

Regional Initiative in Support of Institutional Capacity Development of National Human Rights Institutions

Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (APF)

Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

Office in Bangkok (UNDP-RCB)



Supporting NHRIs in the Asia-Pacific

Recognizing the important role played by National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) in the promotion and protection of human rights, the UNDP Strategic Plan makes support to NHRIs a priority within the governance area.

In the Asia-Pacific Region, UNDP has partnered with regional institutions to support capacity assessments of NHRIs in order to better target capacity development initiatives.

The UNDP Asia Governance and Capacity Development teams are partnering with the *Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (APF)* and the *Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)* to jointly support institutional strengthening of NHRIs to:

- Assist NHRIs to generate an understanding of their capacity strengths and needs and consequently develop strategies to address gaps.
- Support South-South cooperation through peer exchanges. Through the entry point of capacity assessment, the initiative is expected to develop a platform for mutual support and peer-to-peer exchange and learning among NHRIs in the region.

Pilot assessments in Malaysia and the Maldives have taken place in 2009. Additional NHRI capacity assessments are expected to take place in 2010.

Piloting the NHRI Capacity Assessment



An initial pilot was conducted with SUHAKAM (the Malaysian Human Rights Commission) from December 2008 till February 2009. The assessment resulted in 39 recommendations to address capacity gaps highlighted by the process. As a result of the assessment, SUHAKAM accepted all the recommendations and developed a strategy and work plan to address priorities identified by the assessment. The UN Country Team in Malaysia is working to support SUHAKAM in the implementation of the plan.

What is a Capacity Assessment?

Objective

To develop strategies to address the most important capacity needs of the National Human Rights Institution

Approach

- To enable the NHRI to assess its current capacities against the capacities it requires to implement its strategic plan, to identify capacity gaps or deficits
- To identify the capacity gaps that are the most important and most urgent to be addressed
- To develop strategies to address the identified capacity gaps in a long-term manner.

Participants

The process is a self-assessment approach in which

- NHRI members and staff are the most important participants
- Key external stakeholders are also invited to contribute their perspectives
- A joint UNDP-APF-OHCHR project team facilitates the process, in consultation with the NHRI contact person or group.

Methodology

Information is collected through

- Individual and group discussions with the NHRI members and staff
- Background material shared by the NHRI
- Completion of an analytical “worksheet” by the NHRI members and staff
- Individual and group interviews with key external stakeholders.

Product

An analytical report of

- The self assessment, with both qualitative and quantitative components, and
- Proposed strategies to address identified priority needs for capacity development, prepared jointly by the NHRI and the project team.

Approach

A capacity development programme for the NHRI to implement the strategies, with support if required from UNDP and APF

How does the NHRI benefit from the Capacity Assessment?

Participation in the capacity needs assessment project will give NHRI

- An understanding of its current organisational capacities
- A rigorous assessment of its capacity needs
- Clear priorities for capacity development
- Sound strategies both short-term and long-term for capacity development
- A strong analytical report that can assist in securing the support needed to implement the strategies
- A baseline assessment of capacity that can be used to measure improvement and achievement over time
- An additional means to improve its effectiveness
- Key NHRI personnel trained in capacity needs assessment and development.
- The opportunity to lead capacity development for other NHRIs in the region

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