



**ASIA PACIFIC FORUM**  
ADVANCING HUMAN RIGHTS IN OUR REGION

# Annual General Meeting

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## **APF 28**

The 28<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Asia  
Pacific Forum of National Human Rights  
Institutions

New Delhi, India

20 & 21 September 2023

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# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Background</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Structure of this Paper</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Evaluation of the APF</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Confirmation of Attendance &amp; Apologies</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Adoption of Agenda</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>APF Performance Report</b>	<b>8</b>
7.1	Introduction.....	9
7.2	Outcome 1: More NHRIs in the Asia Pacific that comply with the Paris Principles and can exercise their mandate in safety.....	12
7.2.1	An increase in the number of accredited NHRIs in the Asia Pacific region .....	12
7.2.2	More NHRIs with a legal mandate that complies with the Paris Principles.....	14
7.2.3	NHRIs are protected from threats of reprisals.....	18
7.2.4	Performance Metrics.....	20
7.2.5	Gender and Outcome 1.....	23
7.2.6	Member Feedback.....	24
7.3	NHRIs have strengthened capability to effectively promote, protect and respond to human rights issues .....	26
7.3.1	NHRIs have increased operational capability .....	26
7.3.2	NHRIs demonstrate leadership.....	29
7.3.3	NHRIs have the necessary skills and expertise .....	32
7.3.4	NHRIs have increased technical capability .....	35
7.3.5	Performance Metrics.....	36
7.3.6	Gender & Outcome 2 .....	38
7.3.7	Member Feedback.....	38
7.4	NHRI voices are amplified in regional and international fora .....	39
7.4.1	Increased member engagement with regional and international fora.....	39
7.4.2	Increased NHRI leadership in regional responses to human rights issues .....	41
7.4.3	NHRIs are recognised actors in the human rights system .....	45
7.4.4	Performance Metrics.....	47
7.4.5	Gender and Outcome 3.....	48
7.4.6	Member Feedback.....	48
7.5	Outcome 4: The APF is a well-functioning and governed network with an engaged membership .....	51
7.5.1	Organisational decisions are guided by principles of good governance.....	51
7.5.2	Our team is supported by effective management systems .....	53
7.5.3	Our impact is accurately measured and communicated.....	54
7.5.4	We have sustainable sources of funding.....	55
7.5.5	Communications .....	57
7.5.6	Performance Metrics.....	59
7.5.7	Gender and Outcome 4.....	60
7.5.8	Member Feedback.....	62
7.6	List of APF Activities in 2022 – 2023.....	66
<b>8</b>	<b>Promoting Gender Equality</b>	<b>70</b>
8.1	Introduction.....	71
8.2	Supporting the APF membership.....	71
8.2.1	APF/UNFPA research project on reproductive health rights.....	71
8.2.2	Gender integrated into capacity development activities.....	72
8.2.3	Samoan NHRI gender audit.....	72
8.3	Gender representation within the APF membership .....	73

8.4	Gender mainstreaming within APF activities .....	79
8.4.1	Outcome 1 – More NHRIs in the Asia Pacific comply with the Paris Principles and can exercise their mandate in safety .....	79
8.4.2	Outcome 2 – NHRIs have strengthened capacity to effectively promote, protect, and respond to human rights issues .....	79
8.4.3	Outcome 3 – NHRIs voices are amplified in regional and international fora .....	79
8.4.4	Outcome 4 – The APF is a well-functioning and governed network with an engaged membership .....	80
<b>9</b>	<b>Audited Accounts</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Status of APF Members following GANHRI Accreditation</b>	<b>83</b>
10.1	APF Constitution.....	84
10.2	Background.....	85
10.3	Recommendation .....	85
<b>11</b>	<b>Election of APF Governance Committee</b>	<b>86</b>
11.1	Introduction.....	87
11.2	APF Governance.....	87
11.3	Who comprises the APF Governance Committee? .....	88
11.4	What are the terms of office of the APF Governance Committee?.....	88
11.5	What are the duties of the APF Governance Committee?.....	89
11.6	What are the eligibility requirements for the APF Governance Committee? .....	90
11.7	What is the election process for the APF Governance Committee? .....	90
11.8	Recommendation .....	93
11.9	Attachments Annex 4.....	93
<b>12</b>	<b>Report of the GANHRI Secretary</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>General Business</b>	<b>95</b>
	<b>Annexure</b>	<b>96</b>
	Annex 1 – APF Rules of Procedure .....	96
	Annex 2 – APF 27 Draft Program.....	96
	Annex 3 – APF Audited Accounts.....	96
	Annex 4 – Expression of Interest for APF Governance Committee .....	96
	Annex 5 – Proxy Form.....	96

## 1 Purpose

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This report has been prepared by the secretariat of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions ('APF') for the consideration of APF members at their 28<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting to be held in New Delhi, India on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

## 2 Background

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The Annual General Meeting ('AGM') is a formal meeting held once a year. It is a legal requirement for the APF as a not-for-profit organisation.

The AGM serves as an opportunity for APF members to review the operation of the APF over the past year and deal with issues such as the election of officers, the admission of new member institutions, and the approval of the annual audited accounts. It is also a good opportunity to discuss matters of mutual interest between member institutions and to communicate with partners and other interested stakeholders.

The meeting is restricted to APF member institutions and invited observers.

Decisions at AGMs will, as far as possible, be arrived at by consensus. Where the APF Chairperson deems that there is no consensus the matter will be decided by a majority of votes. Only 'A' status member institutions sitting as the Forum Council may vote on agenda items and each 'A' status institution present has one vote. A proxy, attorney or representative is entitled to on behalf of an 'A' status institution if a duly completed and authorised proxy form at Annex 5 has been submitted to the secretariat. Where the votes are equal the proposed resolution is lost. 'B' status member institutions do not have voting rights.

The approved Rules of Procedure for the Annual General Meeting and the APF Conference can be found at Annex 1.

## 3 Structure of this Paper

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The report is structured in the sequence of the agenda items of the meeting. Agenda items are preceded by a 'cover sheet', which provides the following information:

- the title of the agenda item;
- a summary of the main issues;
- any relevant considerations that should be drawn to the attention of APF members;
- who prepared the paper; and finally,
- who will introduce the item for discussion.

Where relevant the 'cover sheet' is then followed by a substantive paper. In order to make the information contained in this report as concise as possible, electronic references are made to the full text of any substantive supporting documentation.

In line with the 'no paper' policy adopted by the APF, meeting papers will only be distributed electronically.

## 4 Evaluation of the APF

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The APF secretariat is committed to providing quality services to APF member institutions. To assist us in this task we request your active participation in evaluating our performance and activities.

At the conclusion of the AGM, the APF secretariat will share an evaluation form.

## 5 Confirmation of Attendance & Apologies

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### 28<sup>th</sup> AGM of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions Meeting Paper

Title:	Confirmation of attendance & apologies
Summary of issue:	<p>APF members attend the AGM. Please note that as there are currently eighteen (18) 'A' status member institutions of the APF, article 5.4 of the Rules of Procedure for the AGM provides that the quorum for the meeting is five (5) members.</p> <p>APF members need to approve any other attendances at the meeting. In line with APF policy, invitations have been issued to UN agencies, GANHRI, NHRIs seeking membership of the APF and expert panellists to attend as observers.</p> <p>APF members wishing to appoint a 'proxy' should submit a completed proxy form at Annex 9 by close of business on <u>Friday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2023</u>.</p>
Recommendation:	That APF members (i) determine whether a quorum exists & (ii) approve the requests for observer status.
Relevant considerations:	Rules of Procedure at Annex 1
Submission prepared by:	Director
Officer responsible:	Chairperson

## 6 Adoption of Agenda

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### 28<sup>th</sup> AGM of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions Meeting Paper

Title:	Adoption of the Agenda for the 28 <sup>th</sup> AGM of the APF
Summary of issue:	A draft agenda has been circulated to all APF members for comment and is at Annex 2.
Recommendation:	That APF members adopt the agenda.
Relevant considerations: (Policy, staffing, expenditure, political etc)	None
Submission prepared by:	Director
Officer responsible:	Chairperson

## 7 APF Performance Report

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### 28<sup>th</sup> AGM of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions Meeting Paper

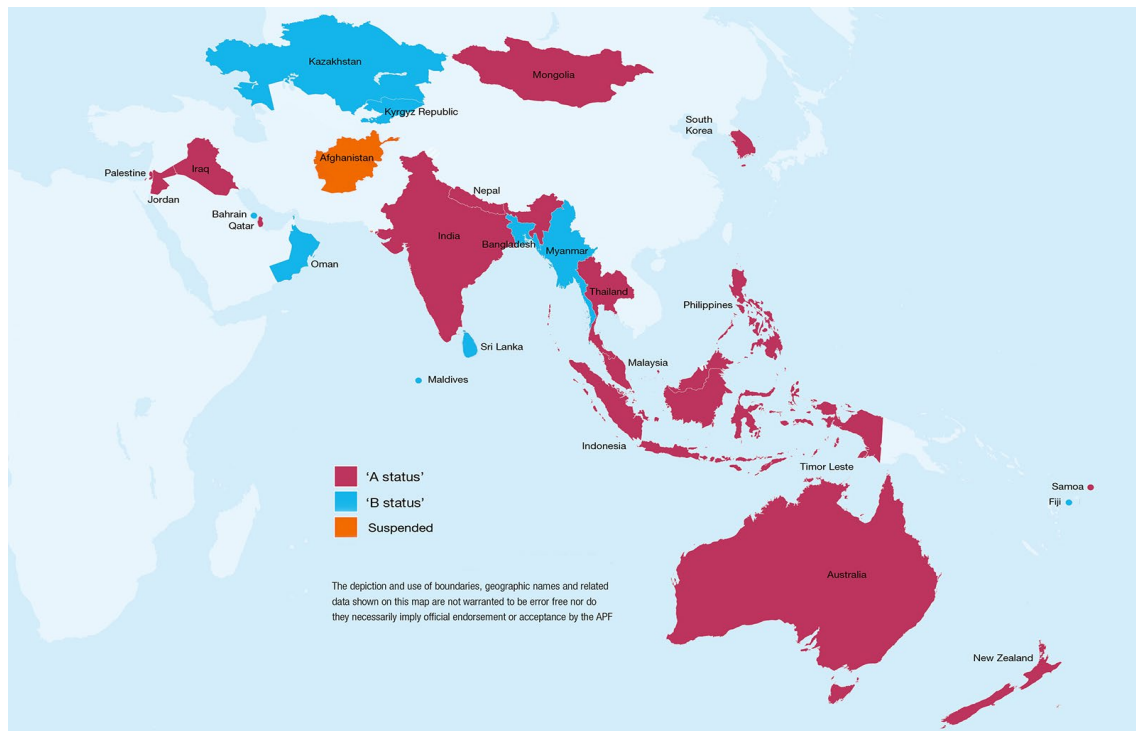
Title:	APF Performance Report
Summary of issue:	The APF Performance Report provides a detailed overview of the activities of the APF over the period 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023. The report contains monitoring and evaluation data to assess the performance of the APF in meeting the outcomes of its Strategic Plan.
Recommendation:	<p>That APF members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Note the Performance Report.</li></ul>
Relevant considerations:	As set out in the following report
Submission prepared by:	Secretariat
Officer responsible:	Chairperson



## 7.1 Introduction

### Our members

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The APF currently has 26 members – 16 ‘A’ status members, 9 ‘B’ status members and 1 ‘suspended’ member – drawn from all corners of the region:

- **Afghanistan** Independent Human Rights Commission
- **Australian** Human Rights Commission
- National Institution for Human Rights in the Kingdom of **Bahrain**
- National Human Rights Commission of **Bangladesh**
- National Human Rights Commission of **India**
- **Fiji** Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission
- **Indonesian** National Commission on Human Rights
- High Commission for Human Rights of **Iraq**
- **Jordan** National Centre for Human Rights
- National Centre for Human Rights of **Kazakhstan**
- National Human Rights Commission of **Korea**
- Ombudsman of **Kyrgyzstan**
- Human Rights Commission of **Malaysia**
- Human Rights Commission of the **Maldives**
- National Human Rights Commission of **Mongolia**
- **Myanmar** National Human Rights Commission
- National Human Rights Commission of **Nepal**
- **New Zealand** Human Rights Commission
- National Human Rights Commission of **Oman**
- Independent Commission for Human Rights of **Palestine**

- **Philippines** Commission on Human Rights
- National Human Rights Committee of **Qatar**
- Ombudsman of **Samoa**
- Human Rights Commission of **Sri Lanka**
- National Human Rights Commission of **Thailand**
- Provedor for Human Rights and Justice of **Timor-Leste**.

The APF is one of four regional networks of national human rights institutions ('**NHRIs**'). Regional networks have also been established to support the NHRIs of Africa, the Americas and Europe. At the global level, the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions ('**GANHRI**') promotes the establishment and operation of NHRIs in compliance with the Paris Principles.

What sets the APF apart is the breadth and depth of the services we offer to our members, including thematic training programs and an innovative capacity assessment program. We provide specialist advice on NHRI legislation and international accreditation for our members, governments in the region and other stakeholders.

In addition, the APF continues to be the leader among NHRI bodies in promoting and monitoring gender equality.

### **About the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions**

The APF is the leading human rights organisation in the region. Established in 1996, we are a coalition of NHRIs from all corners of the Asia Pacific.

NHRIs are independent bodies, established by legislation or in a constitution, to promote and protect human rights in their respective countries. While they are established by government, they operate independently from government. Strong and effective NHRIs help bridge the "protection gap" between the rights of individuals and the responsibilities of the State by:

- Monitoring the human rights situation in the country and the actions of the State;
- Providing advice to ensure the State meets its international and domestic human rights commitments;
- Receiving, investigating and resolving complaints of human rights violations; and
- Undertaking human rights education programs for all sections of the community.

Unlike the other regions in the world, there is no regional court or protection system covering the entire Asia Pacific that people can turn to when their human rights are violated. This makes the role of NHRIs in our region even more critical.

The APF provides practical support and advice to our members and prospective members to help them to be as effective as possible. We also provide advice and expertise to governments and civil society groups in the region to support the

establishment of independent NHRIs that meet the international standards set out in the Paris Principles.

The APF brings member institutions together to develop a shared vision and shared strategies to tackle many of the most serious and complex human rights challenges in the region. We develop partnerships at the international and regional levels to promote and protect human rights, raise the profile of NHRIs and ensure that the collective voice of our members is heard.

### **Our vision**

An Asia Pacific where human rights are universally enjoyed and respected.

### **Our purpose**

To support and strengthen NHRIs in their efforts to promote and protect human rights throughout the Asia Pacific.

### **Our role**

We play multiple and interconnected roles with NHRIs, governments, civil society organisations and intergovernmental bodies, as:



**Adviser:** We deliver expert advice to support the establishment of independent and resilient NHRIs, based on the Paris Principles and international best practice.



**Capability developer:** We support capability development of NHRIs, providing them with resources and advice to effectively deliver on their mandate and respond to human rights abuses.



**Facilitator:** We convene NHRIs and other key stakeholders to collaborate, exchange expertise and contribute to human rights knowledge in regional and international settings



**Advocate:** We advocate for the protection and security of independent NHRIs when facing reprisals as well as compliance with the UN Paris Principles.



**Representative:** We serve as a collective voice for NHRIs at the regional and international level.

### **How we seek to create change**

Bringing about change on complex issues is hard, long-term work. It is the result of many committed groups, institutions and individuals working together for shared outcomes. Our goal is to work with our members, prospective members and others – governments, civil society and international partners – to build communities where the human rights of all people are respected, protected and fulfilled.

The APF's Strategic Plan seeks to contribute to four higher order outcomes:

- **Outcome 1:** More NHRIs in the Asia Pacific that comply with the Paris Principles and can exercise their mandate in safety.
- **Outcome 2:** NHRIs have strengthened capability to effectively promote, protect and respond to human rights issues.
- **Outcome 3:** NHRI voices are amplified in regional and international fora.
- **Outcome 4:** The APF is a well-functioning and governed network with an engaged membership.

During the implementation of the strategic plan, the APF will focus on the following three human rights priorities:

- Gender equality
- Environment and climate change
- Human rights defenders and civic space.

