



INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS SEMINAR

**Sydney, Australia
24, 25 and 28 September 2007**

The International Service for Human Rights (ISHR) is organising an International Human Rights Defenders Seminar that will be held in Sydney, Australia on 24, 25 and 28 September 2007. The seminar will run in parallel to the 12th Annual Meeting of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (APF) and is co-sponsored by the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC).

The seminar is organised in collaboration with Asia Pacific Women, Law and Development (APWLD), International Women's Rights Action Watch (IWRAP), South Asia Human Rights Documentation Centre (SAHRDC) and Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA).

Objectives

The seminar aims to promote practical knowledge about international, regional and national mechanisms for the protection of human rights defenders in the Asia-Pacific region and to explore the role that NHRIs can play as protection mechanisms for human rights defenders.

The seminar also aims to encourage regional discussion regarding human rights defenders and to promote collaboration between NHRIs and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to identify areas of cooperation and specific steps to improve the protection of defenders in the region. One of the anticipated outcomes of training seminar is to strengthen collaboration and exchange of information between NGOs, NHRIs and the APF on issues related to human rights defenders.

The seminar aims to enhance the capacity of organisations in the region to protect and address issues affecting human rights defenders. It is designed for experienced human rights activists and organisations that intend to use the international human rights system in their work.

Programme

The seminar will be held over three days.

The first day will be open to NGOs and NHRIs. In the morning, it will focus on assessing issues and risks facing human rights defenders and women human rights defenders, and on evaluating the role played by NHRIs in the region in protecting them. In the afternoon, the discussion will focus on the challenges and opportunities offered by the APF and will explore possibilities of collaboration between NHRIs and NGOs.

The second day will be open to NGO representatives only. It is intended to provide a forum for NGOs to coordinate and plan for their role and contribution to the Annual Meeting.

The third day will be dedicated to the UN human rights system. Participants will discuss recent developments focusing in particular on the Human Rights Council, the new Universal Periodic Review mechanisms, and the role that NGOs and NHRIs can play within that system.

During the week, the participants will be expected to attend the open sessions of the 12th Annual Meeting of the APF.

Beneficiaries

The seminar will consist of not more than 20 participants from the Asia-Pacific region. It is expected that participants meet the following criteria:

- ◆ Active involvement in a human rights / development / humanitarian NGO, or NHRI (day 1);
- ◆ Willingness and the capacity to access and use national, regional and international mechanisms;
- ◆ Knowledge of international human rights law and mechanisms;
- ◆ Good command of English.

A balance will be sought between the participants in terms of gender and the countries they work in.

Venue

The International Human Rights Defenders Seminar will take place at the following address:

Hyde Park Inn
271 Elizabeth Street
Sydney, NSW 2000
Phone: +61 (0)2 9264 6001
Fax: +61 (0)2 9261 8691
Email: enquiries@hydeparkinn.com.au
Web: www.hydeparkinn.com.au or www.hydeparkforum.com.au

The 12th Annual Meeting of the APF will be held at a nearby hotel, located at the following address:

Four Points by Sheraton Hotel
161 Sussex Street, Darling Harbour
Sydney, Australia
Phone: (61)(2) 9290 4000
Fax: (61)(2) 9290 4040

Registration

The registration process for the seminar is **now open**. The closing date for registration is 15 September 2007. Please register by e-mailing the attached application form to Mr Andrea Rocca at a.rocca@ishr.ch or Ms Elise Magnenat at e.magnenat@ishr.ch

There are no fees for participation to the seminar. Participants are responsible to cover the expenses for their stay in Sydney. During the three days of the seminar, lunch will be provided to all registered participants.

About us

International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)

www.ishr.ch

The International Service for Human Rights provides practical human rights training worldwide to human rights defenders and public institutions, empowering them to access and use international human rights procedures, standards and mechanisms. ISHR provides analytical reports on the UN and other international and regional human rights mechanisms and delivers capacity building and advocacy services contributing to protecting the rights of human rights defenders. Specific advocacy activities also focus on enhancing the effectiveness of the international and regional human rights mechanisms.

Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC)

www.humanrights.gov.au

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission is a national independent statutory government body, established in 1986 by the *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act*. The federal Attorney General is the Minister responsible in Parliament for the Commission. Its goal is to foster greater understanding and protection of human rights in Australia and to address the human rights concerns of a broad range of individuals and groups. The Commission's responsibilities include education and public awareness, discrimination and human rights complaints, human rights compliance, policy and legislative development. The Commission work closely with other national human rights institutions, particularly through the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions, to address major human rights issues in the region.

Asia Pacific Women, Law and Development (APWLD)

www.apwld.org

APWLD is an independent, non-government, non-profit organization. It is committed to enabling women to use law as an instrument of social change for equality, justice and development. It has a consultative status at the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC).

International Women's Rights Action Watch (IWRAP)

www.iwraw-ap.org

IWRAP Asia Pacific is a non-profit international women's organisation based in the South. It promotes the domestic implementation of international human rights standards by building the capacity of women and human rights advocates to claim and realise women's human rights. This is done through the development of new knowledge and the utilisation of a rights-based approach.

South Asia Human Rights Documentation Centre (SAHRDC)

www.hri.ca/partners/sahrdc

The South Asia Human Rights Documentation Centre (SAHRDC) is a network of individuals across the region. It seeks to investigate, document and disseminate information about human rights treaties and conventions, human rights education, refugees, media freedom, prison reforms, political imprisonment, torture, summary executions, disappearances and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. SAHRDC has Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)

www.forum-asia.org

Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development is a regional human rights organisation with 40 member-organisations in 15 countries in Asia. As a membership-based regional human rights organisation, FORUM-ASIA works to promote and protect all human rights including the right to development through collaboration and cooperation among human rights defenders and organisations in Asia.