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## Human Rights Council

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Agenda item 2

### Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General

## National institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights

### Report of the Secretary-General\* \*\*

#### *Summary*

The present report is submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council decision 2/102, in which the Council requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to continue with the fulfilment of her activities, in accordance with all previous decisions adopted by the Commission on Human Rights and to update the relevant reports and studies.

The report, which covers the period from January to December 2009, contains information on the activities undertaken by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to establish and strengthen national human rights institutions (NHRIs), measures taken by Governments and NHRIs in this regard, and cooperation between NHRIs and international human rights mechanisms.

Specifically, the report highlights the main achievements, challenges and priorities at the national level regarding the establishment and strengthening of NHRIs.<sup>1</sup> The activities of NHRIs on thematic issues, such as peace and justice, human rights defenders, migration, business and human rights, rights of persons with disabilities and climate change, are also discussed.<sup>2</sup>

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\* Late submission.

\*\* As the present report greatly exceeds word limitations currently allowed under relevant General Assembly resolutions, the annexes are reproduced in the language of submission only.

<sup>1</sup> Additional information on initiatives and assistance provided to NHRIs may be found in the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly (A/64/320).

<sup>2</sup> Relevant documents are posted on [www.nhri.net](http://www.nhri.net).

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## **I. Introduction**

1. The present report outlines progress achieved since the last report of the Secretary-General submitted to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/10/54).

## **II. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and national human rights institutions**

2. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) accords priority to the establishment and strengthening of national human rights institutions (NHRIs) with due regard for the Principles Relating to the Status of National Institutions (the Paris Principles) adopted by the General Assembly (resolution 48/134, annex). OHCHR is also engaged in improving United Nations system-wide coordination on NHRIs, and supports their increased participation in the United Nations and regional human rights mechanisms. OHCHR encourages the sharing of good practices among NHRIs, supports the strengthening of their regional networks, and facilitates their access to United Nations country teams and other relevant partners.

3. During the reporting period, OHCHR continued to support the building of strong NHRIs and to increase the effectiveness of their regional coordinating bodies. Since 2008, the NHRI fellowship programme has hosted staff from A-status NHRIs from States such as Australia, El Salvador, the Republic of Korea and Togo. This programme has enabled the fellows to gain knowledge of and experience with the United Nations human rights system. It has also been beneficial for OHCHR, in terms of both substantive expertise and the consolidation of contacts with staff from national institutions. OHCHR has issued a new call for candidates for 2010. Through this programme, up to four staff members from NHRIs will be selected to work in the National Institutions and Regional Mechanisms Section of OHCHR for a period up to 12 months.

4. NHRIs compliant with the Paris Principles are essential to national human rights protection systems and are important counterparts for OHCHR. They can play a crucial role in promoting and monitoring the effective implementation of international human rights standards at the national level, a role which is increasingly recognized by the international community. This role was highlighted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights at the opening of the Ninth International Ombudsman Institute World Conference in Stockholm in June 2009. The High Commissioner noted that NHRIs are central elements of a strong national human rights protection framework that also requires an independent judiciary, effective parliamentary oversight mechanisms, fair administration of justice, a dynamic civil society and free and responsible media.

5. Since 2003, OHCHR has maintained the National Human Rights Institutions Forum website ([www.nhri.net](http://www.nhri.net)). In June 2009, following cooperation with the Danish NHRI, OHCHR renewed a grant agreement with the Indian NHRI, responsible for the management of the website in cooperation with OHCHR since 2008. Efforts are being carried out in order to restyle and make it a more user-friendly and accessible tool. The website is linked to the web pages of OHCHR and NHRIs and includes information on the United Nations human rights system, on country and thematic issues and on the activities of the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (International Coordinating Committee).

6. In July 2009, OHCHR released an outcome of the Survey on National Human Rights Institutions, which includes a report on the findings of a questionnaire launched with the aim of taking stock of the current state of such institutions. The analysis of responses

identified challenges and weaknesses experienced by NHRIs, a lack of adequate funding and a need for technical assistance related to organizational and resource management, knowledge of the international human rights system, relationships with public bodies and civil society, and the follow-up of NHRI recommendations by their respective Governments. The Survey provides a diagnostic of gaps and areas of assistance for action by OHCHR, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), donors and the regional coordinating bodies of NHRIs (for a summary of the recommendations, see annex IV).

## **A. Advisory services provided by the Office**

7. OHCHR activities to strengthen the role of NHRIs at the country, regional and international level are carried out mainly through the National Institutions and Regional Mechanisms Section, which works in consultation with other parts of OHCHR, including field presences. OHCHR has continued to provide advice and assistance in the establishment and strengthening of institutions through its country and regional offices, human rights advisers and human rights components of United Nations peace missions, as well as through collaboration with other United Nations partners (including UNDP) and the regional coordinating bodies of NHRIs.

8. Technical cooperation programmes and agreements with a view to strengthening the capacity of NHRIs were conducted by OHCHR through its regional offices for Central Africa, Central Asia, East Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, Southern Africa, South-East Asia, the Pacific and West Africa as well as through country offices, i.e. those of Nepal and Uganda. Cooperation has included training on monitoring, investigation and human rights reporting.

9. Tailored advice is provided on constitutional or legislative frameworks regarding the establishment of NHRIs, as well as on their nature, functions, powers and responsibilities. Comparative analysis, technical cooperation needs assessments, project formulation and evaluation missions are also undertaken to establish and strengthen the institutions' compliance with the Paris Principles.

10. During the reporting period, OHCHR provided advice to Afghanistan, Bahrain, Belize, Brazil, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, the Central African Republic, Chile, the Comoros, the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Finland, Georgia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Indonesia, Iraq, Italy, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Lesotho, Liberia, Lithuania, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mongolia, Nauru, Nepal, the Netherlands, the Niger, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Pakistan, the Philippines, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Rwanda, Samoa, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sudan (Southern Sudan), Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

### **1. The Americas and the Caribbean**

11. In 2008, a draft legislation to establish a national ombudsman office was received from the Government of Haiti. OHCHR and the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti provided comments on this draft. OHCHR has offered technical assistance to the Protectrice du Citoyen, who was appointed on 6 October 2009.

12. OHCHR has provided Belize and Chile with technical support in establishing NHRIs in accordance with the Paris Principles, following the recommendations formulated for both countries through the universal periodic review in May 2009.

13. The National Institutions and Regional Mechanisms Section and the OHCHR Regional Office for South America provided legal advice on the law establishing an NHRI

in Chile. The law was approved by the Chamber of Deputies on 29 July 2009. The President of Chile introduced some amendments to the law and OHCHR provided comments to ensure compliance with the Paris Principles. The law was promulgated on 24 November 2009 and OHCHR has provided technical assistance to establish the institution.

14. OHCHR provided support to the NHRIs of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Peru to participate in the fourteenth Congress and Annual Assembly of the Ibero-American Federation of the Ombudsman and the eighth General Assembly of the Network of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights of the Americas in Madrid in October 2009. The meeting was attended by representatives from A-status NHRIs of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela.

## 2. Africa

15. OHCHR, in cooperation with the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB), organized a round table, held on 29 and 30 January 2009, to encourage parliamentarians to adopt a draft law to establish an NHRI. Participants included 60 parliamentarians, Government representatives and representatives of civil society, as well as the NHRIs of Kenya, Rwanda, Senegal, Togo and Uganda. BINUB and OHCHR have commented on the draft law, addressing shortcomings such as the lack of guarantee for independence.

16. On 3 February 2009, following legal advice provided by OHCHR and the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) on the strengthening of the human rights institution, the Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly passed the Southern Sudan Human Rights Commission Act. Under this Act, the Commission is entrusted with a monitoring, investigation, advisory and promotional mandate.

17. OHCHR provides advice to NHRIs with regard to the International Coordinating Committee accreditation process. In February and April 2009, letters were sent to the NHRIs of Cape Verde, Chad, the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Mali, Mauritania, Sierra Leone, Sudan (Southern Sudan) and Tunisia, inviting them to submit their application to the Subcommittee on Accreditation of the International Coordinating Committee. Chad, Mauritania and Tunisia replied positively and were reviewed at the November 2009 session of the Subcommittee.

18. In March 2009, OHCHR and the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone supported the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone in developing a capacity-development project proposal for fund-raising with a view to implementing the Commission's three-year action plan.

19. The establishment of an NHRI in the Comoros was discussed in the context of the training on a human rights-based approach that the OHCHR Regional Office for Southern Africa conducted from 23 to 25 March 2009. OHCHR provided comments on the draft law on the establishment of an NHRI and, together with UNDP, is following discussions on the adoption of this legislation.

20. On 21 April 2009, the National Assembly of Sudan passed legislation to establish an NHRI. OHCHR provided advice and assistance together with UNMIS on the draft law and during the appointment process.