Indicators for the APF's outcomes human rights priorities form part of a robust monitoring and evaluation system that underpins implementation of the APF Strategic Plan. This Performance Report records our progress and performance over the first year of the Strategic Plan.

## 7.2 Outcome 1: More NHRIs in the Asia Pacific that comply with the Paris Principles and can exercise their mandate in safety

This outcome is focused on greater NHRI compliance with the Paris Principles through direct support around matters of legislation, NHRI establishment and accreditation. There are three components to this outcome: more NHRIs in the Asia Pacific region that attain and maintain GANHRI accreditation; better legislation to empower NHRIs to be effective and independent; and the protection of NHRIs to safely and effectively exercise their mandate.

### 7.2.1 An increase in the number of accredited NHRIs in the Asia Pacific region

To achieve this sub-outcome, our focus is on supporting NHRIs to understand and undertake the GANHRI accreditation process. We support improved NHRI compliance with the Paris Principles, which are the international standards for the mandate and performance of NHRIs. The APF's work on Paris Principles compliance includes supporting NHRIs to undertake the NHRI accreditation process, which is a function performed by the Subcommittee on Accreditation ('SCA') of GANHRI. We target NHRIs that are already accredited with GANHRI and undergoing a reaccreditation process so they can maintain or improve their accreditation status, and new institutions that are seeking accreditation for the first time with advice, training, and peer-to-peer learning

opportunities. The APF also supports GANHRI itself through technical advice on policy and procedure, as well as through its role as a regional network observer on the SCA.

### **Advice on GANHRI Accreditation**

The APF provided support to NHRIs, which were predominantly APF member institutions undergoing accreditation with GANHRI, at the SCA's sessions in October 2022 and March 2023. The NHRIs of Nepal, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, India, Indonesia, and Jordan were all reviewed during this period. APF support to these institutions included reviewing draft versions of their statement of compliance and other written application documents, advising on the draft summary prepared by the SCA secretariat, advising on preparation for the interview with the SCA, and de-briefing with institutional representatives following the outcome of the accreditation review. NHRIs from the Philippines, Indonesia, and Jordan all retained their A-status accreditation following the review at the SCA. The A-status NHRI of India had its accreditation status deferred, to allow the institution more time to address previous recommendations from the SCA.

The APF also provided support and advice to new and B-status NHRIs from Oman, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Pakistan, which all expressed an interest in applying for accreditation or reaccreditation. Following this support, the Ombudsperson of Turkmenistan sent a formal request to the SCA secretariat to be scheduled for accreditation, which will be considered by the SCA at its session in October 2023.

### **GANHRI SCA Sessions**

The APF provided support and technical assistance at an SCA retreat that was held over the weekend before the SCA's October 2022 session, at which SCA members, the SCA secretariat, the GANHRI Head Office, and regional NHRI networks deliberated on a range of matters of policy and procedural reform. Among other matters, the retreat included a discussion on measures to address the increasing volume of NHRIs subject to review at GANHRI and the attendant pressure on the SCA. Following the retreat, at the SCA's March 2023 session, the SCA piloted a new 'pre-session' meeting in February 2023 where members and observers met virtually to consider briefings from OHCHR and deliberate on the lists of questions to ask each NHRI under review. While the pre-session meeting placed an additional burden on participants from more remote time zones, it allowed for more time and space for rigorous discussion and deliberation during the in-person session in Geneva. Determining the interview questions for NHRIs prior to the session also allowed the SCA to provide the questions to NHRIs in the week prior to the interview. The SCA has decided to proceed with the pre-session model for future sessions, although it will now be known as the 'online component' of the session.

The APF also held elections for the regional membership of the SCA, which is currently held by the Independent Commission for Human Rights ('**ICHR**') of Palestine. The New Zealand Human Rights Commission ('**NZHRC**') was elected to succeed the ICHR as the new SCA member from the Asia Pacific region and will take up this role at the SCA's

March 2024 session. The NZHRC will also participate in the October 2023 SCA session as an observer prior to taking up its role at the following session. The NZHRC has designated its new Chief Executive as its representative at the SCA. With New Zealand's membership of the SCA, all four members of the SCA will be women.

### **Online and in-person APF Accreditation Workshop**

During the reporting period, the APF continued with its new approach of delivering support on accreditation through the Annual Program on GANHRI Accreditation, which is a blended learning course for senior staff and leadership of NHRIs to prepare NHRIs for the GANHRI accreditation process and provide background on the Paris Principles standards. The blended learning course involved an online course delivered through the APF's online learning platform, EdApp, which was held from 23<sup>rd</sup> January to 10<sup>th</sup> February 2023, and an in-person workshop in Bangkok, Thailand, which was held from 21<sup>st</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2023. The workshop was co-facilitated by the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand. Participants at the workshop were joined by panelists (4 female, 2 male) from the NHRIs of Malaysia, New Zealand, Thailand, and the Philippines, who shared their recent experiences with the GANHRI accreditation process and supported participants with practical exercises, which included simulations of the different procedures involved in GANHRI accreditation.

31 participants (22 female, 9 male) attended the Program workshop in Thailand from the NHRIs of Bahrain, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Maldives, Oman, Pakistan, the Philippines, Timor-Leste, Thailand, and Turkmenistan.

Program participants provided generally positive evaluations of the Program, although evaluation results indicated that participants didn't feel as though there was much content on gender. This may be attributed to the focus of course material on procedures of GANHRI accreditation (rather than Paris Principles standards), although when planning the next version of the Program the APF will consider how to incorporate more gender-relevant content.

### **7.2.2 More NHRIs with a legal mandate that complies with the Paris Principles**

This sub-outcome focuses on ensuring that new and existing NHRIs are established by a legal mandate that meets the Paris Principles and international best practice. To achieve this, the APF provides expert advice on institutional design and legislation to governments that want to establish a new NHRI, but also to existing NHRIs that want to strengthen their legal mandate. During the reporting period, this included engagements with government representatives, parliamentarians, and other state institutions from Cambodia, the Cook Islands, the United Arab Emirates ('UAE'), and the Federated States of Micronesia ('FSM') on the development of draft legislation and related policy proposals to establish an NHRI.

## **Cambodia**

The APF continued its support to the Cambodian Human Rights Committee (**'CHRC'**), which is an agency of the Government of Cambodia, to progress its proposal to establish an NHRI in Cambodia. The APF worked closely with the Cambodia country office of Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (**'OHCHR'**) on this engagement, which included reviewing successive drafts of legislation to establish the NHRI. The APF also travelled to Phnom Penh to attend two events co-facilitated by OHCHR. This included a technical workshop in July 2022 with representatives of the CHRC to discuss different elements of the proposed legislation, as well as a 'Knowledge Fair' in October 2022 with representatives of the Cambodian Parliament, senior representatives of Cambodian executive agencies and the Cambodian Bar Association to discuss the law, role and functions of a proposed Cambodian NHRI. In addition to the APF secretariat, representatives from the NHRIs of Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines participated in the Knowledge Fair and provided their expertise and experience on specific issues of interest including the selection and appointment process of NHRIs, complaint handling mechanisms, and the immunity and privileges of NHRI Commissioners and staff. In terms of the gender composition of APF representatives at the Knowledge Fair, there was 1 male from the secretariat and 5 females from APF member institutions. There were approximately 80 Cambodian participants attending the Knowledge Fair, and the vast majority of them were male.

## **Cook Islands**

A scoping study on the feasibility of establishing an NHRI in the Cook Islands was made in 2017 on the invitation of the Government of Cook Islands. The scoping visit recommended the establishment of the human rights mandate within the Ombudsman's Office. However, since the scoping study was conducted, there had been limited progress in establishing an NHRI.

In early 2021, the Ombudsman of Cook Islands and staff participated in an APF online course on understanding NHRIs and the Paris Principles. Following the course, the Ombudsman reached out to the APF to seek support in expanding the mandate of the Office to include human rights. The APF provided written advice on draft Cabinet submissions and instructions for drafting of legislation prepared by the University of Newcastle at the request of the Office.

In January 2022, a new Ombudsman, Niki Rattle, was appointed, and the APF offered to support the Office to hold a national consultation on the establishment of an NHRI in Cook Islands, with the aim to reignite the process and support for the work nationally, and to support increased understanding of human rights and NHRI mandate, roles and functions for key actors and stakeholders.

From 9<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> August 2022 a 'National Dialogue' was organised to revive the process of establishing an NHRI. The objective of the National Dialogue was to increase the understanding of the relevant stakeholders in Cook Islands of the role, mandate and



functions of an NHRI in relation to the Paris Principles and support the process of establishment of an NHRI in the Cook Islands.

The APF also invited and supported the Deputy Ombudsman of Samoa to attend the dialogue, to facilitate exchange of knowledge and experience of the Samoa Ombudsman Office in establishing the human rights mandate. The dialogue was also attended by APF partners in the Pacific, the South Pacific Community ('SPC') and OHCHR. Participants included 27 women and 16 men in attendance, (63 % women to 37% men). In terms of participation, it was observed that both men and women spoke up during discussions. In general, the participants reflected a diverse age group, from youth representatives to traditional elders.

The plan of action which came out of the dialogue included having legislation passed within the next 12 months and highlighted the importance of conducting consultations in the Northern Islands of the country. The event also highlighted the need for in-person consultation activities in the Pacific which facilitates a deeper discussion and the opportunity to build relationships across stakeholders. The dialogue outcome also recommended to continue to closely liaise with the Ombudsman Office and other relevant stakeholders, such as the Crown Law Office, on the next steps for additional consultations and policy development.

### **Federated States of Micronesia**

An SPC and APF scoping team visited Pohnpei, FSM to consult with national and Pohnpei State government and other stakeholders from 16 to 22 July 2017. A strong recommendation from this visit was to have similar consultations in the other three states of FSM in order to understand the challenges of a federated state, and to ensure state support for an NHRI should it be established. Hence, another SPC and APF scoping team visited Chuuk, Kosrae and Yap to consult with government and other stakeholders from 20 to 30 May 2019.

Although the National Government and the 4 State governments of FSM expressed their interest to move towards establishing an NHRI, the process was not followed up since – mainly due to the COVID-19 pandemic and disruption of activities. In February 2023, during the Pacific Regional Forum (PRF) held in Fiji, APF and SPC met with the government delegation of FSM and they requested a return visit to update stakeholders.

From 15<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> April 2023 the APF and SPC, with the support of the national government, organised two teams to visit the country. The two teams held meetings with the State governments in Kosrae, Pohnpei, Chuuk and Yap, and the national government officials as well as with other stakeholders. All 4 states expressed their enthusiasm to move ahead with the process. The passing of formal resolutions by the state parliaments was identified as the first major step.



## **Solomon Islands**

From 10<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> May 2023 a APF and SPC scoping mission to the Solomon Islands was undertaken in conjunction with a UPR workshop organised. Based on the discussions with relevant government officials, the following next steps were agreed:

- Form a Working Group/Task Force to Establish an NHRI led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the Deputy Chair being the Ministry of Justice
- Develop TORs and Membership with support from SPC/APF/OHCHR
- Develop a Cabinet Paper to approve the Task Force to Establish an NHRI
- Request Scoping Visit from SPC/APF/OHCHR
- WG/TF visit to Samoa and/or Fiji for lessons learned
- WG/TF to develop a model and draft legislation based on these steps.

In addition, it was agreed that SPC and APF will support the creation of the Task Force to establish an NHRI.

## **Support to APF Members**

The APF also provided technical assistance to its member institutions from the Philippines, Kazakhstan, Palestine, Samoa, Oman and Australia to support the development of proposals to amend different aspects of their respective legal mandates to improve compliance with the Paris Principles. Some key highlights of this work are elaborated below.

### Kazakhstan

Following APF support to the Commissioner for Human Rights of Kazakhstan the previous year, the Commissioner's mandate was entrenched in the Constitution of Kazakhstan, which required the development of a separate constitutional law to elaborate new functions and powers for the Commissioner. In cooperation with the United Nations Development Program ('UNDP'), in August 2022 the APF provided analysis of a draft version of the constitutional law to support the Commissioner in her advocacy with parliamentarians to strengthen the compliance of the institution's mandate with the Paris Principles. A new Commissioner was appointed to the institution in early 2023 and also requested APF's analysis of the final text of the constitutional law to identify any outstanding issues of Paris Principles compliance, with a view to preparing for an application for reaccreditation with GANHRI.

### Australia

The Australian Human Rights Commission ('AHRC') requested that the APF assist its advocacy to strengthen the process for the selection and appointment of members of the Commission to address recommendations made by the SCA in March 2022 that were grounds for the deferral of the AHRC's accreditation status. The APF attended various briefings held by the AHRC for its national partner organisations to explain the scope and nature of reforms necessary to address the SCA's recommendation. The APF

also provided briefing materials for the AHRC to engage with the Australian Attorney-General and his Department, who subsequently introduced amendments to the AHRC's enabling legislation and established a set of appointment guidelines to improve the independence and transparency of the appointment process. The AHRC will be reviewed again by the SCA at its October 2023 session at which the new appointment process will be considered. Notwithstanding the outcome of this review, the Australian case study presents a positive example of the potential for the GANHRI accreditation process to elicit legislative and policy change at the domestic level to strengthen the independence and effectiveness of NHRIs.

### The Philippines

Following its reaccreditation with A status at the SCA's March 2023 session, the Commission on Human Rights ('CHR') of the Philippines sought assistance from the APF to support its advocacy for amendments to various aspects of its legal mandate to address the SCA's recommendations. This included advice on a draft Executive Order for appointments to the CHR, as well as broader mandate reform through a draft 'CHR Charter', which, among other things, seeks to consolidate the CHR's legal mandate in a single statute. The APF provided an assessment of draft versions of the CHR Charter and Executive Order and will continue to work closely with the CHR as it consults externally on the reform process with members of Congress and other stakeholder.

### 7.2.3 NHRIs are protected from threats of reprisals

This sub-outcome is about ensuring NHRIs that face threats to their existence are supported to continue to exercise their mandate without fear of reprisals. Where NHRIs or their personnel are targets of intimidation or subject to threats of reprisals for exercising their human rights mandate, the APF supports those NHRIs by undertaking public statements, convening dialogues, advocacy with government and international organisations, as well as facilitating respite and relocation for NHRI personnel at risk.

### **Afghanistan**

Since the fall of Kabul to the Taliban in August 2021, the APF has been providing emergency advice and assistance to the staff and senior leadership team of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission ('AIHRC') as they have been navigating the political changes and reprisals on the NHRI. This work included:

- Coordination with international partners and governments on the provision of humanitarian visas to AIHRC staff and their families identified most at risk of reprisals from the Taliban,
- Advocacy for the safe passage of AIHRC staff and their families,
- International advocacy with partners on emergency funds,
- Support in the coordination of securing sensitive human rights documentation and personnel files,
- Provision of advice to Senior Leadership on management of the crisis,

- Advocacy for humanitarian visas for former AIHRC staff, their families and former associates and partners of the AIHRC,
- Coordination with Microsoft on the provision of technical support to the AIHRC,
- Provision of pro bono support from an international law firm to seek secure access to the NHRI's account at the Afghanistan International Bank,
- Mobilisation of support statements at the Human Rights Council.

The APF worked closely with its member, the AIHRC, to facilitate the safe departure of staff members and Commissioners from Afghanistan. With the provision of project funding, the APF worked to facilitate the extraction/exit of 604 individuals in total made up of AIHRC staff and their families. This included assisting staff with their applications for humanitarian and/or other visas; travel arrangements to safe countries; obtain approvals for family members; supporting their relocation to third countries, and later to their final destination.

## **Kyrgyzstan**

In April 2023 the Chairpersons of both APF and GANHRI expressed grave concern for the Ombudsman of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, Ms Atyr Abdrakhmatova, due to the early termination of her mandate. In a joint letter to the President of the Kyrgyz Republic and other senior officials, the APF and GANHRI called on government representatives to exercise their influence to ensure that the proposal to terminate Ms Abdrakhmatova's appointment was defeated.

The Ombudsman of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan is the NHRI of Kyrgyzstan and operates within the framework of the 'Paris Principles'. A fundamental requirement of the Principles is that NHRIs are able to discharge their mandate independently and without interference from government and other actors.

## **APF Human Rights Defenders Working Group**

The APF held the first meeting of its Human Rights Defenders ('HRDs') Working Group on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2023, bringing together representatives from the NHRIs of Fiji, Kazakhstan, Maldives, Nepal, Oman, Philippines, and Qatar.

