperation among national human rights institutions, including through the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions,

Welcoming also the strengthening in all regions of regional cooperation among national human rights institutions and between national human rights institutions and other regional human rights forums,

Noting with appreciation the existence of the regional human rights networks in Europe and Africa, the continuing work of the Network of National Human Rights Institutions in the Americas and the work of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions, including the outcomes of their Seventh Annual Meeting held in New Delhi in November 2002,

Noting the initiative of the Council of the League of Arab States, as referred to in its resolutions 6089 of 12 March 2001, 6243 of 5 September 2002 and 6032 of 24 March 2003, to review and update the Arab Charter for Human Rights of 1994 and encourage the efforts of Arab non-governmental organizations to support this initiative,

Noting the valuable role played and contributions made by national institutions in United Nations meetings dealing with human rights and the importance of their continued appropriate participation,

1. *Reaffirms* the importance of the development of effective, independent, pluralistic national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights in conformity with the Principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (Paris Principles), annexed to General Assembly resolution 48/134 of 20 December 1993;

2. *Reiterates*, on the tenth anniversary of their recognition by the General Assembly, the continued importance of the Paris Principles, recognizes the value of further strengthening their application and encourages States, national institutions and other interested parties to consider ways to achieve this;

3. *Encourages* States to establish or, where they already exist, to strengthen such institutions, as outlined in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action;

4. *Recognizes* that national institutions have a potentially crucial role to play in promoting and ensuring the indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights and calls upon all States to ensure that all human rights are appropriately reflected in the mandate of their national human rights institutions when established;

5. *Welcomes* the decisions of a growing number of States to establish, or to consider establishing, such institutions, including the trend towards their establishment in developed countries;

6. *Takes note with satisfaction* of the efforts of those States that have provided their national institutions with more autonomy and independence, including through giving them an investigative role or enhancing such a role, and encourages other Governments to consider taking similar steps;

7. *Recognizes* the important and constructive role that individuals, groups and organs of society can play for the better promotion and protection of human rights and encourages efforts by national institutions to establish partnerships and increase cooperation with civil society;

8. *Welcomes* the practice of national institutions which conform with the Paris Principles of participating in an appropriate manner in their own right in meetings of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies;

9. *Also welcomes* the continuation of the practice of national institutions convening regional meetings in some regions and its initiation in others, and encourages national institutions, in cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, to organize similar events with Governments and non-governmental organizations in their own regions;

10. *Affirms* the important role of national human rights institutions, in cooperation with other mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights, in combating racial and related forms of discrimination and in the protection and promotion of the human rights of women and the rights of particularly vulnerable groups, including children and people with disabilities, and in this context welcomes:

(a) The active participation of national institutions in the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and the Special Session of the General Assembly on Children;

(b) The involvement of national institutions in the study on human rights and disability commissioned by the High Commissioner, and encourages them to contribute to the work of the Ad Hoc Committee established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 56/168 of 19 December 2001;

11. *Recognizes* the important and constructive role that national institutions can play in human rights education, including by the publication and dissemination of human rights material and other public information activities during the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, 1995-2004, and calls upon all existing national institutions to implement human rights education training programmes across all relevant sectors of society;

12. *Commends* the High Commissioner for the priority accorded to the establishment and strengthening of national human rights institutions, including through technical cooperation, and calls upon his Office to continue to strengthen its coordinating role in this field and to allocate the resources necessary for this work from both core and extrabudgetary sources;

13. *Welcomes* in this context the establishment of a national institutions web site (www.nhri.net) as an important vehicle for the delivery of information to national institutions and their partners and for sharing best practice, and further notes with satisfaction the intention of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to publish a compendium of national legislation relevant to national institutions;

14. *Expresses its appreciation* to those Governments that have contributed additional resources for the purpose of the establishment and strengthening of national human rights institutions;

15. *Welcomes* the important role of the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions, in close cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner, in assessing conformity with the Paris Principles and in assisting Governments and national institutions, when requested, to follow up on relevant resolutions and recommendations concerning the strengthening of national institutions;

16. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide, from within existing resources, the necessary assistance for holding meetings of the International Coordinating Committee during the sessions of the Commission, under the auspices of, and in cooperation with, the Office of the High Commissioner;

17. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide, from within existing resources and from the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights, the necessary assistance for international and regional meetings of national institutions;

18. *Welcomes* the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.4/2003/110) and requests him to report to the Commission at its sixtieth session on the implementation of the present resolution;

19. *Decides* to continue its consideration of this question at its sixtieth session.

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