

**Statement from Non-Governmental Organizations on NHRI  
Engagement with Civil Society  
13<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human  
Rights Institution**

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This statement is delivered by the Taiwan Association for Human Rights and supported by the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) participating in the meeting parallel to the 13<sup>th</sup> APF Conference.

On the subject of NHRIs' engagement with civil society, we have identified the need for a diversification coupled with an institutionalization process in the means and methodology of engagement between NHRIs and NGOs in the Asia Pacific region for the better fulfilment, protection, promotion and prevention of violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

After very careful consideration of the above concerns in our NGO forum parallel to the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual APF, we hereby propose the following:

1. We call upon the NHRIs to refocus their roles as 'protectors of human rights,' and in particular:
  - a. To ensure that their present complaints' handling system is victim/survivor friendly and addresses the issue of impunity;
  - b. To ensure that all of their recommendations are effectively and speedily implemented;
  - c. To ensure that each of the NHRIs establish a 'focal point' to address the protection of human rights defenders, taking special note of women human rights defenders and those working on the rights of other discriminated groups;
  - d. To make timely interventions, such as through public statements, when gross human rights violations are taking place in their respective countries.
2. We call upon the NHRIs to have effective dialogue with NGOs for collective engagement with their respective governments.
3. We call upon the AFP to develop and establish benchmarks to further NGO and NHRI collaboration, highlighting the following:
  - a. To facilitate NGO participation in the planning, implementation and evaluation of all NHRI activities;
  - b. To disseminate full information on all NHRI activities to the public;

- c. To facilitate wider NGO involvement and participation through transparent and inclusive process and procedure.
4. We call upon the NHRIs to mainstream engagement with groups that face discrimination (e.g. women, Dalits, indigenous peoples, minorities, and others).
5. We emphasize the importance for the NHRIs and NGOs to collaborate in monitoring their respective Governments' implementation of the recommendations by treaty bodies, special procedures and other international human rights mechanisms.
6. We call upon the NHRIs to collaborate with NGOs in reviewing relevant legislations and their practices to ensure compliance with the Paris Principles.
7. We call upon the APF to invite governments from countries with no NHRI or in the process of establishing a NHRI, and to ensure the presence of senior government officials from such countries (e.g. Pacific Islands, Taiwan, Burma, and Japan) so that the APF would be an effective and meaningful platform for NGO engagement.
8. We call upon the NHRIs to consult NGOs prior to their engagement with the UN Human Rights Council, on any agenda items.

This statement is a collaborative effort of a number of national, regional and international organizations. We thank you for this opportunity to speak before you and we look forward to strengthen NHRIs engagement and collaboration with civil society in the future.