The HRDs Working Group was established to provide strategic guidance and leadership in implementing the APF Regional Action Plan on HRDs. The Plan, adopted in 2021, outlines the actions that the APF and its members will undertake by 2025 to strengthen the rights of HRDs in the Asia Pacific.

HRDs increasingly face challenges to their security, well-being, and freedom to address rights violations. The shrinking civic space and decline in democratic values in the region also impacts on the ability of defenders to work safely. To tackle these issues, advocacy, strategic partnerships, and collaboration between NHRIs and other stakeholders is crucial. The Regional Action Plan also fulfils a significant commitment made by the APF and its members under the 2018 Marrakesh Declaration, which

focuses on expanding civic space and promoting and protecting HRDs with an emphasis on women and the role of NHRIs.

During the meeting, Working Group participants provided inputs to a baseline study that examines the challenges and opportunities faced by APF members in implementing the Regional Action Plan, and discussed next steps forward. The Working Group will also provide guidance to ensure the Plan's implementation, and will monitor progress, review indicators, and make recommendations to the APF Forum Council and General Assembly on the rights of HRDs in the region. A comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework will also track the Plan's progress and will include regular public reports.

The HRDs Working Group serves as a platform for collaboration among NHRIs within the APF membership and the wider Asia Pacific region. It facilitates the sharing of experiences in national protection and promotion activities, as well as the development of skills and systems.

## 7.2.4 Performance Metrics

The APF's Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning framework defines indicators for tracking the achievement of results under Outcome 1.

### **Indicator 1.1 – Number of A/B accredited members**

Indicator 1.1 under the APF's 2022-2027 Strategic Plan considers the number of accredited members, and the proportion of A and B-status members, to measure the impact of the APF's work to support Paris Principles compliance among NHRIs in the Asia Pacific region. The APF uses GANHRI accreditation as a prerequisite for membership, which explains the rationale for using GANHRI accreditation as a mechanism to measure increased membership. The proportion of A and B-status members also provides an assessment of any shifts regionally on Paris Principles compliance.

At 1 July 2022 the APF was comprised of 26 accredited NHRIs, with 17 A-status institutions and nine B-status institutions. In July 2022, the AIHRC had its GANHRI accreditation status suspended as a result of the Taliban's occupation of the Commission's physical offices across the country. Following the decision from GANHRI, the APF Forum Council also suspended the AIHRC's APF membership at its Annual General Meeting in September 2022. The GANHRI accreditation status of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka ('HRCSL') was downgraded from A to B status at the SCA's October 2022 session. At the same session, the SCA recommended the downgrade of the accreditation status of the National Human Rights Commission of Nepal from A to B status, although this downgrade will not take effect until the SCA's October 2023 session.

At 30 June 2023 the APF was comprised of 25 accredited members (a reduction of 1 institution), with 16 A-status institutions (a reduction of 1 institution) and 9 B-status institutions, with one suspended institution (the AIHRC).

At its March 2023 session, the SCA decided to initiate a special review into the accreditation of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission ('**MNHRC**'), which is a B-status NHRI. This is the first special review of its kind under new provisions of the GANHRI Statute, which were endorsed in March 2023, to allow for special reviews of B status institutions. The special review of the MNHRC will take place in October 2023.

There are multiple new, unaccredited institutions in the region that are in the process of preparing to apply for GANHRI accreditation for the first time. This includes institutions from Pakistan and Turkmenistan, both of which have initiated the process of applying for accreditation with the SCA secretariat.

#### **Indicator 1.2 – Paris Principles compliant legislation changes as a result of APF secretariat technical assistance**

The APF's 2022-2027 Strategic Plan considers a new approach to measuring the impact of the APF's technical assistance on NHRI legislation, looking at the quality of the final text of any instruments on which the APF provided advice or analysis. With limited examples of NHRI legislation entering into force during the 2022-2023 reporting period, there is not a significant set of data on which to conduct an assessment under indicator 1.2, although some examples are provided below.

##### Australia

In the Australian context, the APF was engaged by the AHRC to advise on amendments to the AHRC's enabling legislation and the development of policy to strengthen the process for selection and appointment of AHRC commissioners.

The outcome of this engagement so far has been the passage of amendments to the various statutes that provide for the appointment of Commissioners, to provide that a person may not be appointed as the President or a commissioner of the AHRC unless the Minister is satisfied that 'the selection of the person for the appointment is the result of a process that: (i) was merit-based; and (ii) included public advertising of the position'. These amendments were the first item on the legislative agenda for the incoming Attorney-General of the incoming Government, which were passed in November 2022. The Government has committed to further strengthening the appointments process with the adoption of departmental policy to support compliance with the Paris Principles. This policy was only available in draft at the end of the 2022-2023 reporting period, although contains significant improvements to the existing process by providing more opportunities for the participation of civil society organisations in the selection and shortlisting of candidates. While the final version of the guidelines has not yet been adopted, the Australian case study is a positive

example of the GANHRI accreditation process and APF technical assistance working in tandem to promote better compliance with the Paris Principles.

### Kazakhstan

A comparative assessment of the texts of the draft and final versions of the Constitutional Law establishing the legal mandate for the Commissioner for Human Rights of Kazakhstan, on which the APF provided analysis of issues of non-compliance with the Paris Principles, reveals that only a minority of the APF's recommendations were implemented by the Kazakh parliament in the final text of the Law. Some positive amendments included a stronger functional immunity protection for the Commissioner to protect against the threat of legal proceedings for any actions undertaken in good faith and in an official capacity, as well as removing the 'commission of criminal offenses incompatible with the position held' as a ground for the Commissioner's early termination. However, notwithstanding the APF's analysis, a number of provisions remain in the final text of the Constitutional Law that are unlikely to be fully compliant with the Paris Principles.

There are various reasons that may have contributed to the limited impact of the APF's assistance in the Kazakhstan context. While the APF provided its written analysis to the Commissioner, it was otherwise not directly engaged in any consultations with government or parliamentarians to provide a briefing on the analysis. The European Commission for Democracy through Law ('Venice Commission') was also engaged directly by the Parliament of Kazakhstan to provide a legal opinion on the draft Constitutional Law. Many of the recommendations of the Venice Commission were also ultimately not taken up in the final text of the Constitutional Law, despite its stronger political mandate and direct relationship with the Parliament. To strengthen the impact of future advisory engagements in national contexts in which the APF and Venice Commission are jointly engaged, it may be valuable to consult with Venice Commission secretariat at an early stage to discuss opportunities for coordination and ensure consistent messaging on any related technical assistance.

### **Indicator 1.3 – Impact of APF secretariat's support for NHRIs facing threats**

The APF's 2022-2027 Strategic Plan monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning framework required that the APF establish a baseline during the reporting period in order to measure future impact.

The APF therefore commissioned a baseline assessment 'Human Rights Defenders and Civic Space Baseline Study' (the Report) to evaluate the ability of NHRIs in the Asia Pacific region to effectively implement the "Regional Action Plan on Human Rights Defenders 2021-2025" (**'HRDs RAP'**).

The HRDs RAP proposes eight national actions that NHRIs can undertake to advocate for the rights of HRDs in their respective countries: (1) advocate for national legal protections, (2) promote gender equality and mainstream the recognition of Women

HRDs, (3) raise awareness of the rights of HRDs, (4) develop early warning systems, (5) monitor violations against HRDs, (6) report on violations against HRDs, (7) engage with the international human rights system, and (8) strengthen national networks of HRDs.

The baseline study presents a disaggregated analysis of the NHRIs' implementation of the eight HRDs RAP principles between 2019 and 2023. As a result, it provides new insights that can contribute to a more effective implementation of the RAP principles in the foreseeable future.

The analysis highlights that many NHRIs in the Asia Pacific region have made notable progress in adopting and partially implementing the principles outlined in the HRDs RAP. However, despite the widespread adoption of the RAP, a closer examination of their actions reveals significant areas for improvement across all eight indicators.

### 7.2.5 Gender and Outcome 1

The APF is committed to gender equity and equality. We seek to ensure that this commitment is reflected in the design and delivery of our activities.

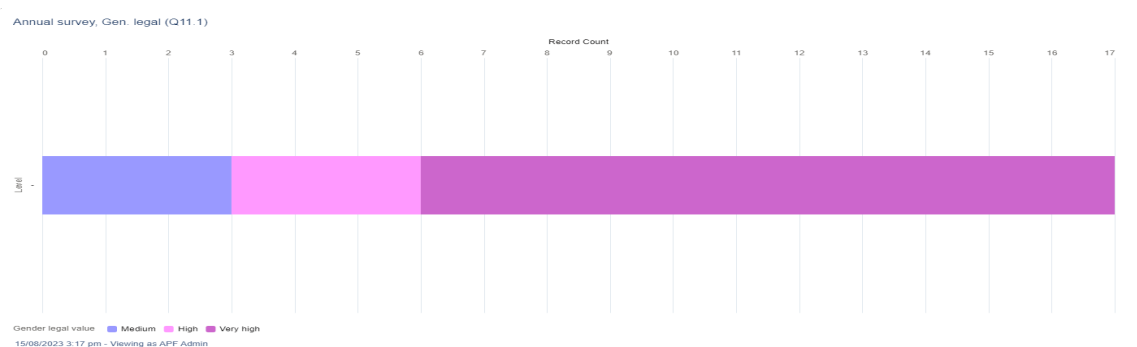
The APF continues to highlight the importance of gender considerations from the early stages of establishment work. For example, to support the Office of the Ombudsman of Cook Islands to increase their understanding of gender equality and gender mainstreaming, staff of the Office were invited to participate in the APF's online course on gender equality.

In its advice on proposed legislation to establish an NHRI in Cambodia, the APF has continued to propose structured measures to ensure gender diversity and pluralism among the leadership and staff of the proposed NHRI. This has included a commitment from the government agency leading the development of the proposal to include a mandatory minimum number of women members of the NHRI's decision-making body.

On NHRI accreditation, the APF also provided support to APF members on how to implement SCA recommendations on strengthening pluralism and gender diversity in its staffing and membership.

#### **Figure 1: Satisfaction with the implementation of gender under Outcome 1**

We asked our members to rate their satisfaction with the implementation of gender equity and equality in our provision of legal and policy advice under Outcome 1. Of the 17 members that responded, eleven members rated it as 'very high' and three members rated it as 'high' (a total of 82%) and three members rated it as 'medium'.

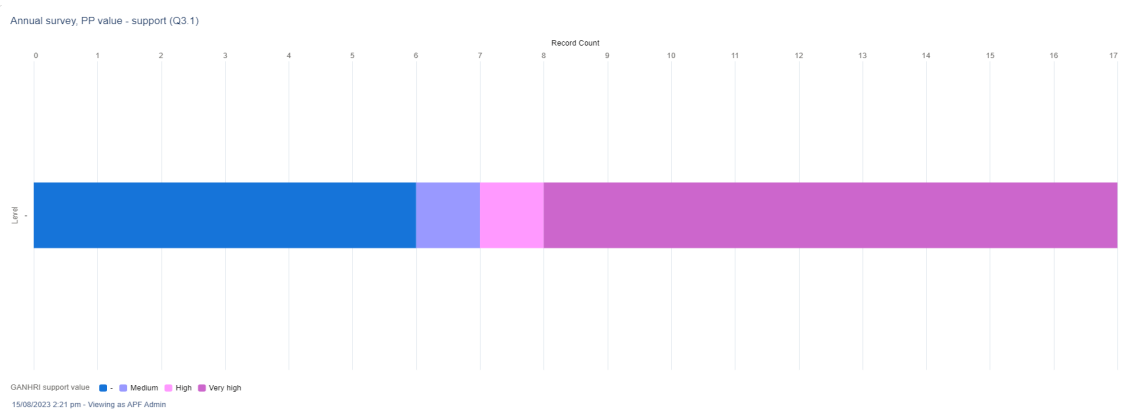


## 7.2.6 Member Feedback

The results of the APF's Annual Member survey question on member satisfaction with APF advice and expertise offer some initial reflections on APF's performance in this area. It should be noted, however, that these results only consider satisfaction and perceived value of the APF's advice among its membership. Accordingly, the results do not track the actual impact of the APF's advice, nor do they consider APF's work beyond its membership (such as the APF's work with governments to support the establishment of new institutions).

### Figure 2: Value of APF Support on GANHRI Accreditation

The APF provides support to our members to undertake the GANHRI accreditation process. We asked our members to rate the value of our support on GANHRI accreditation between 1 June 2022 to 31 May 2023. Of the 17 members that responded, nine members rated the value of our support as 'very high' and one member rated it as 'high' (a total of 59%), and one member rated it as 'medium'. The remaining six members (35%) indicated that the question was 'not applicable' as they were not involved in the GANHRI accreditation process during the reporting period.

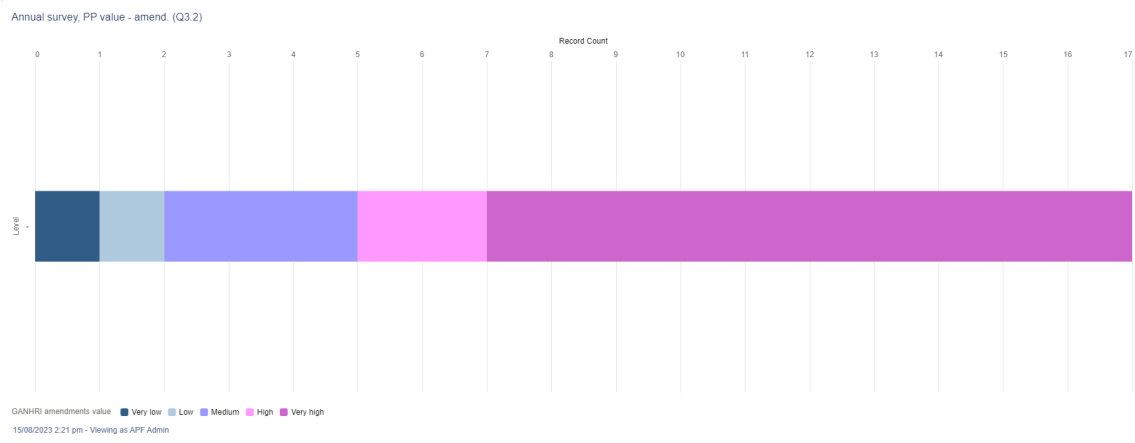


### Figure 3: Value of APF Support on Paris Principles Compliance

The APF provides support to our members on the compliance of national NHRI legislation with the Paris Principles. We asked our members to rate the value of APF support to advocate for amendments to an institution's enabling legal framework to comply with the Paris Principles. This includes support from the APF to assist in the implementation of recommendations of GANHRI's subcommittee on accreditation

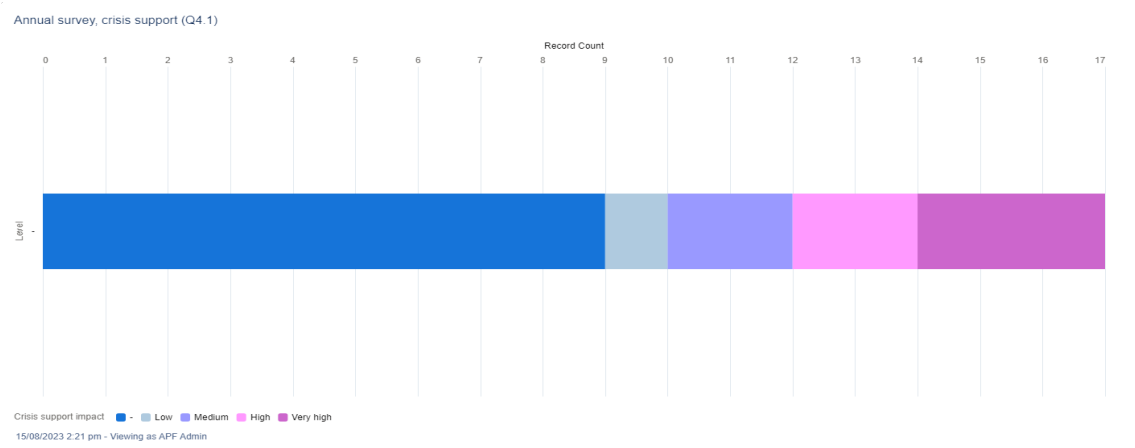


(‘SCA’). Of the 17 members that responded, ten members rated the value of our support as ‘very high’ and two members rated it as ‘high’ (a total of 71%), three members rated it as ‘medium’, one member rated it as ‘low’ and one member rated it as ‘very low’.