21. From 21 to 23 April 2009, OHCHR conducted a joint evaluation mission with the Association francophone des commissions nationales des droits de l'homme to assist the Government of Mali in implementing the universal periodic review recommendation regarding strengthening its NHRI. OHCHR supported the organization of a workshop in

Bamako from 16 to 17 October 2009 to brief parliamentarians on how to mainstream the Paris Principles in the legislative process. The Parliament passed the law in November 2009.

22. Discussions on establishing an NHRI in Guinea were held with the authorities and civil society in Conakry in April 2009. OHCHR provided comparative information.

23. In the United Republic of Tanzania, OHCHR conducted a training session from 22 to 25 June 2009 on human rights standards and human rights monitoring for 29 Commission officers.

24. In Liberia, OHCHR and the United Nations Mission in Liberia continued to encourage the Government to establish an NHRI and provided advice on the enabling legislation that was enacted on 11 March 2005. On 17 August 2009 the commissioners were appointed by the President.

25. In Nigeria, OHCHR continued to provide support to the NHRI and encouraged the Government to revise the law to make it compliant with the Paris Principles.

26. In Uganda, OHCHR conducted training for NHRIs on human rights monitoring and investigations. OHCHR and the NHRI have conducted joint research on, inter alia, HIV/AIDS-related activities and discrimination, and provided support to the Government with regard to its reporting obligations under international human rights instruments.

27. Following the establishment of an NHRI in Djibouti in 2008, the OHCHR Regional Office for East Africa (EARO) and the NHRI conducted a training workshop on reporting to the United Nations human rights mechanisms, focusing on the universal periodic review and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. A two-year technical cooperation programme was developed by EARO, UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), together with the Government and the NHRI, in order to enhance the human rights-related knowledge of national stakeholders and strengthen their capacity in the area of treaty body and universal periodic review reporting.

28. In Ethiopia, training was provided to staff of the NHRI and a website was developed. EARO assisted the institute in carrying out human rights awareness-raising activities and to enhance the Government's capacity in the area of treaty body reporting.

### **3. Asia and the Pacific**

29. In Pakistan, OHCHR has followed up on its efforts undertaken together with the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions and UNDP to establish NHRIs in line with the Paris Principles. On 18 and 19 December 2008, representatives from the Asia-Pacific Forum and OHCHR visited Pakistan to participate in consultations with civil society and parliamentarians on draft legislation to establish an institution. Following those consultations, OHCHR provided comments on the draft legislation.

30. From 12 to 20 January 2009, OHCHR and UNDP undertook a midterm evaluation of the capacity-building project of the Office of the Provedor for Human Rights and Justice of Timor-Leste (2007–2009). The evaluation concluded that the institution had made important progress, and that the project had been crucial in providing support during its inception phase. The recommendations of the evaluation have been reflected in the project. In October 2009, the Office of the Provedor, OHCHR and UNDP started to develop a new technical assistance project.

31. In February 2009, OHCHR signed guidelines for cooperation with the NHRI of Nepal. Support has been provided to the institution and other stakeholders to establish

credible transitional justice mechanisms. In July 2009, OHCHR and the institution developed a project on activities on the rights of detainees.

32. In February 2009, OHCHR, with the Indonesian NHRI (Komnas HAM) and the National Commission on Violence against Women (Komnas Perempuan), organized a national dialogue on the implementation of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, aimed at formulating a strategy for monitoring detention centres in Indonesia.

33. In March 2009, following a capacity needs assessment of the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM), OHCHR, UNDP and the Asia-Pacific Forum issued a report on capacity needs, including a strategy and recommendations. The report was endorsed by SUHAKAM.

34. From 21 to 26 September 2009, OHCHR and the Asia-Pacific Forum provided advice to the authorities in Papua New Guinea in the drafting of the law for the establishment of an NHRI.

35. In October 2009, OHCHR, UNDP, the Asia-Pacific Forum and SUHAKAM assisted the NHRI of Maldives to undertake a capacity needs assessment.

36. From 20 to 30 November 2009, OHCHR, the Asia-Pacific Forum and the Australian Human Rights Commission conducted a mission to Nauru with a view to consulting the Government on options regarding the establishment of an NHRI in compliance with the Paris Principles.

37. On 1 and 2 December 2009, in Jakarta, OHCHR and UNFPA supported KOMNAS Perempuan in convening a consultation with other specialized national commissions in the region, along with several NHRIs, in order to explore ways of collaboration regarding the promotion and protection of women's rights.

#### **4. Europe**

38. In January 2009, OHCHR provided technical advice on amendments to the law relating to the Office of the Public Defender of Georgia, to increase its compliance with the Paris Principles and the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture requirements in assuming the functions of a national preventive mechanism.

39. In April 2009, OHCHR provided legal advice on strengthening the enabling law of the Centre for Human Rights of Moldova and ensuring an assessment of the compliance of the Commission with the Paris Principles through the International Coordinating Committee accreditation process.

40. Following the evaluation of the Kyrgyz NHRI in 2008, OHCHR held a workshop from 24 to 26 July 2009 on the national preventative mechanism under the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture. It helped the institution to develop its strategic planning and provided a consultant to support the institution during its restructuring phase. From 10 to 14 November 2009, the Action 2 Global Programme and UNDP organized a workshop for the NHRI on complaints procedures. The United Nations and the Ombudsman have developed a technical cooperation project (2009–2011) to strengthen the capacity of the institution.

41. In Tajikistan, OHCHR provided support to the Ombudsman in setting up the institution, including by developing its strategic plan and internal regulations.

42. OHCHR is following the efforts under way in European countries, including Finland, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey, to establish NHRIs in line with the Paris Principles.

43. OHCHR held a meeting with the Ombudsperson of Kosovo to provide advice on staff capacity-building and the redrafting of its enabling legislation as well as to share the requirements for International Coordinating Committee accreditation.

## **5. Middle East and North Africa**

44. In December 2008, the Parliament of Iraq approved a law establishing the High Commission for Human Rights of Iraq. This was the outcome of a process started in 2006. OHCHR, in cooperation with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq, has supported efforts to set up the institution, including through the selection process of commissioners.

## **B. Support of the Office for regional initiatives**

### **1. The Americas and the Caribbean**

45. In October 2008, the NHRI of Venezuela was elected as the new secretariat of the Network of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights of the Americas. OHCHR has been working closely with the secretariat with a view to strengthening its capacity and the role it plays within the region and in relation to the international human rights system.

46. OHCHR, together with the secretariat of the Network of Rights and Democracy organized a workshop for the NHRIs of the Americas on the universal periodic review and the international human rights system, held on 26 and 27 March 2009. The workshop was attended by NHRI representatives from Canada, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua and Peru. It was aimed at sharing best practices of NHRI interaction with the international human rights system and was an opportunity for the institutions to learn more about their involvement in the universal periodic review process and treaty bodies, and their collaboration with special procedures mandate holders.

47. OHCHR provided technical and financial support to the eighth General Assembly of the Network of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights of the Americas that took place in Madrid on 29 October 2009. The meeting brought together the presidents of 12 NHRIs. The work programme of the Network for 2008–2010, which focuses on economic, social and cultural rights; women's rights; and displaced persons, was discussed. Cooperation with OHCHR was also highlighted.

### **2. Africa**

48. The OHCHR Regional Office for West Africa attended a workshop for Central and Western Africa, held in Lomé on 19 and 20 January 2009. The workshop highlighted legal and institutional weaknesses common to the majority of NHRIs from the two subregions and discussed ways to strengthen those institutions to comply with the Paris Principles, including through OHCHR assistance.

49. The OHCHR Regional Office for West Africa is engaged in a process of developing the subregional network of NHRIs. Although formally created in 2006 in Banjul, the Gambia, the network is not yet operational. From 12 to 14 February 2009, OHCHR participated in a meeting organized by the Economic Community of West African States in Cotonou, Benin, and assisted in drafting the statute of the network. The statute was adopted in Banjul in October 2009, which resulted in the establishment of the network and the designation of its governing bodies.

50. In September 2009, OHCHR participated in a training organized by the Raoul Wallenberg Institute in Nairobi for new human rights commissioners in East Africa, including those from Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and the United Republic of

Tanzania. The training focused on the core functions and mandate of a Paris Principle-compliant NHRI and the international human rights system.

51. The seventh Conference of African National Human Rights Institutions on “Peace and Justice: the Role of NHRIs” was held in Rabat from 3 to 5 November 2009. This Conference was organized by OHCHR, the Advisory Council on Human Rights of Morocco, the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions and the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie. The Conference adopted the Rabat Declaration, in which participants recognized the role of NHRIs in facilitating justice and peace and resolved to, among other things: (a) promote the interdependency of peace and justice; (b) raise awareness about international instruments on transitional justice; (c) facilitate national consultations for the establishment of transitional justice mechanisms; (d) ensure that such mechanisms are in compliance with international human rights standards and practices; (e) gather information on human rights abuses; and (f) promote the provision of assistance to victims and witnesses (see annex I). NHRIs also received training on investigation techniques, facilitated by OHCHR and the Ombudsman of Ontario.