**Figure 4: Value of APF in providing advice and support in times of reprisals or crises**

The APF seeks to provide advice and support to NHRIs facing threats of reprisals and/or human rights crises that jeopardise their existence or ability to carry out their mandates effectively and independently. We asked our members to rate the role played by the APF in providing advice and support in times of reprisals or crises from 1 June 2022 to 31 May 2023. Of the 17 members that responded, three members rated the value of our support as ‘very high’ and two members rated it as ‘high’ (a total of 29%), two members rated it as ‘medium’, and one member rated it as ‘low’. The remaining nine members (53%) indicated that the question was ‘not applicable’ during the reporting period.



## 7.3 NHRIs have strengthened capability to effectively promote, protect and respond to human rights issues

This outcome is focused on supporting greater NHRI compliance with the Paris Principles by developing their capabilities across four streams: operational effectiveness; leadership; responding to human rights issues and technical capability to undertake their mandate. For the APF, achieving this outcome is about delivering a range of capability-focused programs and support including capacity assessments, training courses, coaching and mentoring, resources, facilitating networks and sharing experiences and expert advice.

Achieving this outcome will ultimately help create effective NHRIs that are empowered with the skills and expertise to protect, promote, and enforce human rights. Critically, this outcome will be evidenced through greater NHRI compliance with the Paris Principles.

### 7.3.1 NHRIs have increased operational capability

This sub-outcome is focused on developing NHRI operational skills, expertise, and capability to more effectively protect and promote human rights. This includes strengthening internal operations such as strategic planning, monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning ('MEAL') and gender mainstreaming. Within this, we focus on providing training courses, advice and resources that enable NHRIs to strengthen their operational capability to deliver on their mandate.

#### **Fiji NHRI Strategic Planning Workshop**

From the 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> July 2022 the APF supported the Fiji Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission ('FHRADC') to undertake a strategic planning workshop to establish its human rights goals and priorities for the next five years.

The two-day workshop, held in Suva, Fiji was facilitated by the APF with the participation from the FHRADC's staff and commissioners. As part of the strategic planning process, Commission staff travelled throughout Fiji, including to remote provinces, to consult with individuals and community members on the draft plan, inviting them to share their concerns and views on key human rights issues.

The workshop was an opportunity to review the strategic priorities based on this feedback, and to identify outcomes, actions and measures of success.

#### **Turkmenistan Capacity Assessment**

From 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> July 2022 the APF held the capacity assessment ('CA') preliminary meetings with the Turkmenistan Ombudsman, UNDP, OHCHR, government and civil society stakeholders to discuss the forthcoming implementation of the CA. The APF facilitated these meetings virtually over a three day period.

From 4<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> October 2022, a CA of the Ombudsperson's Office of Turkmenistan was held at the invitation of the Ombudsman and in partnership with UNDP and OHCHR. The assessment was arranged by APF, OHCHR and UNDP under the framework of the 'Global Principles for Assessing the Capacity of National Human Rights Institutions' developed in 2011.

The purpose of the CA was to provide a thorough analysis of the current strengths and capacity gaps of the Ombudsman's Office and recommend strategic priorities and actions to support it to fulfill its mandate to promote and protect human rights more effectively in line with the UN endorsed Paris Principles.

The CA team members consisted of representatives from the APF, UNDP and OHCHR, including the APF member institution, the National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia. As part of the assessment, the team held interviews with the Ombudsman, her staff, representatives of various government ministries, the Supreme Court, local government, and civil society organizations in Ashgabat and in Ahal and Balkan regions.

Through research, interviews and a survey, the CA Team considered the mandate and functioning of the Ombudsman, its current capacity and what it requires for its strengthening over the next three to five years.

The CA team finalised the Capacity Assessment report which included recommendations on strategic priorities and actions for the consideration of the Ombudsman. In a virtual meeting dated 17 March 2023, the Ombudsman said she accepted the CA recommendations. UNDP in Turkmenistan and the APF have been in discussions regarding supporting several of the CA recommendations in a joint effort in 2023 and potentially up to 2025. The Ombudsman has committed to publish the CA report on its website in Russian, Turkman and English.

### **Fiji NHRI MEAL Workshop**

From 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2022 the APF provided technical support to the FHRADC to develop a MEAL framework that will support the FHRADC's ability to gather data and report on the impacts it has on human rights in Fiji. Under this activity, APF helped the FHRADC to:

- strengthen the overall understanding of monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning throughout FHRADC
- build leadership and expertise in the facilitation of MEAL processes
- develop a MEAL framework to work alongside its strategic plan.

The first two days of the workshop were aimed at staff who were identified to be the priority leads (one for each of the five identified priority areas in the strategic plan). The priority leads included 1 woman and 4 men. Total staff of FHRADC includes 5 women and 5 men. APF facilitators were two women. There was sufficient participation of all genders in the workshop in general.

## **Regional Online MEAL Course**

A robust MEAL framework is an essential operational tool that can help a NHRI evaluate the effectiveness of the institution, demonstrate the impact of their work and provide a data driven picture of the role of the institution in protecting and promoting human rights. An effective MEAL framework can also support broader management functions and help a NHRI to reflect and adjust its strategic approach and encourage a positive learning culture within the institution.

To support members, the APF has developed a practical guide for NHRIs introducing MEAL concepts and how to implement the process of MEAL, available here: <https://www.asiapacificforum.net/resources/monitoring-evaluation-accountability-and-learning-guide-national-human-rights-institutions/>

The APF has piloted the resource through providing online learning courses and capacity development programmes to the NHRIs of Samoa, Malaysia and Fiji. With this experience, the APF conducted an online learning course on MEAL to the membership in February 2023. The online learning programme was designed to support participants from NHRIs to increase their understanding of MEAL concepts and build their confidence to carry out a MEAL process within their NHRIs. The online workshop and live sessions were held from 13<sup>th</sup> February to 10<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

## **APF-UNDP-OHCHR Potential Capacity Assessment Kyrgyzstan Ombudsman**

On 27<sup>th</sup> February 2023 the APF held a preliminary meeting with the Kyrgyzstan Ombudsman, UNDP and the OHCHR to discuss the possible implementation of a CA. The APF delivered an introductory briefing on the CA process, which is designed to enable NHRIs to develop and implement capacity development strategies to strengthen their ability to promote and protect human rights. However, this process has been delayed due to the dismissal of the then Ombudsman by the Parliament in April 2023.

## **Kazakhstan Capacity Assessment**

From 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> May 2023 the APF held a virtual CA preparatory meetings with the leadership and staff of the Kazakhstan National Centre for Human Rights, UNDP, OHCHR, government and civil society representatives to discuss the CA and to explain its methodology.

From 19<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023, the CA of the Kazakhstan National Centre for Human Rights was held and facilitated in partnership with UNDP and OHCHR. The purpose of the CA was to provide a thorough analysis of the current strengths and capacity gaps of a NHRI and recommend strategic priorities and actions to support it to fulfil its human rights mandate in line with the Paris Principles. This process included research as well as surveys and interviews with the leadership and all staff. The CA team visited

the NCHR's head office in Astana and its several regional offices. It also met with governmental agencies and CSOs in these regions.

As part of the assessment, the team also held interviews with representatives of various government agencies, the Constitutional Court, UN agencies, government and CSOs.

The CA team consisted of an NHRI Expert Consultant, the APF secretariat, UNDP, OHCHR, and a representative from the Samoan Ombudsman.

After the adoption of the report and recommendations, the APF and its partners will also provide ongoing support after the assessment to assist the NHRI in implementing the recommended strategies and recommendations. This support includes mentoring, training, and technical assistance.

### **Timor-Leste NHRI MEAL Workshop**

A MEAL Framework supports NHRIs to gather data for reporting on the impacts it has on human rights in its country. A MEAL Framework also supports NHRIs to gauge how well they are achieving their strategic priorities as established by their strategic plans.

The collaboration between Timor-Leste NHRI and the APF in the facilitation of its MEAL processes is expected to result in the following outcomes:

- The organisation-wide culture of MEAL within the Office will be strengthened.
- The leadership of the Office will be able to develop and implement a MEAL Framework alongside its Strategic Plan. This will include relevant MEAL Plans that included:
  - ethical principles
  - indicators, baselines, and targets
  - data types and sources
  - data methods, questions, and analysis
  - dependencies and assumptions
  - responsibilities and timeframes.

The MEAL support process ran from May 2023 to the end of June 2023. The in-country workshop was held from 19-23 June 2023.

### **7.3.2 NHRIs demonstrate leadership**

This sub-outcome aims to support and empower NHRIs to be leaders in protecting and promoting human rights. To deliver on this priority, the APF focuses on outreach activities, conducting high-level dialogues and providing ad-hoc advice. Ultimately, this is about creating NHRIs that live and foster a culture of independence, lead necessary conversations, demonstrate initiative and are fully compliant with the Paris Principles.

## **Mongolian NHRI High Level Dialogue**

From 31<sup>st</sup> October to 2 November 2022 the APF convened a virtual High-Level Dialogue ('HLD') with the National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia ('NHRCM'), to provide an overview of the APF's work and to exchange ideas on strengthening capacity across all areas of the organisation.

The dialogue provided an opportunity to engage with NHRCM senior leaders, including recently appointed Commissioners, on a range of topics, including the Commission's role as a National Preventive Mechanism ('NPM') for Mongolia. NPMs are torture prevention bodies which conduct regular monitoring visits to places of detention and have a key role to play in complementing the work of international human rights mechanisms such as the UN Human Rights Council, Treaty Bodies, and visiting UN mechanisms including Special Procedures and the UN Subcommittee on the Prevention of Torture. The three-day dialogue also included discussions about the role of the Commission in protecting and promoting the rights of HRDs.

During the meeting, Khunan Jargalsaikhan, NHRCM Chairperson, provided an overview of the Commission's current work, while Commissioner Dondov Sangisharav presented on the NHRCM's current engagement and achievements relating to the Commission's HRDs mechanism. Commissioner Tselmen Yadamjav provides an outline of current engagement relating to the role of the Commission as NPM.

## **Chairperson Leadership Outreach Program – Jordan NHRI**

On 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023, as part of its Leadership Services, the APF held its 'Chairperson Leadership Outreach' program with the Chair of Jordan's National Centre for Human Rights ('NCHR'), Ms Samar Khaled al Haj Hassan.

The virtual meeting provided an opportunity for the NHCR and APF to discuss the NCHR's human rights priorities under the leadership of Ms Hassan. Ms Hassan was appointed as Chairperson in October 2022 and is the first woman to hold the role.

The NCHR has an extensive mandate to address a wide range of human rights issues, including violations, complaints, education and promotion, and integrating human rights into legislation and practices. During the session, Ms. Hassan highlighted the NCHR's ongoing work and key areas of focus, including its commitment to women's rights and gender equality.

On 10<sup>th</sup> May 2023 the APF also conducted an on-line 'Introduction to the APF' with the Chairperson and senior representatives to discuss potential areas of Jordan-APF cooperation.

These engagements have led to ongoing discussions to further support the NCHR, including a possible CA in 2024.

## **Introduction to the APF Program – Timor Leste NHRI**

On 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2023 the APF secretariat held one of its Leadership programmes the 'Introduction to the APF' with the newly appointed Provedor for Human Rights and Justice of Timor Leste ('PDHJ') to discuss the organisation's priorities and potential areas of APF support.

As Timor Leste's NHRI, the PDHJ has a mandate to promote, protect and monitor respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in the country. It also has a crucial role in strengthening the rule of law, promoting accountability, and ensuring the participation of citizens in the democratic process. As a young, post-conflict country, however, Timor Leste faces significant human rights challenges. Addressing systemic human rights violations is a challenging but important task for the PDHJ.

During the online meeting, Provedor Virgilio da Silva Guterres, who began his office in December 2022, provided updates on the PDHJ's current work. Institutional capacity remains a challenge for the organisation, including legal capacity, which is vital for addressing legislative gaps and enabling the institution to engage with and make recommendations to relevant State agencies.

This program has led to further capacity development support to the PDHJ in the form of MEAL training.

## **APF – UAE NHRI Meetings**

Following in person meetings at the margins of the APF regional meeting held in Geneva in March 2023 with the Chairperson, Commissioners and senior leadership of the NHRI of UAE, the APF held a series of bilateral meetings with institution to explore possible UAE-APF cooperation in the following areas:

- A HLD for the Board of Trustees.
- Capacity development opportunities for staff.
- Paris Principles review of mandate and assistance with accreditation.
- Engagement in APF activities as an Observer.

## **APF – Taiwan NHRI Meeting**

On 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2023 the APF held a virtual meeting with senior representatives of the National Human Rights Commission of Taiwan to explore possible Taiwan-APF cooperation in the following areas:

- Capacity development opportunities for staff.
- Engagement in APF activities as an Observer.

## NHRI Leadership Guide

Due to their unique nature, leading NHRIs is a significant task. New NHRI leaders may face challenges understanding their new roles and responsibilities and the complexity of the work of NHRIs. Even experienced NHRI leaders regularly encounter new issues and challenges in their work.

In response, the APF developed a new resource to assist leaders in meeting these challenges. The NHRI leadership guide describes the nature of NHRIs and the requirements of NHRI leadership. It sets out the roles and responsibilities of the various categories of leaders – those who head the institution, others appointed to statutory positions within the institution, the senior executive officer ('**SEO**') and other senior staff, acting individually and collectively. These are all NHRI leaders with important roles to play in directing and managing the NHRI and its operations and ensuring its effectiveness.

### 7.3.3 NHRIs have the necessary skills and expertise

This sub-outcome focuses on developing the capability and capacity of NHRIs to respond to human rights issues. Within this, our focus areas will be on gender equality through gender mainstreaming, human rights impacted by environmental degradation and climate change, and shrinking civic spaces and the protection of human rights defenders.

#### Online Course on Advancing Human Rights in Humanitarian Action

From 11<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022 the APF delivered an online course in partnership with OHCHR, to support NHRIs to protect human rights during humanitarian crises.

The course aimed to strengthen the capability of NHRI staff in the Asia Pacific by building awareness and knowledge on human rights in humanitarian action and highlighting the value that NHRIs can bring to humanitarian preparedness and responses. A specific emphasis was placed on the gender dimensions of humanitarian crises.

With floods, fires, typhoons and other natural disasters becoming more intense and more frequent due to climate change, NHRIs from across the Asia Pacific shared ideas on how to integrate human rights into emergency responses to these events. The workshop explored the role of NHRIs in relation to:

- Early warning and contingency planning
- Monitoring, including information gathering, documentation and analysis
- Advocacy and reporting in humanitarian emergencies
- Ensuring equality and non-discrimination in humanitarian responses, with a focus on vulnerable groups
- Building partnerships with other organisations delivering humanitarian responses.



## **Nepal Workshop on NHRIs and Journalists**

From 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> November 2022 International Media Support ('IMS'), a non-profit organisation working to strengthen the capacity of media to reduce conflict, strengthen democracy and facilitate dialogue, and the National Human Rights Commission of Nepal hosted a workshop in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Representatives from the NHRIs of Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines and Indonesia, and from the APF secretariat, took part in the workshop to share their experiences and comment on the anchoring of safety mechanisms for journalists and HRDs.

In 2012, IMS began working with the National Human Rights Commission of Nepal ('NHRC') to examine the idea of establishing a mechanism to promote journalist safety anchored by an NHRI. In 2019, the NHRC adopted a directive to enable it to set up such a mechanism.

Similar efforts began in Pakistan in 2013, when the country was selected as a pilot for launching the [UN Plan of Action on Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity](#). In 2021, two bills were passed in Pakistan to improve the safety of media professionals. Similarly, since 2015 through the implementation of the [Philippine Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists](#), there have been efforts towards establishing a safety mechanism led by the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines. And in Indonesia, journalists and civil society groups have begun consultations on developing a safety mechanism for media workers.

The workshop also aimed to strengthen the ability of NHRIs to monitor and report on violations against journalists and HRDs, and included a session focused on the rights and experiences of women journalists and the role of NHRIs in ensuring a gender-sensitive approach to protecting freedom of expression.

Other participants at the workshop included representatives from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ('UNESCO'), the Danish Institute for Human Rights, as well as civil society representatives from across the region.

## **APF-UNFPA Virtual Seminar on Reproductive Rights**

In 2022, the United Nations Population Fund ('UNFPA') Asia Pacific human rights focal points drafted an initial human rights work plan for the region building on the Strategic Plan to institutionalize human rights in the region. It includes five pillars in which one of the pillars refers to collaboration with the NHRIs. This work coincided with a research project carried out between UNFPA and APF with the objective to examine the program made by the NHRIs in the area of gender equality and human rights in respect to reproductive rights, which led to the publication, 'Integrating reproductive rights into the work of NHRIs of the Asia-Pacific region' and a revised and updated study of the views, practices, challenges and opportunities between 2011 and 2021.

Early on in this research it was agreed to take the recommendations from this study forward. On 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2023 an on-line workshop was held to develop and populate a draft advocacy plan on reproductive rights. Following up from the workshop, an additional workshop was held with UNFPA Country Offices and NHRIs to further populate the advocacy plan on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2023 in Bangkok, Thailand. The objectives of the workshop were:

- To facilitate exchange and knowledge sharing on human rights good practices and lessons learned.
- To support the alignment of priorities with human rights commitments and national systems.
- To support the development of advocacy plans on the countries' accepted recommendations from UPR and/ or treaty bodies.

### **APF-UNDP Business and Human Rights Workshop**

Due to their unique institutional position, NHRIs are an important vehicle for influencing business and human rights ('BHR') outcomes. In 2018, the UN Human Rights Council (resolution 38/13) explicitly recognized: 'the important role of national human rights institutions in supporting activities to improve accountability and access to remedy for victims of business-related human rights abuse, including through supporting the effective implementation of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights'.

NHRIs can exert significant influence by raising awareness, conducting training, advocating with business and government, engaging in National Action Plan processes, recommending law reform and engaging with civil society and rights holders. In addition, NHRIs have the power to facilitate access to remedy both directly through their own procedures, and also indirectly through advocacy and capacity-building.

In recognition of the above UNDP partnered with the APF to deliver training to NHRIs on BHR issues. The objectives of the training were to:

- Identify the mandate and competence of NHRIs to address BHR issues and how they can work more strategically in this field.
- Understand the international framework that guides regulation and advocacy in BHR and analyse emerging regulatory trends.
- Identify and analyse stakeholder engagement techniques and approaches to BHR.
- Use practical activities to develop strategies to improve knowledge and skills on BHR including on investigations, monitoring mechanisms and research and provide insight into campaigns, programs, activists, organisations and accountability mechanisms in BHR.
- Develop connections with fellow NHRI representatives in the region to provide mutual support and potential collaboration on BHR.

The training was conducted over two days from 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> June 2023 in Bangkok, Thailand. It was structured as a collaborative and discursive programme that built knowledge by engaging participants in discussions and practical exercises to improve their capacity to engage with BHR issues. The in-person training was complemented by a self-paced virtual course that will enable participants to continue learning beyond the in-person training.

### **Blended Learning Program on Torture Prevention**

The online course content for the Torture Prevention course was set up on EdApp platform. The content requires review and finalisation before the course will be conducted during 2023-2024. The content is divided into 4 courses, with 5 lessons in each.

As part of the Memorandum of Agreement between APF and the Association for the Prevention of Torture ('APT'), the content review process is currently underway and it is expected to be completed by end of June 2023. Once the content is published, an online course and a national course on Torture Prevention is planned to be held in the second half of 2023.

### **Samoa NHRI Gender Audit**

A Gender Audit of the Samoa Ombudsman's Office carried out by the APF in 2022 found that the Office has a respectful, gender-friendly environment where all staff are well supported to carry out their roles. Gender mainstreaming is a cross-cutting outcome in the most recent strategic plan. There is a balance of female and male staff, with female staff employed in the majority of senior leadership roles. The Office recognises the value and importance of promoting and protecting gender equality, demonstrated by its willingness to undertake a gender audit.

The Gender Audit also proposed that the Office could strengthen its commitment to gender equality by formalising its 'informal' gender-friendly nature and ensuring that the inclusion of gender in planning documents filtered through to policy, practice, monitoring and evaluation of impact. During 2023, a gender policy was developed for the Samoa Ombudsman's Office by the APF.

## **7.3.4 NHRIs have increased technical capability**

This sub-outcome is about supporting NHRIs with the technical skills and capability to embody the Paris Principles when undertaking their mandate. This includes strengthening technical areas of the NHRI including awareness-raising and education, monitoring, advocacy and conducting investigations. A key focus of this sub-outcome is to support NHRIs' progression to a fully compliant NHRI.

### **Human Rights Community Led Development Course**

The APF also developed a human rights community-led development ('HRCLD') Guide with an accompanying online and face-to-face capacity development programme. To

inform the development of these resources, an expert reference group consisting of representatives from the NHRIs of Fiji, Samoa and the Ombudsman Office of Cook Islands contributed to the development of the programme.

A human rights community-led development approach supports communities to understand when their human rights are violated and to speak out on human rights issues affecting them. A HRCLD approach enables NHRI's to enact their mandate by facilitating self-reliant and respectful communities that are able to:

- identify, examine, document, and monitor human rights violations that impact on them.
- develop and implement sustainable strategies to address these human rights violations using local knowledge and local solutions.
- monitor and evaluate the success of these strategies.
- strengthen resilience, cohesion and self-reliance.
- increase equality, inclusion and non-discrimination.
- improve economic, social, cultural, civil and political conditions.

From 17<sup>th</sup> October to 11<sup>th</sup> November 2022, twelve participants from NHRIs across the Pacific successfully completed the blended learning course on HRCLD. The course was designed to support NHRIs, and institutions looking to expand their work to include human rights, to strengthen their understanding of HRCLD as an approach to engaging with communities.

Staff from the NHRIs of the Cook Islands, Fiji and Samoa and representatives from SPC completed the online course held in the APF Community. In addition, the APF held a five-day in-person workshop for the participants in Nadi, Fiji from 21<sup>st</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

From 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> March 2023 a further in-country workshop was facilitated in Apia, Samoa with NHRI and civic society organisation ('**CSO**') representatives.

It is anticipated that this programme (to end June 2025) will result in increased ability for Pacific NHRIs to meet their mandate by developing and facilitating a Pacific-centric human rights community-led development approach with targeted communities. In addition, the programme also provides an opportunity for the communities to be supported, using the Pacific-centric HRCLD approach, to address the human rights issues which affect their lives, and to expand and strengthen human rights community-led development capability within the APF and the SPC.

### 7.3.5 Performance Metrics

The APF's Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning framework defines indicators for tracking the achievement of results under Outcome 2.

## **Indicator 2.1 – Implementation of Capacity Assessment recommendations**

Indicator 2.1 under the APF's 2022-2027 Strategic Plan assesses the implementation of capacity assessment recommendations. The overall target is 40% of all capacity assessment (CA) recommendations implemented per NHRI over 3-year period.

With regards to the Fiji NHRI CA conducted in March 2020, the CA made 28 recommendations. 3 recommendations have been completed (10.7%) and 6 are in progress (21.4%). 19 recommendations are unknown status as of 30 June 2023. Overall the target has not been met.

With regards to the Bahrain NHRI capacity assessment reviewed conducted in May 2021, the CAR made 14 recommendations. 9 recommendations have been completed or considered completed (64.28%). 4 recommendations are in progress (28.57%) and 1 has not started (7.14%). Overall the target has been met.

With regards to the Turkmenistan NHRI CA conducted in November 2022, the CA made 26 recommendations. As a newly completed CA there is insufficient time to make an assessment of the implementation of recommendations.

## **Indicator 2.2 – NHRI leaders indicate an external or internal action taken because of the HLD**

Indicator 2.2 under the APF's 2022-2027 Strategic Plan assesses whether internal or external actions have been taken as a result of an APF HLD. The target is at least one internal or external action undertaken by each NHRI because of HLD within 12 months.

The APF conducted a HLD with the Mongolian NHRI in October 2022. As a result of the HLD, the Commission reported it is paying more attention to the annual planning and budget allocation and this will be reflected in the drafting of the next annual budget. This reflects an internal action.

After the HLD, the commission held several meetings with national and international partners such as OHCHR, APT, UN Resident Coordinator, Amnesty International Mongolia, Secretariat of the Parliament to learn more on the proper management and prioritisation of their targets and goals. This reflects an external action. The overall target was therefore met.

## **Indicator 2.3 – NHRI actions internally and externally to promote, protect and address human rights issues as a result of participation in the APF Secretariat's activities**

Indicator 2.3 under the APF's 2022-2027 Strategic Plan assesses whether internal or external actions have been taken as a result of participation in APF activities. The target is at least one internal or external action undertaken by each NHRI within 12 months.

Of the 11 APF capacity development activities tracked over the reporting period, 9 led to either internal or external actions taken by NHRIs. The target was met.

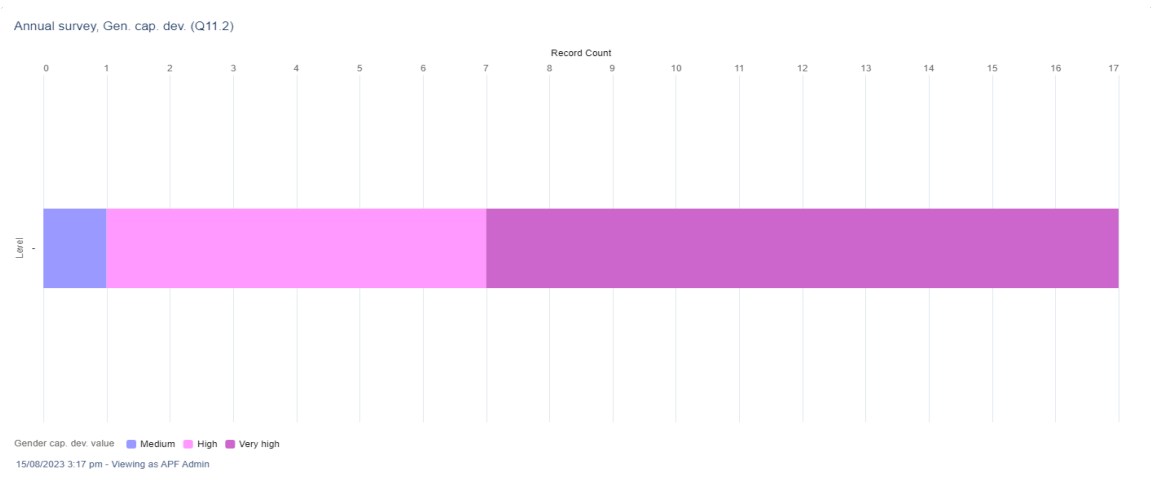
### 7.3.6 Gender & Outcome 2

Gender continues to be integrated into capacity development activities, as APF staff checklists are used during the planning, implementation, and reporting stages of activities.

Specialised gender content was added to the APF’s capacity development activities in relation to strategic planning, capacity assessments, MEAL, humanitarian action, human rights defenders, torture prevention and human rights community led development. Gender focused activities were also undertaken including work on reproductive rights and gender audits.

**Figure 5: Satisfaction with the implementation of gender under Outcome 2**

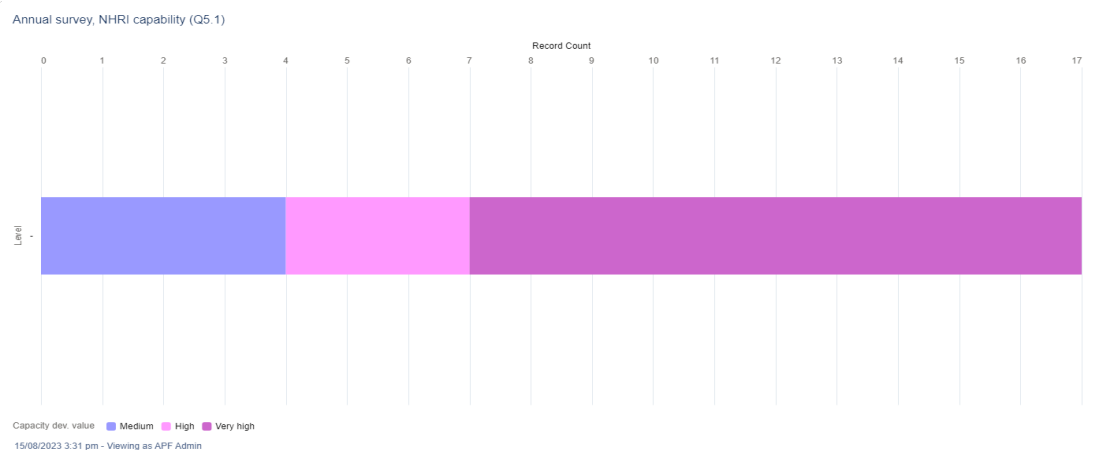
We asked our members to rate their satisfaction with the implementation of gender equity and equality in our provision of training and capacity development activities under Outcome 2. Of the 17 members that responded, ten members rated it as ‘very high’ and six members rated it as ‘high’ (a total of 94%) and one member rated it as ‘medium’.



### 7.3.7 Member Feedback

**Figure 6: Value of APF activities to support NHRI Capability**

The APF seeks to strengthen the capability of our members through training, capacity assessments and high-level dialogues. We asked our members to rate the value of the APF providing training and capacity development activities from 1 June 2022 to 31 May 2023. Of the 17 members that responded, ten members rated the value of our support as ‘very high’ and three members rated it as ‘high’ (a total of 76%), and four members rated it as ‘medium’.



## 7.4 NHRI voices are amplified in regional and international fora

This outcome is focused on amplifying the voice, awareness and collective action of NHRIs in regional and international contexts. The delivery of the outcome is centred on participation and representation in regional and international fora; collective responses to regional human rights priorities; and promotion and recognition of NHRIs.

For the APF, our role in delivering on this outcome is achieved by way of providing the structures, mechanisms, and platforms for NHRIs to meaningfully engage in the region. We also act as a collective voice for NHRIs in the Asia Pacific on shared human rights priorities and build awareness at the regional and international level around the work and importance of NHRIs.

### 7.4.1 Increased member engagement with regional and international fora

This sub-outcome is focused on increased NHRI engagement with the United Nations, regional mechanisms and other human rights actors. To achieve this sub-outcome, the APF works at the regional and international level to create opportunities for NHRIs to engage.

#### **Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions**

The APF is one of the four regional networks which comprise GANHRI. Each year GANHRI holds a meeting of its General Assembly and at least two meetings of its Bureau. In addition the APF participates in the GANHRI-UNDP-OHCHR tripartite meetings and time limited task forces on specific issues.

During the reporting period GANHRI held the following meetings:

- General Bureau meeting in Morocco from 27<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> October 2022;

- GANHRI Statute task force meetings on 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> November 2022 and 18<sup>th</sup> January 2023;
- GANHRI-UNDP-OHCHR tripartite virtual meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> November and 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022;
- GANHRI-APF coordination meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2023;
- General Assembly and Bureau meeting, Geneva, from 13<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> March 2023;
- GANHRI-UNDP-OHCHR tripartite meeting, New York, from 23<sup>rd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> May 2023.

In these meetings the APF Chairperson, elected Bureau representatives from APF NHRIs, in association with elected representatives from the other three regional networks, discussed a range of administrative and policy related issues.

In preparation for these meetings the APF worked with and provided advice and written reports to the APF Chairperson, its elected Bureau members and the broader APF membership on the issues for consideration and decision.

#### **EU-funded Project to increase engagement and collaboration between NHRIs and Inter-Governmental Mechanisms in South-East Asia and the Pacific (IGM Project)**

The IGM Project commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020 and concluded on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023. The aim of the project was to build and strengthen relationships between NHRIs in the South-East Asia and the Pacific sub-regions with their respective Inter-Government Mechanisms (**IGMs**), the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (**AICHR**) and the Pacific Islands Forum (**PIF**). The IGM Project activities sort to strengthen the capacity of NHRIs to share their expertise with IGMs and bring NHRIs and IGMs together for dialogue and exchange. The activities include a combination of blended learning courses, online communities of practice and a small grants program to develop NHRI capacity and assist targeted national projects. The activities also include the facilitation of dialogues between NHRIs and IGMs to build their engagement and collaboration and contribute to a joint policy/outcomes document.