52. The meetings of the General Assembly and the Steering Committee of the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions were also held at the Conference in Rabat. The Moroccan NHRI was elected as the new Chairperson for the Network and the South African NHRI as the Vice-Chairperson. OHCHR will continue to provide technical and financial support to the secretariat of the Network. The Conference will be held in South Africa in 2011.

53. From 9 to 12 November 2009, OHCHR organized a conference in Bamako, Mali, on the preparation of reports to the treaty bodies and the role of NHRIs regarding migration in West Africa. A total of 50 representatives from Governments, NHRIs and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) attended the conference. It focused on following up on the commitments of the Santa Cruz Declaration,<sup>3</sup> and on adopting a road map to promote and protect the rights of migrants. On 13 November, NHRIs and representatives of civil society discussed the drafting of rules and procedures and the workplan for 2010–2012 of the West African Network of National Human Rights Institutions.

### 3. Asia and the Pacific

54. On 2 and 3 March 2009, OHCHR participated in a consultation on the regional initiative in support of the capacity development of NHRIs in Asia and the Pacific, organized by the UNDP Regional Centre in Bangkok and the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions. The consultation discussed lessons learned from the pilot capacity needs assessment of the NHRI of Malaysia and explored capacity-development approaches employed to support other NHRIs. Following the second capacity needs assessment with the NHRI of Maldives, in December 2009, the Asia-Pacific Forum, OHCHR and UNDP held a consultation to discuss lessons learned and best practice of the capacity assessments carried out so far and further develop a methodology to conduct capacity needs assessments of NHRIs.

55. OHCHR, in partnership with the Asia-Pacific Forum and with the support of the Government of Samoa and the Pacific Islands Forum, organized a workshop on the “Establishment of national human rights mechanisms in the Pacific” (Apia, Samoa, 27–29 April 2009) aimed at enhancing the capacity of Pacific States to establish national human rights mechanisms in line with the Paris Principles. Representatives from the Marshall

<sup>3</sup> Adopted during the Eighth International Conference of National Human Rights Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights of the Americas, held in Santa Cruz, Plurinational State of Bolivia, 24–26 October 2006.

Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu attended the workshop and adopted the Samoa Declaration, in which they recognized the importance of taking necessary measures to establish NHRIs compliant with the Paris Principles. “Making it happen”, a document incorporating practical steps to establish an NHRI tailored to the needs of the Pacific Island States, was elaborated.

56. The Fourteenth Annual Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Forum was held in Amman from 3 to 6 August 2009, hosted by the National Centre for Human Rights of Jordan with technical and financial co-sponsorship from OHCHR. The key themes of the meeting were the impact of corruption on the realization of human rights as well as religious beliefs. The Forum’s Councillors also discussed suspending the Forum accreditation process and using the International Coordinating Committee decisions as evidence of compliance with the Paris Principles for the purpose of membership in the Asia-Pacific Forum.

#### **4. Europe**

57. OHCHR participated in the 2nd meeting between the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights and the European Group of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, in Vienna, on 29 June 2009. The meeting focused on the Agency’s annual work programme, the European Group’s strategic plan for 2009–2010, follow-up on discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and homophobia, and on the Agency study on the capacity and powers of NHRIs in the European Union.

58. OHCHR participated in the meeting of the Coordinating Committee of the European Group, in Vienna, on 30 June 2009. The meeting focused on International Coordinating Committee developments, the follow-up to the Durban Review Conference, and NHRI engagement with the Agency for Fundamental Rights and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

59. OHCHR and the UNDP Bratislava Regional Centre organized a workshop in Geneva, held from 24 to 26 November 2009, on the role of NHRIs and cooperation with the United Nations human rights machinery, in order to strengthen the capacity of NHRIs from the Commonwealth of Independent States and Croatia to interact with the international human rights system, namely, in following up on the implementation of the universal periodic review, treaty bodies and special procedures’ recommendations. OHCHR and the UNDP Bratislava Regional Centre will continue their joint efforts to strengthen the capacity of NHRIs, through subregional workshops.

#### **5. Middle East and North Africa**

60. OHCHR assisted in the organization of the fifth Conference of the Arab National Human Rights Institutions, held in Amman on 8 and 9 March 2009, on “Elections in the Arab World and Their Impact on Human Rights”. A total of 80 participants, including representatives of the NHRIs of Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia, as well as of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. NGOs, international organizations and United Nations agencies attended and adopted a document to assist NHRIs in implementing a human rights-based approach during elections.

61. The United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region, in Qatar, held an inaugural workshop on the international human rights system in Doha on 27 and 28 May 2009. A total of 60 participants, including representatives of the NHRIs of Afghanistan, Algeria, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and the Occupied Palestinian Territory attended the workshop.

62. On 11 November 2009, Bahrain issued a Royal Order to establish an NHRI. OHCHR provided technical assistance to the Government in 2008, and is following

developments in this regard. OHCHR stands ready to assist in ensuring that the NHRI is established according to international standards. OHCHR is also following efforts regarding the establishment of NHRIs in Lebanon and Oman.

63. OHCHR is supporting the NHRIs of Morocco and Jordan in effectively delivering their mandates as regional chairs of the coordinating groups of Africa and Asia, respectively.

64. In Jordan, OHCHR is working with UNDP to develop joint technical cooperation activities to support the National Centre for Human Rights. Means of ensuring further cooperation with the recently established NHRIs in the Middle East, namely, those in Saudi Arabia and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, have been explored.

## **C. Support of the Office for international initiatives**

### **1. International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights**

#### *(a) Twenty-second session*

65. As secretariat of the International Coordinating Committee, OHCHR provided substantive support to and facilitated the twenty-second session of the Committee, held in Geneva from 23 to 27 March 2009. NHRIs from the four regions reported on their activities and key challenges encountered. A finance committee was established to oversee fundraising and financial management. Participants were informed that a bank account was opened and that Committee members had started to pay annual fees. The Committee representative in Geneva gave an update on NHRI participation in the Human Rights Council. The Working Group on the Durban Review Conference of the International Coordinating Committee informed the NHRIs on how to strategize to make an impact during the Conference.

66. OHCHR informed participants about its priorities, including: increasing the knowledge of NHRIs about new United Nations human rights treaties and optional protocols; encouraging institutions to play a greater role in encouraging the ratification of new treaties; strengthening treaty body procedures for interaction with NHRIs; compiling examples of good practices of interaction between NHRIs and United Nations human rights mechanisms; disseminating the concluding observations of treaty bodies and recommendations resulting from the universal periodic review process; publicizing the use of the International Coordinating Committee representative in Geneva; encouraging greater NHRI involvement in drafting the general comments of treaty bodies; and supporting the involvement of NHRI complaints-handling and the use of jurisprudence with respect to the treaty body system.

#### *(b) Bureau meeting*

67. OHCHR provided support to the International Coordinating Committee Bureau meeting held in Rabat on 1 and 2 November 2009. The Bureau discussed possible items for the next International Coordinating Committee Conference in March 2010, and prioritized the follow-up to the Durban Review Conference, the draft United Nations declaration on human rights education and training, NHRI engagement with international human rights mechanisms. Regarding the importance of NHRIs paying annual subscription fees to enable the operations of the International Coordinating Committee, it was agreed that NHRIs should be given the opportunity to pay their fees before the next Committee meeting. The possibility of having Arabic as a working language of the Committee was considered. The need to strengthen regional secretariats of NHRIs to promote interaction between regions

was also discussed. Participants underwent a strategic planning session and agreed to elaborate region-specific prioritized plans to be merged into one International Coordinating Committee Plan.

(c) *Side events*

68. In March 2009, the International Coordinating Committee established a nine-member working group on business and human rights, comprising two NHRIs per region and the International Coordinating Committee Chairperson's representative. The working group's mandate includes strategic planning, capacity-building, resource-sharing, agenda-setting and outreach.

69. In June 2009, some 30 representatives from NHRIs, NGOs and Governments met at a side event to the eleventh session of the Human Rights Council, organized by the International Coordinating Committee and OHCHR. The discussion was on the role of NHRIs in the area of business and human rights, focusing on the issues canvassed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises. The next international conference of the International Coordinating Committee, in Edinburgh, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, in 2010, will focus on human rights and business: the role of NHRIs. OHCHR is preparing it in cooperation with the Scottish Human Rights Commission.

70. In August 2009, the International Coordinating Committee and OHCHR organized a side event to the third session of the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee entitled "Draft Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training: Experiences and Contributions of NHRIs". The event provided a forum to discuss and share NHRI experiences and best practices in the field of human rights education and training.