From 23<sup>rd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> August 2022, 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> October 2022 and 10<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> May 2023 the APF held three workshops for NHRIs and Pacific IGMs in Nadi, Fiji to discuss the implementation of two projects by the Fiji and Samoan NHRIs which were funded through the small grants program on the promotion and protection of the right to a healthy environment in the context of climate change; to identify opportunities to engage with the Pacific IGMs on these issues; and explore how NHRIs can collaborate to address the transboundary aspects of these issues. These meetings developed and endorsed a joint policy/outcomes document on NHRI-IGM engagement.

From 24<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> November 2022 the APF held an equivalent workshop for NHRIs and South-East Asian IGMs in Bangkok, Thailand that examined the work of the NHRIs from the Philippines and Thailand in the implementation of their small grants national projects on the promotion and protection of the right to a healthy environment in the context of climate change in the ASEAN context.



From the 29<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> May 2023 the APF formally partnered with ASEAN and AICHR and the EU to hold a workshop on ‘Business and Human Rights, Environment and Climate Change’ in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. At this meeting the NHRIs developed and endorsed a joint policy/outcomes document on NHRI-IGM engagement.

The APF has also developed a ‘good practices’ document on collaboration between NHRIs and IGMs that is based on the country-level experiences of NHRIs implementing projects funded through a small grants program.

### **Cooperation with the Pacific Community**

On 16<sup>th</sup> September 2022 the APF met with Mr. Miles Young, Director of the Human Rights and Social Development Division at SPC. SPC is the principal scientific and technical organisation in the Pacific region. It is an international development organisation owned and governed by 27 country and territory members in the Pacific sub-region. The meeting discussed and agreed on joint APF-SPC cooperation and capacity development activities focused on NHRIs.

### **Regional Framework on Environmental Rights in ASEAN**

On 23<sup>rd</sup> September and 22<sup>nd</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2022, the APF participated in an AICHR Ad Hoc Preparatory Sessions for the ASEAN Environmental Rights Framework and Interim Working Group Meeting.

These meetings deliberated and agreed on the Terms of Reference of the ASEAN Environmental Rights Working Group to draft the regional framework. About 60 participants including representatives from ASEAN Sectoral Bodies and Entities, the ASEAN Secretariat, NHRIs, civil society organisations, United Nations agencies, and academic institutions attended.

These meetings provided a platform for participants to exchange views on possible key elements, structure, and status of the proposed regional framework on environmental rights. The meetings reiterated the importance of gender integration throughout the process. The meetings discussed the possibility of the ASEAN leaders adopting the instruments by 2024.

The meetings were chaired by the AICHR Representative of Thailand, Prof. Dr. Amara Pongsapich, the former Chairperson of the NHRI of Thailand. The meetings benefited from the technical support and collaboration with the UN agencies, including the United Nations Environment Programme, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

## **7.4.2 Increased NHRI leadership in regional responses to human rights issues**

This sub-outcome focuses on forming collaborative regional responses to regional human rights priorities. The APF facilitates opportunities and channels for

collaborative and urgent action between NHRIs on joint investigations, conducting research, delivery of programs and awareness raising.

### **APF Virtual Dialogue on People with Disabilities and the role of NHRIs**

On 18<sup>th</sup> July 2022 the APF, in collaboration with the National Human Rights Commission of India ('**NHRCI**'), hosted a virtual dialogue on the role of NHRIs in protecting and promoting the rights of people with disabilities.

Across the Asia Pacific, an estimated 400 million people live with a disability. Many live in poverty and suffer prejudice, discrimination, and exclusion. COVID-19 and climate change have also exacerbated structural barriers for people with disabilities.

The virtual dialogue provided an opportunity for APF members to share their experiences and best practices in addressing many of these challenges.

In his welcoming remarks, NHRC Member Mr. Rajiv Jain shared how the Indian Commission has continued to champion the rights of people with disabilities, including advocating for the participation for all in public and political life.

Other presentations during the session included:

- Dr. Ben Gauntlett from the Australian Human Rights Commission, discussed the Commission's disability rights work, including its IncludeAbility project which aims to increase meaningful employment opportunities for people with disability.
- Ms Sarah Abidah Hamzah from the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia shared how the Commission has worked to improve access to places of worship for people with disabilities. As part of the APF Digital Storytelling Small Grants Program, the Commission produced a digital story 'I want to pray' which highlights the challenges that people with disabilities can face when practicing their religion.
- Ms Sandra Moniaga, Commissioner at the Indonesian National Commission on Human Rights ('**Komnas HAM**') shared how NHRIs can work to strengthen the rights of people with disabilities. Komnas HAM collaborates with partners and disabled persons' organisations to promote human rights.
- Justice M.M Kumar, NHRCI Member, spoke on the importance of artificial intelligence ('**AI**'), in enhancing the accessibility for people with disabilities, with a focus on the regulatory responsibilities of governments and the private sector on the development and use of AI.

### **APF Virtual Dialogue on Discrimination in Employment**

On 26<sup>th</sup> August 2022 the APF held a virtual dialogue on discrimination in employment and the role of NHRIs, in collaboration with the NZHRC.

During the dialogue, APF members shared their work in calling for greater equality, transparency and eliminating discrimination in the workplace.

Presentations included:

- Dr Saunoamaali'i Karanina Sumeo, Equal Employment Opportunities Commissioner provided an overview of the NZHRC's national inquiry into the Pacific pay gap. Since July 2021, the Commission has been engaging with Pacific workers with a focus on the manufacturing, construction and health sectors.
- Dr Rosalie Atie, Policy Adviser Race Discrimination Team at the Australian Human Rights Commission, spoke about the Commission's National Anti-Racism Framework Project, a long-term project to guide actions on anti-racism by government, NGOs, business, educators, health professionals, justice authorities, civil society, and the community.
- Mr Rajiv Jain, Member of the NHRCI spoke on the issue of the workforce and gender pay parity. In his presentation he provided background to protections in the Indian Constitution and legislation in relation to gender pay parity.

### **APF Virtual Dialogue on Climate Change**

On 10<sup>th</sup> November 2022 the APF held a virtual dialogue on the role of NHRIs in addressing the human rights impacts of climate change, in collaboration with the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission.

Across the Asia Pacific, millions of people are at risk from the impacts of climate change. NHRIs have a role to play in advising their governments on their obligations to implement the Paris Agreement, as well as supporting effective climate governance, facilitating progress towards zero-carbon economies, and ensuring that decisions on climate change are participatory, non-discriminatory, and accountable.

The virtual dialogue provided a regional platform for APF members and prospective members to exchange information, share best practices, achievements, and challenges in relation to their work to protect human rights in relation to climate change.

Presentations included:

- The Chairperson of the Myanmar Commission opened the dialogue and focused on the impact of climate change on women in Myanmar and how it exacerbated existing structural discrimination against women. He also highlighted their leadership role and agents of change in addressing climate change issues.
- The Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines discussed its groundbreaking national inquiry on climate change. The inquiry began its public hearings in 2018 and the report was released in 2022. It sets out legal, scientific and qualitative data and recommendations to various actors. Climate change affects all human rights including economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights.

- The Chairperson of the Maldives Commission said climate change is an urgent existential issue for the Maldives and other low lying islands and States. Rising sea levels threaten the coral reefs due to rising temperature of sea water. Communities in remote islands are at greater risk. Livelihoods are directly affected. The Maldives is one of the most vulnerable countries in relation to climate change. In sobering statistics, fifty (50 %) of its national budget is spent on adapting to climate change. The President of the Maldives warned at COP 26 that if the effects of climate change were not reversed the Maldives will cease to exist by the end of the 21st century. The Commission investigated damages caused to houses due to climate change (beach and land erosion, storms). It found the problem was becoming widespread. She urged that NHRIs take the issue of climate change seriously.
- The Chairperson of the NHRCI discussed the human rights impact caused by adverse climate change around the world including increased stress on mental health, increased poverty, forced migration and displacement. The Indian Commission is using its functions and powers to address climate change including suo moto, research/advisories, advice on legislation. It also has a focus on vulnerable groups including human rights defenders.
- Romulo Nayacalevu, Pacific lead facilitator on the APF's IGM project spoke on how the project aims to support the capacity of NHRIs in South-East Asia and the Pacific to engage with their respective IGMs on human rights issues. Advocacy, networking and collaboration is key in the work of NHRIs in relation to climate change. As part of the project there is a small grants scheme to support participating NHRIs to develop projects that seek to address climate change. For those in the Pacific, addressing climate change is an issue of survival.

### **GANHRI Working Group on Older Persons and Korean NHRI-APF-EU International Conference on Drafting a Convention on the Rights of Older Persons**

Older persons are facing challenges that are not addressed in existing international human rights standards. In this context, the United Nations established the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing ('**OEWGA**') in December 2010 for the purpose of strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons (A/RES/65/182). The Working Group is mandated to consider the existing international framework of the human rights for older persons, and assess possible gaps in the existing framework, and convenes annually to consider the feasibility of further legal instruments. Its work is on-going, and in April 2022, the Working Group proposed to convene an Intersessional Working Group to prepare and present draft text determining the main gaps in the international human rights system for older persons (A/AC.278/2022/2).

GANHRI also established its own working group to promote the rights of older persons in 2016. The National Human Rights Commission of Korea ('**NHRCK**') is the Chair of GANHRI Working Group. The NHRCK proactively initiated a process to produce a draft text of a Convention on the Rights of Older Persons from the perspective of NHRIs.

Against this backdrop, from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2022 the APF partnered with the NHRCK and the European Union ('EU') to host a meeting of the GANHRI Working Group on Older Persons and to hold an international conference to examine the possible contents, structure and objectives of a possible new UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons. This conference brought together core human rights-stakeholders including NHRIs, international & regional organizations, governments, civil society organizations, activists and academics to discuss how to adequately enhance the human rights of older persons and come up with a draft text on a Convention from the perspective of NHRIs which will ultimately be presented to UN OEWSGA.

### **Abolition of the Death Penalty in Asia**

From 26<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> May 2023 the APF participated in a regional seminar on the abolition of the death penalty in Asia. The seminar brought together a variety of regional actors engaged in the abolitionist movement to participate in a holistic conversation on how to use different entry points for abolition and identify strategies towards the abolition of the death penalty in Asia, via presentations and workshops. The objective of the seminar was to identify challenges and opportunities to design strategies on the short and mid-term with the different main stakeholders in Asia. The focus of the APF was to stress the role of NHRIs in pursuing the abolition of the death penalty.

### **7.4.3 NHRIs are recognised actors in the human rights system**

This sub-outcome is focused on raising awareness of the work of NHRIs in the region and their important role in protecting human rights.

### **Covid and Law in Asia**

Covid-19 had a devastating impact on communities across Asia. Political and legal systems were tested by the pandemic as governments in the region struggled to find the right responses to the health emergency it created. Laws were found to be flawed – in some cases, laws were even abused. On the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> July 2022, the APF participated in an AICHR seminar on the impact of Covid on laws in Asia to promote the role of NHRIs. The seminar critically assessed government responses, examining their impact on laws, institutions, and rights and freedoms. The seminar particularly examined case-studies of China; Indonesia; Myanmar; Timor-Leste; Vietnam; and a South-East Asia regional study.

### **Central Asian NHRI Seminar**

From 21<sup>st</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2022, the regional workshop for Ombudspersons of Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) as well as national partners representing Parliaments and NMRIFs took place in Istanbul, Türkiye.

The Regional Workshop was conducted within the frameworks of the Central Asia Support Initiative of the National Human Rights Institutions ('CASI/NHRI'), which is the

regional platform jointly established by UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub and OHCHR Regional Office for Central Asia. It is part of the global OHCHR-UNDP-GANHRI Tripartite Partnership on NHRIs, aiming to leverage the respective mandates, expertise, and operations of GANHRI, OHCHR, and UNDP to support NHRIs worldwide.

In total, 44 participants, including four ombudspersons, representatives of Parliament participated in the regional workshop. Participants were provided with a platform to discuss priority thematic issues as well as their capacity-building priorities, including i) accreditation with the Global Alliance of NHRIs, ii) engagement with the UN Human Rights Mechanisms and iii) the roles of NHRIs in promoting and protecting human rights in the emerging regional challenges and interlinked fragilities to the conflict, climate change, and violations of human rights due to the business conduct. A separate focus was made on the Central Asia experience in repatriation, rehabilitation and reintegration of nationals from conflict zones and the NHRIs role in this process. It provided a safe space for learning and experience-sharing discussions among the Central Asian NHRIs, also engaging the peer NHRIs from other regions, the APF, as well as other international experts. The workshop resulted in the elaboration of forward-looking plans for regional capacity building and joint collaboration with NHRIs and their partners.

### **Pacific Regional Forum on NHRIs**

The APF in partnership with SPC has been working as partners for many years to support Pacific Islands Countries ('PIC') in their efforts to establish NHRIs. This Pacific Regional Forum was designed to continue that support. Establishing credible and effective NHRIs would be a significant step to meet the commitments outlined in the 2050 Strategy, address recommendations received during the UPR, and it provides an opportune time for PICs to come together as a region to explore and consider the next steps in progressing establishment and strengthening of NHRIs. To this effect, the Pacific Regional Forum on National Human Rights Institutions was held in Fiji in February 2023. The forum was undertaken with the following key objectives in mind.

- To increase the understanding of progress, developments and challenges in the region to establish and strengthen NHRIs;
- To identify strategies for the effective establishment and strengthening of NHRIs;
- To reaffirm commitment to establish NHRIs and developed country-level pathways, including identification of support required by SPC/APF/OHCHR via bilateral meetings.

The two-day workshop held from 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2023 in Nadi, Fiji was a successful event with representation from every Pacific Island government; the NHRIs from Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, and Samoa; and relevant donors, totalling over fifty highly engaged participants. Additionally, this Regional Forum had several high-level keynote speakers from the host government including the Honourable Siromi Turaga, MP, Attorney General and Minister of Justice for Fiji and the Honourable Lynda Tabuya, MP, Fiji Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation. SPC and APF received praise for the Forum from the host Government as well as participants. A

total of 54 participants attended the NHRIs forum. Where 59% were female and 41% were male.

Delegates from the following countries attended the two-day forum and participated in various bilateral meetings; Cook Islands; Kiribati; Federal States of Micronesia; Fiji; Nauru; Palau; Papua New Guinea; Republic of Marshall Islands; Samoa; Solomon Islands; Tonga; Tuvalu; Vanuatu; Australia; and New Zealand.

Based on the discussions of the forum and bilateral meetings with PIC country delegates, APF has developed a Pacific NHRI Roadmap, which outlines the current status of NHRI establishment.

#### 7.4.4 Performance Metrics

The APF's MEAL framework defines indicators for tracking the achievement of results under Outcome 3.

##### **Indicator 3.1 – NHRIs engagement with regional and international human rights fora**

Indicator 3.1 under the APF's 2022-2027 Strategic Plan assesses NHRI engagement with regional and international human rights fora. The overall target is a 10% increase in engagement over the IGM baseline report over the period of the strategic plan.

The baseline report examined 11 NHRIs from both South-east Asia and the Pacific. Of these 11 NHRIs, at the regional level no engagement was recorded in the Pacific region and 5 actions had taken place in South-east Asia between NHRIs and regional intergovernmental mechanisms.

During the reporting period the target of a 10% increase in engagement at the regional level was met with 100% of all members in both South-east Asia and the Pacific actively engaging with intergovernmental mechanisms. The target is therefore met.

##### **Indicator 3.2 – NHRIs regional advocacy for priority human rights issues**

Indicator 3.2 under the APF's 2022-2027 Strategic Plan assesses NHRIs regional advocacy for the APF's priority human rights issues of gender equality, climate change and human rights defenders. The overall target is 50% of all APF members have engaged regionally on the three priority issues over the period of the strategic plan.

Of the APF's 26 member institutions, 18 members (70%) to date have undertaken regional advocacy during the reporting period. The target is therefore met.

##### **Indicator 3.3 – NHRI advocacy leading to domestic changes**

Indicator 3.3 under the APF's 2022-2027 Strategic Plan assesses whether NHRI advocacy has led to domestic changes. The overall target is 20% of all APF member States have implemented domestic changes as a result of NHRI advocacy during the period of the strategic plan.



Of the APF’s 26 member institutions, 9 members (35%) reported that their advocacy had led to domestic changes. The target is therefore met.

7.4.5 Gender and Outcome 3

In strengthening the engagement of NHRIs internationally and regionally, the APF actively applied its policy on gender equality and mainstreaming in terms of both representation and thematic content.

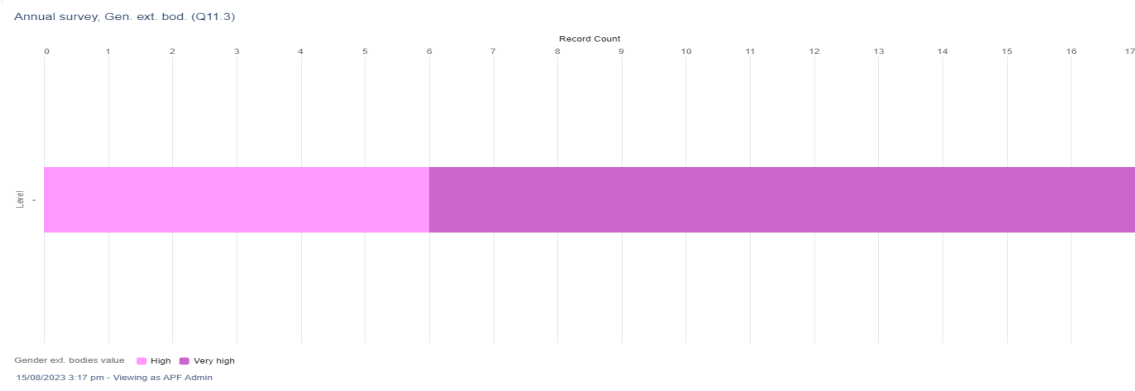
For example, with regards to APF representation, the APF actively promotes senior women NHRI office holders as official APF representatives in international and regional events.

For example, of the APF’s four representatives on the GANHRI Bureau, there is an equal 50%-50% split between men and women. In terms of our IGM participants, approximately 75% were female and 25% male.

In terms of thematic content, the APF’s interventions and contributions to international and regional activities highlighted the gender impact of various human rights issues, including COVID-19, women human rights defenders across the region, older people, climate change induced displacement, torture prevention, and disability. For example, at our co-organised international conference on the rights of older persons, 53% of the speakers were male and 47% were female.

Figure 7: Satisfaction with the implementation of gender under Outcome 3

We asked our members to rate their satisfaction with the implementation of gender equity and equality in our provision of opportunities for engagement with regional and international mechanisms under Outcome 3. Of the 17 members that responded, eleven members rated it as ‘very high’ and six members rated it as ‘high’ (a total of 100%).



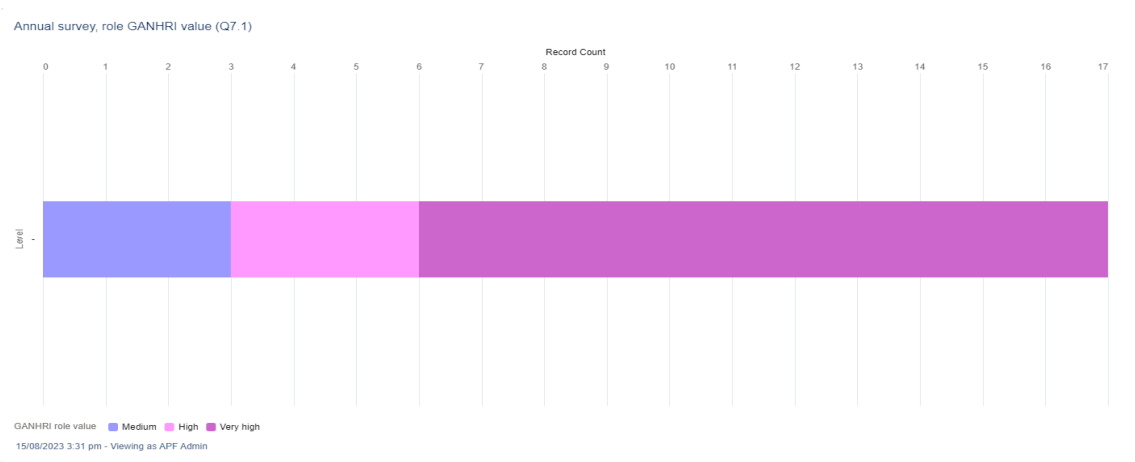
7.4.6 Member Feedback

Figure 8: Value of APF Role in GANHRI

The APF seeks to play an active role to represent APF members in GANHRI. We asked our members to rate the value of the role played by the APF in GANHRI from 1 June 2022 to 31 May 2023. Of the 17 members that responded, eleven members rated our

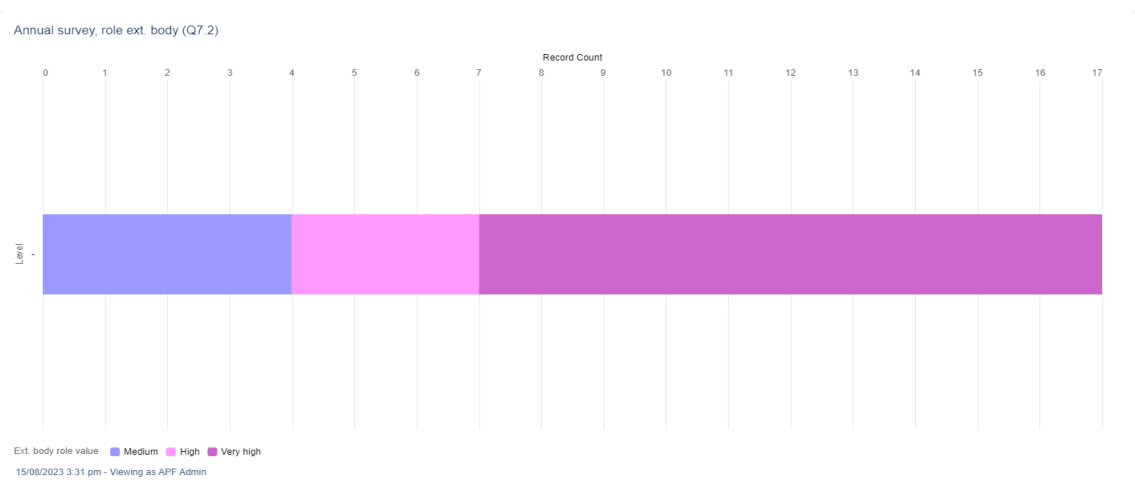


support as ‘very high’ and three members rated it as ‘high’ (a total of 82%), and three members rated it as ‘medium’.



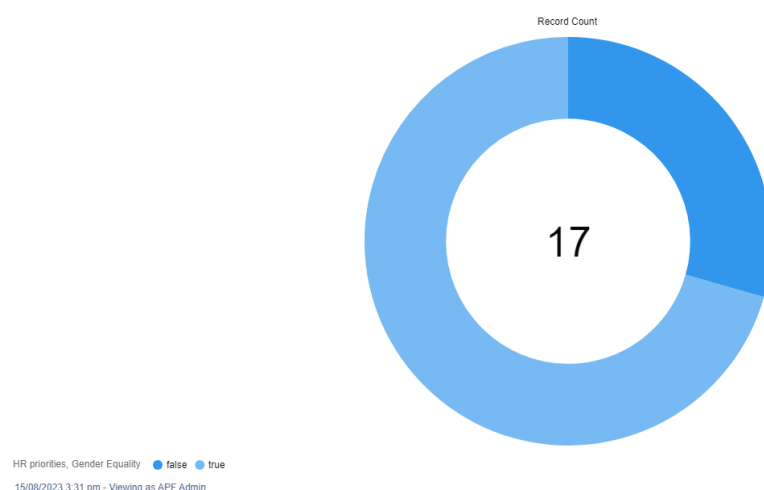
**Figure 9: Value of APF Role in regional and international mechanisms**

The APF seeks to play an active role to represent APF members in regional and international mechanisms. We asked our members to rate the value of the role played by the APF in regional and international mechanisms from 1 June 2022 to 31 May 2023. Of the 17 members that responded, ten members rated our support as ‘very high’ and three members rated it as ‘high’ (a total of 76%), and four members rated it as ‘medium’.



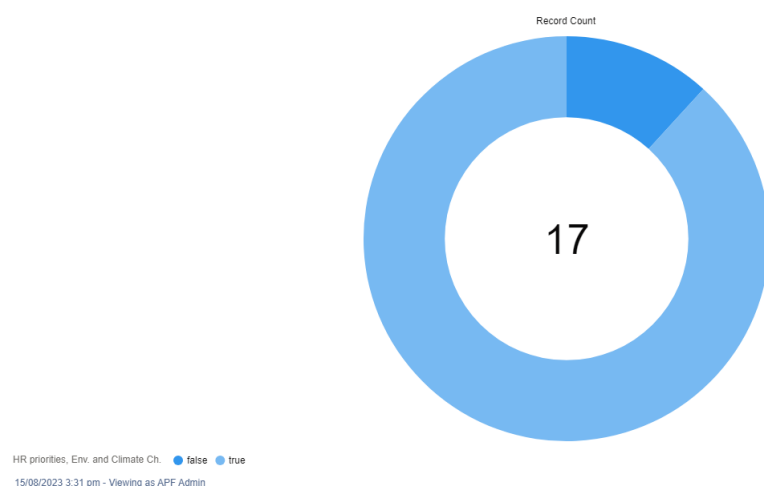
**Figure 10: NHRI Leadership and Advocacy on Gender Equality**

A strategic purpose of the APF’s selection of three regional human rights priority issues is to promote NHRI leadership and advocacy on these issues. We therefore asked our members if they had undertaken regional leadership and advocacy activities on gender equality from 1 June 2022 to 31 May 2023. Of the 17 members that responded, twelve members had undertaken activities (71%) and five members had not.



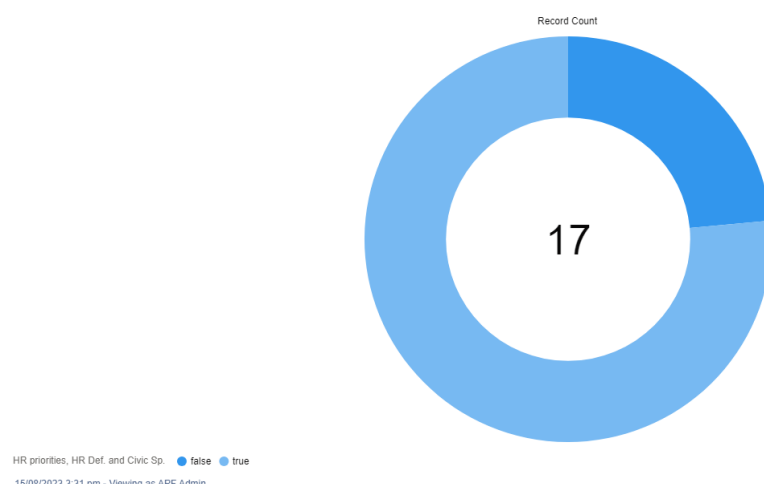
**Figure 11: NHRI Leadership and Advocacy on Environment and Climate Change**

A strategic purpose of the APF's selection of three regional human rights priority issues is to promote NHRI leadership and advocacy on these issues. We therefore asked our members if they had undertaken regional leadership and advocacy activities on the environment and climate change from 1 June 2022 to 31 May 2023. Of the 17 members that responded, fifteen members had undertaken activities (88%) and two members had not.



**Figure 12: NHRI Leadership and Advocacy on Human Rights Defender and Civic Space**

A strategic purpose of the APF's selection of three regional human rights priority issues is to promote NHRI leadership and advocacy on these issues. We therefore asked our members if they had undertaken regional leadership and advocacy activities on human rights defenders and civic space from 1 June 2022 to 31 May 2023. Of the 17 members that responded, thirteen members had undertaken activities (76%) and four members had not.



## 7.5 Outcome 4: The APF is a well-functioning and governed network with an engaged membership

This outcome is about ensuring the APF has an active and engaged membership; and is well-resourced and supported. Ultimately, this is about ensuring the sustainability and longevity of the APF and its ability to continue supporting NHRIs into the future. The delivery of this outcome focuses on four key areas: organisational decisions are guided by good governance; APF staff are supported by effective management systems, our impact is accurately measured and communicated and we have sustainable sources of funding.

### 7.5.1 Organisational decisions are guided by principles of good governance

This sub-outcome is about ensuring organisational decisions are guided by good governance where our members are engaged in APF decision-making and contribute towards the strategic direction of the network. For the APF, this is about working with members to determine the best possible decisions for the organisation to support our activities in the region.

#### Governance

The APF seeks to operate according to the highest levels of effectiveness, accountability, efficiency and member participation. The APF is an independent, non-profit legal entity, with a board of directors – the Forum Council – that reflects our regional diversity. Established by the APF Constitution, the Forum Council is composed of one voting councillor nominated by each full APF member. The General Assembly is responsible for setting strategy and making high-level decisions ('A status' members have voting and participatory rights and 'B status' members have participatory rights).

An elected Governance Committee is responsible for considering and making recommendations to the Forum Council and General Assembly on a range of issues.

### **Annual General Meeting**

The Annual General Meeting (**'AGM'**) is a formal meeting held once a year. It is a legal requirement for the APF as a not-for-profit organisation. The AGM serves as an opportunity for APF members to review the operation of the APF over the past year and enables A-status members to decide on policy, hold elections, ratify audit and financial requirements, consider the APF's annual report, directors' report, performance report and consider membership applications.

The 27<sup>th</sup> AGM (**'APF 27'**) was held as a virtual event, on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> September 2022. All 25 APF members were in attendance, in addition to prospective members and observers.

The first session, held on the 14<sup>th</sup> September, focused on the theme "A universal human right to a healthy, sustainable environment – the role of NHRIs", and included a presentation by Dr Ian Fry, Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the context of Climate Change. As Special Rapporteur, Dr Fry's role involves studying the effects of climate change on human rights and integrating the findings into policy making. During his presentation, he shared how NHRIs can engage and collaborate with his work. This was followed by an interactive dialogue between NHRIs in the region on the human rights impacts of environmental degradation and climate change. During the session, Atty Jacqueline de Guia, Executive Director at the Philippines Commission on Human Rights, provided an overview of the Commission's inquiry on human rights and climate change, while Dr Ahmed Adham, Vice President of the Human Rights Commission of the Maldives, presented a report by the GANHRI Caucus on Climate Change. Romulo Nayacelevu, APF Expert Facilitator, presented on the APF's project on strengthening engagement between NHRIs and Inter-Governmental Mechanisms in South-East Asia and the Pacific.

The second session, held on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September, addressed business items including the presentation of the APF's annual performance and gender performance reports, and elections for a range of representative positions. Significant decisions taken by APF Forum Councillors at the AGM included:

- Welcoming the NHRIs of Iraq and Thailand as full members of the APF, following their accreditation as 'A status' institutions by GANHRI.
- Electing the Australian Human Rights Commission and the National Human Rights Commission of India, as APF representatives to the GANHRI Bureau.
- Electing the New Zealand Human Rights Commission as the Asia Pacific region's member on SCA.

The AGM was also an opportunity for APF members, along with representatives from other NHRIs in the Asia Pacific region, to share an overview of their current activities and achievements.

100 participants attended the AGM. The gender composition of the meeting was 52% female and 48% men.

### **APF Half-Year Meeting**

The APF held a half-yearly meeting in March 2023 in association with the GANHRI General Assembly. The meeting received a mid-term update on the implementation of APF activities over the half year and a corresponding financial report of actual expenses over the six-month period and projected expenditure for the full twelve-month period. The meeting also considered and approved the APF operations plan for 2023-2024 and forecast budget. Finally, the meeting considered a range of policy issues related to work of GANHRI.

### **APF Governance Committee**

APF members elected a new Governance Committee during the 27th APF Annual General Meeting, held virtually on 14-15 September.

Doo-Hwan Song, Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission of Korea, was elected as the new Chairperson of the APF. He will lead the APF Governance Committee for a period of two years. Mr Song was joined on the APF Governance Committee by Khunan Jargalsaikhan, Chief Commissioner of the National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia (as Deputy Chairperson), and Justice Arun Kuma Mishra, Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission of India (as Member).