**2. Subcommittee on Accreditation**

71. OHCHR provided secretarial support to the meetings of the Subcommittee on Accreditation, held in April and November 2009. A report of the Secretary-General (A/HRC/13/45) provides more information on those sessions.

**3. Ibero-American Federation of the Ombudsman**

72. OHCHR participated in the fourteenth Congress and Annual Assembly of the Ibero-American Federation of the Ombudsman held in Madrid on 28 and 29 October 2009. The meeting, hosted by the Spanish Defensor del Pueblo, was attended by about 150 NHRI representatives.

**4. Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions**

73. OHCHR participated in the Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions in Port of Spain on 23 and 24 November 2009. The work of the Forum focuses on the role of NHRIs in climate change and human rights. OHCHR, together with the NHRI of Canada, Chair of the Forum, will organize a workshop in 2010 to promote the establishment of Paris Principles-compliant NHRIs in the Caribbean countries.

### **III. Cooperation between United Nations human rights mechanisms and national human rights institutions**

#### **A. Human Rights Council**

74. OHCHR has been supporting NHRI engagement with the Human Rights Council, in accordance with Commission on Human Rights resolution 2005/74. Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 provides opportunities for institutions and their regional coordinating mechanisms to participate in the Human Rights Council and to engage with its various mechanisms. Institutions accredited with A status by the International Coordinating Committee, the Committee itself, and regional coordinating bodies speaking on behalf of A-status accredited institutions may participate and address the Council on all agenda items. They can also submit written statements, issue documentation (with a United Nations document symbol) and have separate seating arrangements at the Council sessions.

75. With regard to Council mechanisms, institutions have been given a clear and significant role by resolution 5/1, for example with regard to the universal periodic review, where their input is included in the stakeholders' report. OHCHR is assisting in the implementation of universal periodic review recommendations concerning the establishment or strengthening of NHRIs, including supporting institutions in applying for International Coordinating Committee accreditation.

76. In 2009, 48 countries were reviewed under the universal periodic review. Of these, 22 have an NHRI, 11 of which submitted information for the stakeholder's report. Among them, nine hold A status and two, B status. The Network of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights of the Americas submitted two contributions regarding the universal periodic review of Chile and Uruguay.

77. In 2009, an average of 20 NHRIs participated in each of the Human Rights Council sessions. They were very active before and during the sessions, presenting statements, submitting written documentation, participating in general debates and interacting with the Special Rapporteurs.

#### **B. Treaty bodies**

78. In 2009, 69 of the countries examined by treaty bodies had an NHRI. Of those institutions, 37 participated in the treaty body process, including by submitting alternative reports or attending the sessions. As an ongoing activity, OHCHR has systematically engaged with treaty bodies by providing expert analysis on NHRIs and their related activities. It also regularly updates a compilation of all treaty body concluding observations and recommendations that mention NHRIs ([www.nhri.net](http://www.nhri.net)), and sends the concluding observations to the institutions concerned.

79. On 26 October 2009, the International Coordinating Committee, with the International Disability Alliance and OHCHR, held a parallel event on cooperation between NHRIs and organizations of persons with disabilities in monitoring the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It was organized on the sidelines of the OHCHR consultations on national frameworks under the Convention.

80. The reports to the General Assembly of the Committee against Torture and the Committee on the Rights of the Child have recognized the important role of NHRIs in their processes. The Human Rights Committee has a dedicated focal point for such institutions. In 2009, the secretariat of the Committee against Torture launched a website for NHRIs, with information on how to interact with it.

### **C. Special procedures**

81. During the reporting period, a large number of NHRIs interacted with special procedures mandate holders and submitted to the Human Rights Council written contributions to complement the reports of special procedures mandate holders on country missions.

82. On 30 June 2009, as part of their 16th annual meeting, special procedures mandate holders, along with NHRIs and NGOs, held an interactive dialogue. The International Coordinating Committee representative in Geneva presented a statement on enhancing cooperation between NHRIs and such mandate holders, as part of the follow-up mechanisms developed by some special procedures mandate holders.

83. OHCHR regularly provides special procedures mandate holders with information concerning the work of NHRIs in the preparation of their country missions. Increasingly, such mandate holders look to institutions for assistance in ensuring that their recommendations are followed up at the national level. This is an important area of work for NHRIs and should be further encouraged.

### **D. Durban Review Conference**

84. OHCHR supported NHRIs in participating actively in the Durban Review Conference, including by providing financial assistance to A-status institutions (with priority accorded to those from the least developed countries), developing an NHRI webpage on the official conference website, and working with the International Coordinating Committee working group on the Durban process. Representatives of 39 NHRIs from all regions participated in the Conference. During a side event co-organized by OHCHR and the International Coordinating Committee to share best practices and key challenges, participants identified 14 priorities aimed at increasing their engagement against racism and related intolerance at the national, regional and international levels.

85. NHRIs also identified a number of relevant follow-up activities: the establishment of focal points within institutions; the establishment of a network among focal points; and the sharing of good practices on the website [www.nhri.net](http://www.nhri.net). OHCHR has allocated funding for specific follow-up activities, including supporting the South African Human Rights Commission.

## **IV. Cooperation among the Office of the High Commissioner, United Nations agencies and programmes, and international and regional organizations on national human rights institutions**

### **United Nations Development Programme**

86. OHCHR and UNDP have increased the degree of cooperation on establishing and strengthening NHRIs, leading to an increasing range of activities, including an e-discussion on the United Nations Human Rights Policy Network (HuriTalk), joint technical cooperation projects, joint advocacy for the establishment of NHRIs, following up and building on universal periodic review and Subcommittee recommendations regarding institutions, joint capacity needs assessment and evaluation missions. In 2009, this range of activities has continued (see references throughout the present report).

87. With UNDP and the NHRIs of Denmark, India, South Africa and Uganda, OHCHR developed a toolkit for United Nations country teams on how to support the establishment and consolidation of an NHRI. The toolkit was validated in Johannesburg in May 2009 by representatives of about 40 UNDP regional and country offices. It is expected that the toolkit will be officially launched by the High Commissioner and UNDP Administrator in 2010.

88. UNDP and OHCHR continued to cooperate on joint initiatives, such as supporting the capacity development of NHRIs in Asia and the Pacific, supporting the adoption of a document to assist institutions to implement a human rights-based approach to elections in the Arab region, and reinforcing the capacity of NHRIs from the Commonwealth of Independent States and Croatia to interact with the international human rights system.

### **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization**

89. OHCHR attended the meeting of the Steering Committee of the Permanent Forum of Arab-African Dialogue on Democracy and Human Rights in Paris on 25 and 26 May 2009. The meeting, organized by UNESCO and the NHRI of Egypt, was attended by 24 representatives of Governments, NHRIs, NGOs and regional and international organizations.

### **International Ombudsman Institute**

90. OHCHR attended the Ninth International Ombudsman Institute World Conference, held in Stockholm from 9 to 12 June 2009. In addressing the meeting, the High Commissioner focused on current challenges to the protection and promotion of human rights, stressed the growing importance of the role of national human rights commissions and ombudsman institutions in the promotion and protection of human rights at the national, regional and international levels, and encouraged increased cooperation among regional and international associations of ombudsmen and NHRIs in the context of the Paris Principles, as well as between these organizations and the United Nations system as a whole.

### **United Nations Children's Fund**

91. On 22 and 23 June 2009, OHCHR participated in the regional seminar on the creation of independent human rights institutions for the promotion and protection of the rights of the child: effective approaches for African French-speaking countries, organized by the UNICEF Regional Office for West and Central Africa, the Innocenti Research Centre and the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie in Bamako. OHCHR stressed the importance for NHRIs to have a broad mandate and for specialized institutions to be in compliance with international standards.

### **Association of Mediterranean Ombudsmen**

92. OHCHR attended the inauguration of the headquarters of the Association of Mediterranean Ombudsmen in Tangier, Morocco, on 4 November 2009. The meeting focused on the role of ombudsman associations and networks in the development of such institutions. OHCHR also participated in the 3rd meeting of the Association in Athens on 14 and 15 December 2009, where the main topic was: Transparency and public services: what role for the ombudsman?

## **Council of Europe**

93. The 3rd coordination meeting between OHCHR and the Council of Europe was held in Strasbourg, France, on 16 and 17 November 2009. OHCHR held bilateral working meetings on the procedure of accreditation by the International Coordinating Committee with staff from the Council of Europe.

## **Non-governmental organizations**

94. OHCHR continued its cooperation with Rights and Democracy in organizing workshops on the universal periodic review and the international human rights system for NHRIs. OHCHR maintains cooperation with the Association for the Prevention of Torture and Amnesty International and regularly calls on NGOs for greater interaction with NHRIs.

## **Academic institutions**

95. In 2009, OHCHR strengthened its partnership with the Bristol University research programme team on the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture. OHCHR participated in the University's two round tables on the Optional Protocol and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, organized in May 2009. In September 2009, OHCHR participated in a workshop on implementation of treaty body decisions, through a presentation on the role of NHRIs in such implementation.

## **Regional mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights**

96. OHCHR convened regional consultations on enhancing cooperation between regional and international mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights. These consultations were held in November and December 2009 in Africa (Addis Ababa), in cooperation with the African Union; in the Americas (Washington, D.C.), in cooperation with the Organization of American States (OAS); and in Europe (Strasbourg, France), in cooperation with the Council of Europe. The purpose of the consultations was to share information on ways to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and regional human rights arrangements. Representatives of NHRIs participated in these consultations, where modalities of cooperation between the institutions and the regional arrangements were discussed.

97. On 4 June 2009, the General Assembly of the OAS adopted resolution AG/RES. 2448 (XXXIX-O/09), in which it referred to the role of the International Coordinating Committee in accrediting national human rights institutions in conformity with the Paris Principles and resolved to use the list of institutions accredited by the Committee with "A" status as criteria to allow those institutions participation in OAS political bodies dealing with human rights-related issues. It provides for the modalities of NHRI participation, including the allocation of dedicated seats, the issuance of institution documents under their own classification and the possibility to make oral interventions.

## V. Round tables on thematic issues

### **Transitional justice**

98. In January 2009, OHCHR issued a guidance note on NHRIs and transitional justice, developed in consultation with experts and national institutions. It is to assist NHRIs in their engagement on transitional justice issues, describes challenges and opportunities, highlights applicable international standards, and makes recommendations.

### **Economic, social and cultural rights**

99. A side event to the twenty-second session of the International Coordinating Committee focused on NHRIs and the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Panellists discussed the justiciability of economic, social and cultural rights and the role of NHRIs in implementing the Optional Protocol.

### **Detention**

100. NHRIs participated in a side event held during the twenty-second session of the International Coordinating Committee in March 2009, to share experience and initiatives on detention monitoring and contribute directly to a joint publication by Harvard University and OHCHR. The discussions focused on structural and policy issues in relation to detention monitoring.

### **Torture prevention and the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment**

101. NHRIs participated in a side event during the twenty-second session of the International Coordinating Committee to share experience in the implementation of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture. The discussions showed that, while there is no set model for the creation of a national preventative mechanism, institutions have a significant role to play in relation to the implementation of the Optional Protocol, either by acting as national preventative mechanisms, coordinating the work of such mechanisms or interacting with the designated mechanism. The role of NHRIs at the international level (e.g., interactions with the Subcommittee on Prevention) was also noted.

102. In cooperation with the Association for the Prevention of Torture and the Asia-Pacific Forum, OHCHR is currently finalizing the handbook for NHRIs on the prevention of torture, which will provide guidance, including through best practice from institutions acting as national preventative mechanisms.

### **Human rights inquiry**

103. In 2008 the Equality and Human Rights Commission of Great Britain launched a human rights inquiry aimed at assessing the progress in raising the awareness of human rights culture in the country. A parallel event was organized by OHCHR and the institution at the twelfth session of the Human Rights Council on 23 September 2009, to share the experience in conducting this inquiry.

## **The role of ombudsmen, mediators and national human rights institutions in the United Nations system of promotion and protection of human rights**

104. With the support of their respective permanent missions in Geneva and OHCHR, the ombudsmen of Morocco and Sweden organized a parallel event during the twelfth session of the Human Rights Council in September 2009, on the role of the ombudsman, the mediator and national human rights institutions in the United Nations system of promotion and protection of human rights, as framed by General Assembly resolutions 63/169 and 63/172.

### **Business and human rights**

105. On 6 October 2009, 30 representatives from NHRIs, NGOs and Member States met at a side event during the OHCHR consultation by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises. The side event, organized by the International Coordinating Committee in collaboration with OHCHR, was aimed at ensuring respect for international human rights standards at the corporate and business level.

### **National human rights institutions as human rights defenders**

106. On 6 and 7 November 2009, OHCHR, in collaboration with the NHRI of Morocco and the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions, organized a workshop aimed at strengthening the role of NHRIs as human rights defenders and protectors as well as at increasing participants' knowledge and understanding of international human rights standards protecting human rights defenders. The workshop, held in Rabat, was attended by representatives from institutions in Africa and the Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders. NHRIs shared best practices and highlighted challenges in conducting their mandates, including death threats, inadequate witness protection systems and the need to have more training in investigation techniques and monitoring.

### **HIV/AIDS**

107. OHCHR provided support to regional workshops on HIV/AIDS, in cooperation with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and the NHRIs of Denmark and Uganda. Regional workshops for NHRIs were held in Senegal (October 2009) and Peru (December 2009). Institutions were encouraged to ensure their greater involvement in national responses to HIV/AIDS, and the *Handbook on HIV and Human Rights for National Human Rights Institutions* was used as a tool.

## **VI. Conclusions**

108. **National human rights institutions compliant with the Paris Principles are key elements of a strong and effective national human rights protection system. They can help ensure the compliance of national laws and practices with international human rights norms; support governments to ensure their implementation; monitor and address at the national level core human rights concerns such as torture, arbitrary detention, human trafficking and human rights of migrants; support the work of human rights defenders; and contribute to eradicate all forms of discrimination.**

109. The Secretary-General encourages NHRIs to be strong pillars in the fight against impunity by ensuring the functioning of an effective justice system. They have a key role to play in relation to the administration of justice, including monitoring places of detention and working with law enforcement officers to promote the rule of law. NHRIs should strive to become an effective first port of call for victims of human rights violations, nationally.

110. The Secretary-General welcomes the adoption of the Rabat Declaration at the seventh Conference of African National Human Rights Institutions. The text is a testimony of the role of NHRIs in transitional justice in general as well as in facilitating and supporting the functioning of transitional justice mechanisms and processes, in order to ensure accountability, serve justice and achieve reconciliation and peace. NHRIs are encouraged to give due attention to the practical recommendations of the Declaration with respect to monitoring and establishing transitional justice mechanisms.

111. The Secretary-General notes with appreciation the continuing work of the regional networks of NHRIs and encourages greater cooperation between the regional networks and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. He calls for NHRI cooperation with regional human rights mechanisms such as organs of the African Union, the Inter-American System and the European human rights mechanisms, and the development of regional human rights norms and jurisprudence. He recalls that regional human rights commissions and courts and NHRIs have a symbiotic relationship in the promotion and protection of human rights.

112. The Secretary-General encourages NHRIs to continue to interact and cooperate with the United Nations human rights system and to advocate for the ratification and effective implementation of international human rights instruments. Since several new international human rights instruments, such as the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, give NHRIs a potential monitoring and implementation role, the Secretary-General encourages States parties to strengthen the mandate and capacity of NHRIs to enable them to fulfil this role effectively.

113. The Secretary-General underlines the importance of the autonomy and independence of the ombudsmen, mediators and other NHRIs. The Secretary-General reiterates the call of the High Commissioner for Human Rights for greater cooperation between NHRIs and ombudsman institutions for the improvement of national human rights frameworks. He further encourages ombudsman institutions to comply with the Paris Principles, to strengthen their independence and increase their capacity to act as national protection mechanisms.

114. The Secretary-General recognizes the active participation of NHRIs in the Durban Review Conference and welcomes the NHRI commitments to continue to support the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. The Secretary-General calls on States parties to continue to support NHRIs and other national stakeholders in the implementation of the outcome document of the Durban Review Conference and action plans, including through legal reform at the national level.

115. The Secretary-General reiterates the importance of the financial independence of NHRIs and autonomy for their effective performance, especially in times of financial crisis.

## Annexes

### Annex I

#### **Seventh Conference of African National Human Rights Institutions**

Rabat, 3–5 November 2009

#### **Rabat Declaration**

*Participants at the Seventh Conference of African National Human Rights Institutions, convening in Rabat, Morocco, from 3 to 5 November 2009 under the theme: “Peace and Justice: Role of National Human Rights Institutions”, under the auspices of the Advisory Council for Human Rights of Morocco in cooperation with the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions and with the support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), and the Commonwealth Secretariat,*

*Acknowledging with appreciation the welcome and hospitality of the Government and people of Morocco in the hosting of the Seventh Conference,*

*Expressing their warm gratitude to the Advisory Council for Human Rights of Morocco for its notable organization and hosting of the Conference,*

*Expressing their appreciation for the presence at the Conference of the Registrar of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the representative of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and the Chair of the International Coordinating Committee of National Human Rights Institutions,*

*Noting with gratitude the continued support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) towards the strengthening of the Permanent Secretariat of the Network, and welcoming the assistance given by the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights in hosting it,*

*Reaffirming their commitment to the Kigali Declaration of 10 October 2007 and its attachment to the values enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, the United Nations Declaration on the Right of Peoples to Peace (1984), the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (2007), and various other international instruments concerning human rights to which their States have subscribed and ratified,*

*Recalling the need for all the African national human rights institutions to function independently and in full conformity with the Paris Principles as adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 48/134 of 20 December 1993,*

*Recalling also that the effective promotion of and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms require that States ratify United Nations instruments concerning human rights, reinforce them and forward periodically, in conformity with these instruments, reports to the respective monitoring committees,*

*Noting* that the Nairobi Declaration on the role of NHRIs in the Administration of Justice adopted by NHRIs in 2008 underlined the crucial role of NHRIs in relation to access to justice, the judiciary, law enforcement and correctional and detention facilities as part of their contribution to a peaceful and human rights respectful society,

*Convinced* that justice, peace and democracy are mutually reinforcing imperatives and that accountability is an important aspect for preventing future violations,

*Concerned* by the recurrence of armed conflict in many African countries, and the crackdowns on democracy resulting from the lack of accountability and existence of impunity which further represent threats against peace,

*Recognizing* the need for a comprehensive approach when addressing the legacy of large-scale abuses, comprising of investigations and prosecutions, truth-seeking processes, reparations programmes, and vetting processes; and that any such combination must be in conformity with international legal standards and obligations, and take into account national context,

*Recognizing* the important role NHRIs, especially those in line with the Paris Principles, have been playing in transitional justice processes, in order to ensure accountability, serve justice and achieve reconciliation, and considering that this role could be further strengthened,

*Recognizing* the need to address the root-causes of conflict, and to ensure the protection and fulfilment of all rights, including economic, social and cultural rights,

*Recognizing* the need to promote political and economic good governance as the basis of a peaceful democratic society,

*Aware* of all the above issues concerning human rights,

1. Resolved:

- (a) To promote the interdependency of peace and justice,
- (b) To promote and disseminate relevant international and regional human rights instruments and standards, including the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance; and to promote their wide implementation,
- (c) To raise awareness about international instruments and standards as well as best practices relating to transitional justice and combating impunity,
- (d) To raise awareness of transitional justice mechanisms and lessons learned, to engage relevant stakeholders, including civil society and institutional actors in transitional justice discourse, and to mobilize the society's action in this area,
- (e) To facilitate the national consultations for the establishment of transitional justice mechanisms in close cooperation with other national and international stakeholders, and ensure participation of victims, and other vulnerable or marginalized groups, and make appropriate recommendations to ensure an open and transparent process,
- (f) To engage in information gathering and documenting of human rights abuses, and cooperate with transitional justice mechanisms in investigation of human rights violations,
- (g) To ensure preservation and protection of information on human rights abuses, including through appropriate archiving,

(h) To interact with and reinforce the justice mechanisms and ensure that cases of human rights violations are submitted to the justice system and adequately addressed,

(i) To cooperate in the design and, as appropriate, in implementation of transitional justice mechanisms, and to ensure the centrality of victims in such processes,

(j) To ensure that the establishment and operation of any transitional justice mechanism is in compliance with international human rights standards and practices,

(k) To ensure that the rights of those facing transitional justice mechanisms, including alleged perpetrators and victims, are respected,

(l) To promote provision of assistance to victims and witnesses participating in transitional justice processes, so they are informed of their rights and responsibilities and have access to medical and psychosocial care; and to promote provision of victims and witness protection,

(m) To monitor and report on the implementation of the recommendation of transitional justice mechanisms,

(n) To recommend to the relevant authorities legislative and administrative reforms to ensure their compliance with international standards, and to prevent recurrence of human rights abuses and to restore respect for the rule of law and trust in government institutions,

(o) To engage and interact with international and regional human rights mechanisms, including by submitting reports, and making statements, and following up of recommendations related to transitional justice and human rights in general,

(p) To participate in the development and revision of education programmes to include aspects on culture of peace, conflicts prevention, tolerance and fight against discrimination and human rights.

## **Participants at the Conference**

2. *Call* for direct contributions from African NHRIs and continued assistance, substantive and financial, by international and regional intergovernmental organizations, including OHCHR and OIF, UNDP and other partners to the Permanent Secretariat of NHRIs in Nairobi, Kenya,

3. *Note* that a number of national human rights institutions in Africa have affiliate status with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and call on others that have not attained such status to do so, and urges the African Commission to expedite the establishment of the Unit on NHRIs as recommended in its meeting in May 2009,

4. *Reaffirm* their commitment to cooperate with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in the area of the promotion, protection and enforcement of human rights,

5. *Resolve* to work with international and regional organizations, including the African Union through the Peace and Security Council, in the promotion, protection and enforcement of democracy, rule of law and human rights,

Agree to hold their next biannual conference in South Africa in 2011.

**Adopted in Rabat, 5 November 2009.**

## Annex II

### **Fourteenth Annual Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions**

3 to 6 August 2009, Amman, Jordan

#### **APF Conference concluding statement**

##### **Introduction**

1. The Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (the APF), consisting of the national human rights institutions (NHRIs) of Afghanistan, Australia, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, New Zealand, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Timor-Leste, held its Fourteenth Annual Meeting in Amman, Jordan, from 3 to 6 August 2009 under the patronage of His Majesty King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein.
2. The Forum Councillors expressed their deep gratitude and appreciation to His Majesty King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein for giving his patronage to the Conference and to the Jordan National Centre for Human Rights for hosting the meeting, to the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) for its co-sponsorship and to all the APF's donors for their financial support. They acknowledged the significant contribution of H.R.H. Prince Hassan bin Talal as the keynote speaker on Human Rights and Religious Belief.
3. H.E. Mr. Nader Al-Dahabi, Prime Minister of Jordan, officiated at the opening ceremony of the meeting. Dr. Adnan Badran, Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the Jordan National Centre for Human Rights and Chairperson of the APF, and Tan Sri Abu Talib Othman, Chairperson of the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia and Deputy Chairperson of the APF delivered speeches at the opening ceremony. The speakers stressed the importance of human rights and the role of NHRIs and the APF in the promotion and protection of human rights throughout the Asia-Pacific region.
4. Forum Councillors also warmly thanked H.E. Mr. Abdulhadi Al Majaly, Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament, for hosting a conference function. They acknowledged the expert contributions of Dr. Bassam Al-Omouh, Mr. Robert Archer and Mr. Demosthenes Chryssikos, and warmly welcomed the participation and statements of the Chairperson of the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions (ICC), Ms. Jennifer Lynch QC, and the representatives of the OHCHR, Mr. Homayoun Alizadeh and Ms. Francesca Albanese.
5. The Forum Councillors encouraged and welcomed the participation and statements of approximately 43 international, regional and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the representatives of the parliaments and/or Governments of Australia, Indonesia, Jordan, Malaysia, Nauru, New Zealand, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Samoa and Thailand and the intergovernmental organization of the Commonwealth Secretariat.
6. Finally the Forum Councillors expressed their appreciation for the excellent efforts and hospitality of the Chairperson, Commissioner General Dr. Muhyieddeen Touq, and staff of the Jordan National Centre for Human Rights and the APF secretariat in the organization of the annual meeting and conference.

## Conclusions

*The Forum, during its open plenary sessions:*

7. Expressed appreciation to the OHCHR for its support in connection with NHRIs and their protection mandates; for the establishment and strengthening of NHRIs; and to the ICC and its accreditation process. The APF reaffirmed the success of its partnership with the OHCHR and looked forward to enhancing their mutual cooperation and support including through the development of a comprehensive multi-year partnership and the implementation of recommendations emanating from the international human rights system.

8. Expressed appreciation to the Chairperson of the ICC, Ms. Jennifer Lynch, for her active participation in the Forum Councillors meeting and APF Conference. Forum Councillors offered their continued support to ensure that the ICC and regional coordinating committees remain important entities in the international human rights system. They recorded their sincere appreciation to Ms. Lynch for her excellent Chairpersonship of the ICC and her untiring support for the work of NHRIs domestically, regionally and internationally.

9. Informed the Conference of the outcomes of the meeting of Forum Councillors held on 3 and 4 August 2009. The following decisions were highlighted:

- The unanimous election of the Jordan National Centre for Human Rights to the position of Chairperson of the APF, the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand and the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia to the two positions of Deputy Chairpersons.
- The approval of a proposal to use ICC accreditation decisions in determining membership status for the APF. As a result of this decision and in line with ICC accreditation decisions the human rights institutions from the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Qatar became full member institutions of the APF and the Sri Lankan Commission became an associate member of the APF. The APF reiterated that it would provide assistance to the Sri Lankan Commission in seeking to regain its full membership of the ICC and APF and recommended that the Sri Lankan Government appoint the Chairperson and Commissioners in accordance with the Sri Lankan Constitution. The APF also noted the importance of the recommendations of the ICC Sub-Committee on Accreditation to the institutions of Qatar and the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the APF offered its support to ensure compliance with the Paris Principles.
- The approval of a proposal to: (i) separate the annual Forum Councillor and business meetings of the APF from the APF Conference; (ii) convene the APF 15th Annual Meeting in 2010 in a central regional location; and (iii) convene the combined APF 16 Annual Meeting and Conference in 2011.
- The nomination of India, Jordan, Malaysia and New Zealand to the ICC Bureau. The Republic of Korea was elected to the ICC Sub-Committee on Accreditation.
- The nomination of the Chief Commissioner of the New Zealand Human Rights Commission as the region's candidate for the position of ICC Chairperson. If the New Zealand Chief Commissioner cannot, for whatever reason, serve the full three-year term as ICC Chairperson then the APF would recommend to the ICC that the remainder of the term be filled by the Jordan National Centre for Human Rights.
- Welcomed the establishment of a Working Group on Migration and the election of a steering committee composed of Jordan, Nepal, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Republic of Korea.

- The decision to accept with appreciation the offer of the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand to host the Sixteenth Annual Meeting and Conference in 2011.
10. Welcomed the efforts of the Senior Executive Officers to contribute to the effective and efficient functioning of national institutions as well as to their close cooperation and coordination on issues of mutual interest and concern.
11. Welcomed the reports of APF members on their operations over the preceding year and commended them for their work. In particular welcomed the emphasis on subregional cooperation between NHRIs on thematic issues and capacity-building.
12. Welcomed the reports of the Governments of Australia, Nauru, New Zealand and Samoa and the intergovernmental organization of the Commonwealth Secretariat on the activities undertaken to protect and promote human rights including support for NHRIs. In particular they welcomed the commitments made by the Governments of Nauru and Samoa to actively explore the establishment of NHRIs and offered these Governments the support of the APF.
13. Welcomed the reports of NGOs/CSOs. Forum Councillors expressed their appreciation for the constructive and coordinated contribution of NGOs/CSOs, thanked NGOs/CSOs for their submissions, collective participation and advocacy at the meeting and stressed their commitment to meaningful dialogue and practical cooperation. Forum Councillors agreed to further consider:
- Providing a session for NGO/CSO input into the APF annual meeting in 2010
  - The NGO/CSO recommendations to strengthen institutional protection of human rights in the areas of the establishment and enhancement of NHRIs; the establishment and enhancement of regional mechanisms; the integration of human rights mechanisms with the work of NHRIs; NGO/CSO engagement with the APF Conference and Meeting and the protection of human rights defenders
  - The NGO/CSO recommendations on the role of NHRIs in combating corruption and the need for institutional transparency and in promoting freedom of religion and belief and the promotion of religious tolerance and coexistence
  - The NGO/CSO recommendations on human rights defenders
14. Was informed of serious human rights violations in a number of States throughout the region, especially Myanmar, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Occupied Palestinian Territory as a result of occupation, and the corresponding difficult situation faced by human rights defenders. NHRIs pledged to take all available steps to protect human rights defenders.
15. Considered the issue of Human Rights and Corruption and committed to undertake practical measures to combat corruption using a human rights-based approach and to promote awareness of the close linkages between corruption and human rights and the harmful effects of corruption on the enjoyment of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.
16. Considered the issue of Human Rights, Religion and Belief and the need for inter and intra-faith dialogue nationally, regionally and internationally to promote mutual understanding and the protection and promotion of human rights and the value of using a human rights approach to balance potentially competing rights.
17. Acknowledged the service and contribution made by Professor Ahn Kyung-Whan, former Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission of the Republic of Korea and Vice-Chairperson of the ICC.

## Annex III

### **Draft notes on the Fifth Conference of the Arab National Human Rights Institutions on “Elections in the Arab World and their Impact on Human Rights”, Amman, Jordan, 8–9 March 2009**

#### **Background**

Under the patronage of H.E. Nader al-Dahabi, the Prime Minister of Jordan, a two-day conference on the impact of elections on human rights in the Arab world was organized by the **National Center for Human Rights of Jordan (NCHRJ)** in cooperation with the **Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)** in Amman, Jordan, from 8 to 9 March 2009. The Conference marked the fifth annual meeting of national human rights institutions (NHRIs) from the Arab Region. Between 70 and 80 participants attended the sessions on both days, amongst whom were representatives of national human rights institutions (NHRIs) from Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia;<sup>4</sup> representatives of the countries which do not have NHRIs, such as Iraq and the United Arab Emirates, non-governmental organizations from Jordan, Iraq and Bahrain, United Nations agencies such as OHCHR, UNESCO and UNDP, as well as international organizations such as the National Democratic Institute (NDI), amongst many others.

The Conference was opened with remarks from **His Excellency Dr. Adnan Badran**, President of the Board of Trustees of the NCHRJ, **Mr. Gianni Magazzeni**, OHCHR Coordinator of the National Institutions Unit, and **His Excellency Dr. Boutros Boutros Ghali**, President of the National Council for Human Rights in Egypt. The opening session was attended by the **Jordanian Prime Minister, H.E. Nader al-Dahabi**.

#### **Working sessions and discussion**

The Conference was organized into seven working sessions, including a post-Conference event on Israeli violations of human rights in Gaza presented by the Independent Commission for Human Rights of the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Each session was dedicated to a particular topic related to the protection of human rights at times of elections. While the first day explored a wide range of themes on elections and human rights including international standards pertaining to the organization and conduct of free and fair elections, the second day focused more specifically on the role of NHRIs in promoting free and fair elections. Each session began with presentations of one to three speakers on the given topic.

Sufficient time was allocated at the end of the presentations for general discussion, questions and comments. The speakers included members of NHRIs, independent researchers, and international electoral experts.

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<sup>4</sup> These institutions have both varying records of cooperation with United Nations human rights machinery and different levels of compliance with the international standards relating to national human rights institutions (“the Paris Principles”).

During the first session dedicated to the culture of elections and human rights in the Arab world, **Dr. Waleed Abdul Haai**, of NCHRJ, spoke of the effects of culture on the conduct of elections and protection of human rights during elections. He mentioned nationality laws and laws regulating the representation and voting rights of women as issues of concern that influence elections in the Arab world. The second presenter, **Mr. Michel Paternotre** of the Democracy Reporting International (DRI), reminded the participants of the international and regional standards, underlying in particular the importance of, inter alia, the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, as well as a number of so-called soft law documents, such as various statements and the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which jointly prescribe in some detail the requirements necessary for the establishment of fair, free, transparent and democratic elections.

The ensuing debate revolved around the issue of culture as one of the determinants that shape the law, politics and consequently elections in the Arab-speaking world.

The second and the third sessions were dedicated to the fairness, transparency, and integrity of elections as a requirement for good governance and respect of human rights.

Following **Dr. Ali al-Sawi's** presentation on legal guarantees for the protection of human rights during elections, **Mr. Mohammad Ojar**, of the Human Rights Advisory Council in Morocco, and **H.E. Ms. Asma Khader** of the NCHRJ, reflected on the linkages between elections and good governance, while noting the importance of the equality of inclusion and participation of women in the process of elections. **Ms. Khader** reiterated that democracy cannot exist without the participation and inclusion of women who, in some countries, constitute over 50 per cent of the overall population. In her presentation, she underlined the low percentages of women's participation in high government positions in the Arab world.

The last session of the first day was dedicated to the review of standards for monitoring and evaluating elections, and the two speakers, **Mr. Michel Paternotre** of DRI and **Mr. Jonathan Stonestreet** of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) shared their experiences in international elections monitoring the purpose of which is to assist the countries to identify gaps and areas in need of improvement.

The second day was entirely devoted to the work of NHRIs and their roles in times of elections, exploring, in particular, the necessity for establishing partnerships with the civil society organizations and the strengthening of democratic culture before, during and after the elections.

The second day thus commenced with discussion on ways to strengthen relationships and partnerships with non-governmental sector. The speakers, **Dr. Hussam Badrawi** of the National Council for Human Rights in Egypt and **Mr. Oraiab al-Rantawi** of Al-Quds Research Center.

Jordan, discussed the role of NHRIs as an intermediary and link between the civil society and the government and their ability to support the advancement of the civil society sector by promoting human rights culture, raising awareness on the necessity for elections monitoring and engaging in education and training activities on elections monitoring for civil society organizations. **Mr. al-Rantawi** noted that the role of NHRIs starts with the law on elections and the need to ensure that electoral laws conform to international standards.

During the sixth session dedicated to the role of NHRIs prior, during and after elections, the representatives of NHRIs of Morocco, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Jordan shared their experiences pertaining to the engagement of their respective NHRIs in elections advocacy, monitoring and follow-up. **Mr. Abderrazak Rouwane** of Morocco described in some detail the organization and engagement of the Human Rights Advisory

Council in Moroccan elections monitoring. **Mrs. Randa Al-Siniora** of the Occupied Palestinian Territory described the immense difficulties faced by the Palestinian elections observers during parliamentary and presidential elections in the occupied territories due to the severe limitation in access and movement across numerous checkpoints. **Dr. Ali al-Dabbas** of Jordan spoke of the engagement in advocacy (during and after the passing of the Jordanian electoral law) by the National Center for Human Rights and described the difficulties faced by the NCHRJ observers in terms of obtaining licenses and approval to access polling sites by Jordanian authorities.

OHCHR Regional Representative, **Mr. Fateh Azzam**, facilitated the last working session entitled “Next Steps for NHRIs: Identification of Challenges, Opportunities and the required Support: A Road-Map for the Future”. During the session, the speakers, His Excellency **Dr. Muhyieddeen Touq**, Commissioner General of the National Center for Human Rights of Jordan, and **Mr. Habib Sleem** of the Higher Committee on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Tunisia (*Le Comité supérieur des droits de l’homme et des libertés fondamentales*) summarized the discussions and findings of the past two days, reiterating the need for closer partnerships with the civil society organizations, advocacy for clear legislations, importance of having NHRIs not shy away from complicated and sensitive issues and the need for the NHRIs to complement the good work of the civil society. Following their presentations, representatives of other NHRIs presented their proposals for future action and follow-up, adopting, towards the end of the session, a series of recommendations, as well as a concept of a letter on the recommendations to be shared with the participants, Arab States and Arab regional organizations. The Conference was closed by brief remarks by **His Excellency Dr. Muhyieddeen Touq** and **Mr. Gianni Magazzeni** of OHCHR.

## Recommendations and final points

The following points related to the role of NHRIs in connection with elections were agreed upon:

1. To officially distribute the report and recommendations resulting from the Conference to the participants, States and regional Arab organizations;
2. To engage the ICC of NHRIs and regional coordinating bodies and other civil society organizations in connection with NHRI role in elections; i.e. developing election laws and election procedures;
3. Develop a database of NHRIs best practices and lessons learned in connection with elections;
4. To ensure relevant international standards for the holding of free and fair elections are reflected in domestic laws and practices and ensure that governments are provided with the necessary assistance concerning the conditions for holding free and fair elections;
5. To assist with the creation and development of independent electoral commissions;
6. To monitor the human rights aspects of election before and during the elections in cooperation with independent national and international observers;
7. To ensure follow-up action by the government and other State entities in connection with recommendations related to electorate laws and election procedures as well as those resulting from electoral observers missions;

8. To take a public stand on the conduct of elections and their results and publicize these stands in different fora;

9. To advocate the application of the principle of democratic change of government in conditions which respect the constitution;

10. To ensure that adequate training of relevant international standards is provided to national actors and civil society organizations.

The Conference has also adopted a letter which contains a set of recommendations regarding elections and democratic life, to be sent to the 21st Arab summit meeting which was due to be held in Doha, Qatar on 30 March 2009. Additionally, the Conference agreed to include a fixed agenda item under the title “review of implementations of previous recommendations” in the agenda of each conference. Consequently the NHRIs are requested to present a review of their implementation of the Amman conference in the next meeting in Morocco.

At the suggestion of the Moroccan representative, it was decided that the next, VI Conference of Arab NHRIs will be held in Morocco in 2010 on the theme of the role of NHRIs in strengthening the rule of law in the Arab region. The next Conference will also discuss the establishment of a so-called “troika”, i.e., a secretariat composed of three members that would assist with organization of future NHRIs conferences.

## Annex IV

### Survey on national human rights institutions

#### Summary of the recommendations of a questionnaire addressed to national human rights institutions worldwide

**Recommendation:** OHCHR, UNDP, RCCs of NHRIs, and interested donors, should support NHRIs to prioritize advocacy with their government for the revision and strengthening of the legal framework of those NHRIs established by an executive instrument. Recommendations from United Nations treaty bodies, the SPMHs, and the UPR in the Human Rights Council, as well as the ICC Sub-Committee on Accreditation may all support the expansion of the mandate of NHRIs.

**Recommendation:** OHCHR, UNDP, RCCs of NHRIs, and interested donors, should support activities that explore and gather best practice on the types of legal provisions (e.g. membership criteria, appointment processes) ensure the governing body is effective and diverse in practice. Data on other mechanisms of ensuring pluralism within an institution, beyond the composition of its governing body, would also be useful.

**Recommendation:** OHCHR, UNDP, RCCs of NHRIs, interested donors, should support NHRIs to prioritize advocacy with governments for the revision and strengthening of procedural requirements for the selection and appointment of members.

**Recommendation:** as the ICC's General Observations state that dismissal or forced resignation of a member may result in a review of the institution's accreditation, strengthening legal requirements for dismissal (building on the best practice examples provided by respondents) should be a priority. OHCHR, UNDP, RCCs of NHRIs, and interested donors should support NHRIs in securing such legal requirements.

**Recommendation:** OHCHR, UNDP, RCCs of NHRIs, and interested donors, should prioritize activities to develop the capacity of NHRIs to effectively manage the relationship with their relevant government department, including in budget allocation. In addition, they could also prioritize continued advocacy with member States to ensure they meet their obligation to provide adequate resources.

**Recommendation:** OHCHR, UNDP, RCCs of NHRIs, and interested donors, should prioritize further training and capacity development for NHRI staff across all levels. They should also prioritize support for institutions to develop human resource plans to increase staff effectiveness, career development and diversity.

**Recommendation:** OHCHR, UNDP, RCCs of NHRIs, and interested donors should prioritize support to institutions to improve their accessibility, with a particular focus on reaching out to vulnerable groups.

**Recommendation:** OHCHR, UNDP, RCCs of NHRIs, and interested donors should prioritize work with NHRIs, in the framework of the Nairobi Declaration, to effectively implement their core protection functions, particularly in detention monitoring. Follow-up research with NHRIs to collect best practice on collaboration and coordination with other visiting bodies is also important to explore, to address any potential protection gaps.

**Recommendation:** OHCHR, UNDP, RCCs of NHRIs, and interested donors, should prioritize further guidance to NHRIs in relation to their activities for human rights defenders, including by systematically collecting and disseminating examples of best

practice. Capacity-building activities for NHRIs, particularly in Africa, to support human rights defenders (generally and in cases threat) should also be prioritized.

**Recommendation:** OHCHR, UNDP, RCCs of NHRIs, and interested donors should prioritize support to institutions to develop strategies for follow-up where they do not exist and strengthen them where they do. Advocacy for strengthened legal frameworks that require the State to formally respond to institutions' recommendations is also another important medium- and long-term priority.

**Recommendation:** OHCHR, UNDP, RCCs of NHRIs, and interested donors should consider providing support to NHRIs in this area, as well as developing mechanisms to encourage institutions to pool educational and research material.

**Recommendation:** OHCHR, UNDP, RCCs of NHRIs, and interested donors should facilitate increased awareness raising for both NHRIs and NGOs on each others respective roles, for example through joint activities. Support for the strengthening of legal provisions that require NHRIs to establish formal relationships with civil society is also another important medium- and long-term priority (only 45 per cent of respondents indicated that their founding law contains such a provision).

**Recommendation:** OHCHR, UNDP, RCCs of NHRIs, and interested donors should facilitate and assist NHRIs direct engagement with these organizations, thus also increasing the level of awareness about the work of NHRIs.

**Recommendation:** OHCHR, UNDP, RCCs of NHRIs, and interested donors should consider extending support to institutions to overcome budgetary constraints to improve participation rates in ICC events. Respondents also made a number of valuable suggestions on how to enhance the benefits of ICC meetings, which OHCHR should work with the ICC and the RCCs to implement.

**Recommendation:** OHCHR, UNDP, RCCs of NHRIs, and interested donors should facilitate capacity-building missions, encourage increased cooperation and provide opportunities for working experiences with regional networks. Comments from respondents particularly noted the educational value in these types of activities. To facilitate this, such bodies may consider supporting the establishment and strengthening of regional and subregional networks of NHRIs.

**Recommendation:** OHCHR should further consult with NHRIs on their experiences of working with the United Nations at the country level, as respondents did not generally comment on this in their responses. Collecting examples of best practice in relation to coordination and collaboration between NHRIs and field presences would also be valuable.

**Recommendation:** OHCHR, UNDP, RCCs of NHRIs, and interested donors should prioritize continued training to NHRIs on the international human rights system. However, they should explore methods of doing so that are less resource-intensive for NHRIs and reach the broadest number of staff. This could include "train the trainers" workshops for identified focal points on international engagement and developing online or distance training materials.