There were only three nominees, all male, for the five-member Governance Committee. An additional election seeking nominations from two female representatives of 'A' status APF members will be held at the next APF AGM in 2023 to promote gender equality.

The Governance Committee met in December 2022 and March 2023 to consider a range of strategic, operational and policy related issues and made decisions and recommendations for the adoption of the Forum Council.

## **7.5.2 Our team is supported by effective management systems**

This sub-outcome is about ensuring the APF has robust policies, systems, processes and models in place to support our team to function effectively. This is about enhancing our various internal systems and processes and to be adequately resourced to deliver on our strategic direction. A key focus within this priority includes internal systems such as management, technology, planning, budgeting and human resources.

### **APF Secretariat**

The APF secretariat reports to the Governance Committee, Forum Council and General Assembly through the APF Chairperson. The APF secretariat implements the decisions approved through its governance arrangements.

The APF 2022-2027 Strategic Plan includes a robust approach to measuring the organisation's performance. Under this Strategic Plan a draft annual operations plan and associated budget is presented to APF members for consideration and approval. The secretariat then provides all APF members with a half year activity and financial report and a full year performance report with independently audited accounts for their consideration and approval.

The APF has also reviewed its finance and budgeting systems. The APF Governance Committee have asked that financial data be presented on a calendar year, rather than financial year, cycle. The APF is evaluating different budgeting models that will enable us to present this information in this format whilst also aligning to the APF's financial year.

The APF also reviewed its human resources and organisational development policies to identify gaps in our systems. We will seek to undertake further work in this area over the next 12 months to improve our performance.

### **APF Community**

The APF Community provides a platform for learners of APF online courses to engage with their course facilitators and other learners. The Community also allows various groups/ teams to engage and share their good practices.

During 2023, the existing APF Community content was migrated to Bettermode v2 which has better functionality and features that can enhance the user experience and interactivity. The new APF Community content is now configured to work for existing users.

## **7.5.3 Our impact is accurately measured and communicated**

This sub-outcome is about improving accountability, transparency and impact measurement across the organisation and within NHRIs. We measure and communicate the impact of our work with NHRIs and how this contributes toward our strategic outcomes. By reflecting on our impact, we adjust and refine our approach so that we continue to increase our impact.

In the development of our new strategic plan the APF also developed a corresponding MEAL framework. The performance system relies on APF staff collecting information against indicators for the preparation of this overall performance report.

This is the first year of the implementation of the new MEAL framework under this strategic plan. The APF will review the implementation of the framework and refine it to ensure that we are accurately measuring and communicating our outcomes.

#### 7.5.4 We have sustainable sources of funding

This sub-outcome is about ensuring our financial sustainability by diversifying sources of funding. This entails exploring and seeking to acquire a variety of donors that, over time, can lead to new restricted (project) funding and unrestricted funding. Stewardship and renewals of existing donors remain key for the APF. Ultimately, we will seek to balance restricted and unrestricted funding to enable us to deliver on our outcomes and roles.

The APF receives funding from governments, institutional donors and NHRI member contributions. Income is provided for 'core' support against the APF's Strategic Plan or towards specific projects. Project support varies considerably from year to year depending on the scale and number of projects undertaken.

**Figure 13: Diversity and security of income sources**

<b>APF Sources of Income Year ended June 2023</b>	<b>Months to expiry</b>	<b>A\$</b>	<b>%</b>
Australian Government (DFAT)	24	850,000	27%
European Union (EU.NHRI.3)	21	208,202	7%
European Union (Inter-governmental mechanisms)		648,607	20%
Germany Government (Afghanistan NHRC staff repatriation)		68,232	2%
Interest & Other Income		79,485	3%
Membership fees		83,617	3%
NHRC India	24	323,770	10%
NHRC Korea		105,691	3%
New Zealand Government (Pacific)		407,636	13%
New Zealand Government (Core funding)	48	374,425	12%
Government of Thailand		14,602	0%
<b>Total Income (excluding net foreign exchange gain)</b>		<b>3,164,267</b>	

**Security of income sources:** We secured agreement for specific funding grants from the German Government to assist in the repatriation of Afghanistan NHRI staff repatriation to other countries.

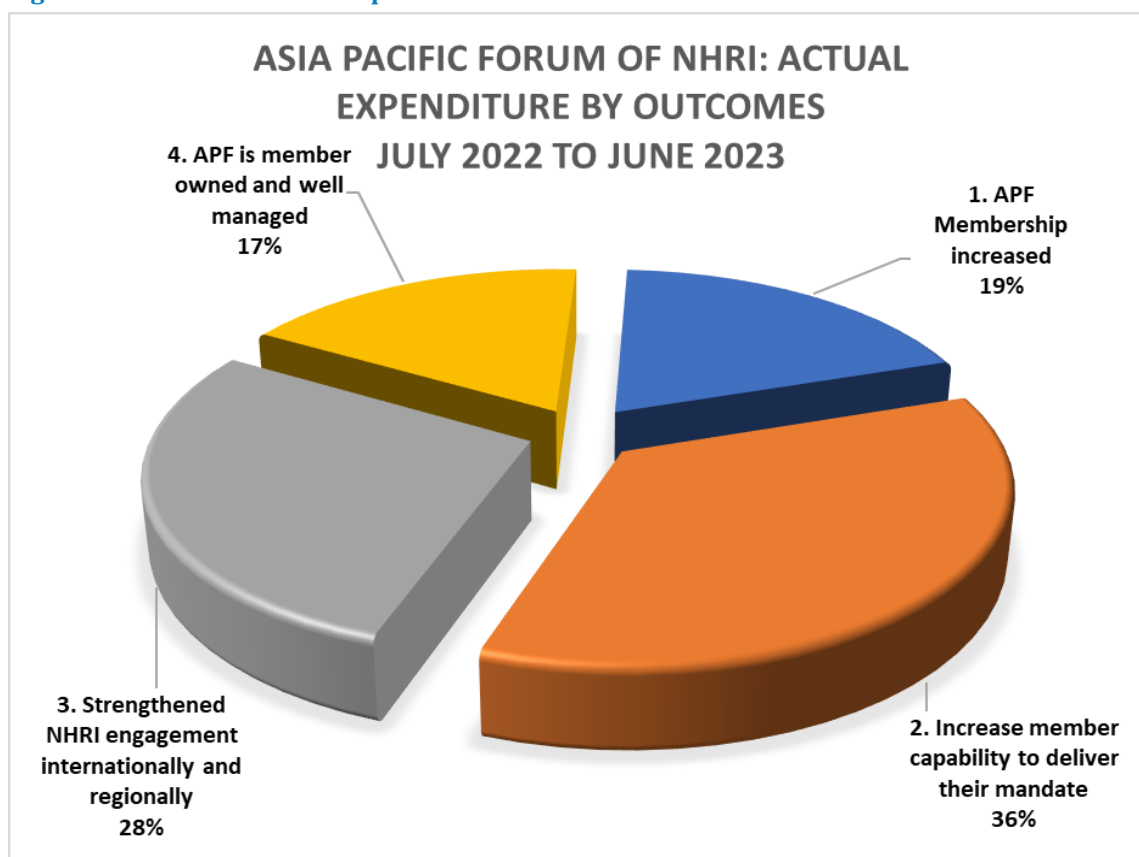
**Need to maintain a balance between core and project funding:** The percentage of core funding to specific funding was 64% and 30% compared to last year's 67% and 33%. From July 2023, income from New Zealand Government will be 100% core funding. This will provide the organisation greater flexibility to allocate resources in line with its strategic decisions and member needs.

#### **APF program expenditure by outcome**

The APF allocates its expenditure against the outcomes of the APF's Strategic Plan (2022-2027) using a documented methodology. The largest components of expenditure were:

- **Outcome 2** (increased member capability to deliver their mandate). Total expenditure was **\$1,038K (36%)**.
- **Outcome 3** (Strengthened NHRI engagement internationally and regionally). Total expenditure was **\$815K (28%)**.
- **Outcome 1** (APF membership increased). Total expenditure was **\$552K (19%)**.
- **Outcome 4** (APF is member owned and well managed). Total expenditure was **\$511K (17%)**.
- Total expenditure on promoting **gender equality** which is mainstreamed in the four outcomes mentioned above was **\$211K (7%)**.

**Figure 14: APF Income and Expenditure**





## Actual vs Budget

Actual financial results of **\$277,000**, was better than budget by \$367,000.

The main differences were:

- Decrease in expenditure by **\$501,000** mainly due to deferment of EU-funded projects (\$330,000) to FY24 and savings with capacity assessment & international engagement expenditure (\$99,000).
- Income increased by **\$134,000** – mainly due to deferring unspent grant funds for the IGM Project and EUNHRI Phase 3 Project (\$270,000) and higher than anticipated Interest Earned (\$69,000).

## Actual 2023 vs Actual 2022

Net results for 2023 was higher than the previous year by **\$67,000**.

*Income* was higher by **\$895,000** mainly due to the utilisation of unspent funds from previous financial year from India NHRC (\$107,000) and NZ Pacific (\$408,000).

*Expenditure* was higher by **\$828,000** mainly due to increased travel related activity post Covid (\$663,000).

## 7.5.5 Communications

In 2022-23, our communications focused on promoting the work of APF member organisations and generating content to engage our members, stakeholders, partner organisations, donors, and potential donors. This included sharing good practice examples from NHRIs, developing digital stories to engage audiences, and presenting our reports and materials in an engaging manner and with a focus on our impact.

Throughout the reporting period, we continued to strengthen our social media presence, profiling the work of NHRIs and their unique role in the international human rights framework, highlighting the contribution of the APF in protecting and promoting human rights in the Asia Pacific region, and strengthening relationships with our partners and donors through strategic and informative content.

### Social media

In 2022-23, the APF strengthening its social media presence. In undertaking this work, the APF aims to profile the work of NHRIs and their unique role in the international human rights framework; to highlight the contribution of the APF in strengthening human rights in the Asia Pacific region; to engage with new potential partner by building our brand and profile; and to improve and strengthen relationships with existing partners through strategic, engaging and informative content.

The APF's social media sites (LinkedIn, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter) recorded increases in the number of views, likes, shares and follows, indicating a consistently high level of engagement with APF content.

## **APF website**

There was solid engagement with the APF website content during the year, with 82,998 website sessions recorded. Each visitor to the APF website during 2022-23 accessed an average of 1.61 pages per session and spent an average of 1:19 (minutes) on the site.

Industry research indicates that sessions longer than a minute should be the goal for non-profit organisations. In addition, people visit organisational websites to source specific information rather than browse content. As a general rule, the number of pages visited, and the time spent on websites by users, is declining as people search for specific content.

## **APF Bulletin**

The APF Bulletin, published and distributed monthly, continues to be a valuable way of regularly engaging with APF members, partners, donors, and stakeholders, showcasing the role of the APF and the work and impact of our members.

In 2022-23, the APF Bulletin was well utilised by subscribers and continues to perform far above industry standards for non-profit organisations. In the reporting period, the APF Bulletin had an average unique open rate of 31.3% (industry standard 25.2%) and an average click through rate of 23.8% (industry standard 2.79%). During the 2022-23 period we rolled out a new design of the APF Bulletin, to improve the newsletter's visibility, useability, and relevance.

## **APF brand and website**

During 2022-23 we began scoping work to refresh the APF brand and to develop a new website. As a vital component for engagement with our members, prospective members, current and potential donors, and other stakeholders, the APF website provides a platform to elevate the APF's values, brand and reputation towards achievement of our strategic objectives. It is also an important vehicle for profiling the work of NHRIs, providing resources to our members, and delivering information on APF activities to key stakeholders.

In today's digital age, a user-friendly and intuitive website is vital for an organisation to stay relevant and responsive. Given some of the issues identified with the APF's current website (outdated design and navigation, slow loading speed and accessibility issues) a redesign was determined to be essential to improve user access to our site and resources.

The redesign will focus on accessibility, utilising contemporary design principles and responsive layouts for users. A mobile-friendly website is a high priority as mobile usage continues to increase across the APF membership. The new website will include an improved user interface and streamlined navigation, allowing users to find information quickly and easily, leading to higher engagement.

Design and development of the website commenced in June 2023 and will continue during the 2023-24 financial year. It is anticipated that the new APF website will be launched in early 2024.

### **Communications support during APF activities**

Throughout the 2022-23 financial year, the APF's Communications and Networking Officer carried out communications support for various APF activities, including the IGM Project and APF online dialogues. This involved preparing communications materials, promoting events on the APF website, Bulletin, and social media platforms, supporting events on Zoom and other platforms, and creating communications materials, including photography and video content, and capacity development course materials.

### **Advocacy and statements**

The APF, in collaboration with our members and partner organisations, released advocacy statements in support of NHRIs and Human Rights Defenders throughout the 2022-23 year, including statements on (i) the early termination of the Kyrgyz Ombudsman and (ii) the safety of former CHR Chairperson, Leila de Lima.

## **7.5.6 Performance Metrics**

The APF's Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning framework defines indicators for tracking the achievement of results under Outcome 4.

### **Indicator 4.1 – Timely and appropriate discharge of Governance decisions**

Indicator 4.1 under the APF's 2022-2027 Strategic Plan assesses the timely discharge of Governance decisions. The overall target is 70% of Governance decisions implemented within 12 months. The target was met.

### **Indicator 4.2 – APF Team supported to successfully carry out roles in a 'good employer' environment**

Indicator 4.2 under the APF's 2022-2027 Strategic Plan assesses whether the APF team is supported to carry out their role in a 'good employer' environment. The overall target is the implementation of effective and future-thinking management systems, technology, planning, budgeting and human resources over the period of the strategic plan.

For this and the following indicator 4.3, the APF is currently recruiting for a Chief Operating Officer ('COO') position. The COO has been designated under the MEAL framework for the primary responsibility for the implementation of activities under these indicators. On technology and budgeting systems, the APF has introduced new and updated technology. Planning and human resources systems await further development.

#### **Indicator 4.3 – APF operations address succession planning, organisational design, and social inclusion policies**

Indicator 4.3 under the APF's 2022-2027 Strategic Plan assesses whether APF operations address succession planning, organisational design and social inclusion policies. The overall target is that the APF Governance Committee has adopted a succession plan, organisational design and social inclusion policies during the period of the strategic plan.

The APF undertook a Gender Audit during the reporting period and is currently implementing the recommendations of the audit report. Succession planning will partly be addressed through the employment of the COO. Further social inclusion policies will be addressed by the COO.

#### **Indicator 4.4 – Accuracy and utility of the Secretariat's impact review and reporting system**

Indicator 4.4 under the APF's 2022-2027 Strategic Plan assesses the accuracy and utility of the secretariat's MEAL framework. The overall target is that the APF has adopted, operationalised and strengthened its MEAL system.

This is the first year of the new MEAL framework. Under this framework further indicators will be designed and implemented over the next year to measure new activities. The system is therefore adopted and operationalised by requires further strengthening.

#### **Indicator 4.5 – Number, type and level of funding donor commitment**

Indicator 4.5 under the APF's 2022-2027 Strategic Plan assesses the number, type and level of donor commitment to the APF. The overall target is that the APF acquires one new donor during the period of the strategic plan.

### **7.5.7 Gender and Outcome 4**

In terms of APF governance committee the APF only received three nominees – the APF Chairperson (Korea), Deputy Chairperson (Mongolia) and the remaining member (India). All identified as male (100%). The APF will therefore hold an election at the next AGM to elect an additional two female representatives to the committee.

At the APF AGM, 100 participants attended and the gender composition of the meeting was 52% female and 48% men.

At the APF there are currently ten staff in the 'Head Office' secretariat, one of whom is on maternity leave. Of these staff, seven identify as female (70%) and three identify as male (30%).

The APF's commitment to gender equality and the rights of women and girls is demonstrated in the news articles, publications, and materials curated and

disseminated across our communication channels. This work is guided by the APF gender mainstreaming strategy.

In 2022-23, 23 gender-related articles, digital stories and other resources were featured in the APF Bulletin. In terms of visual representation, 54.5% of images in the Bulletin featured women and 45.5% of images featured men. The APF is dedicated to advancing gender equality and will strive to amplify the voices of all individuals, including people of diverse gender identities, in our future publications.

### **APF Gender Audit**

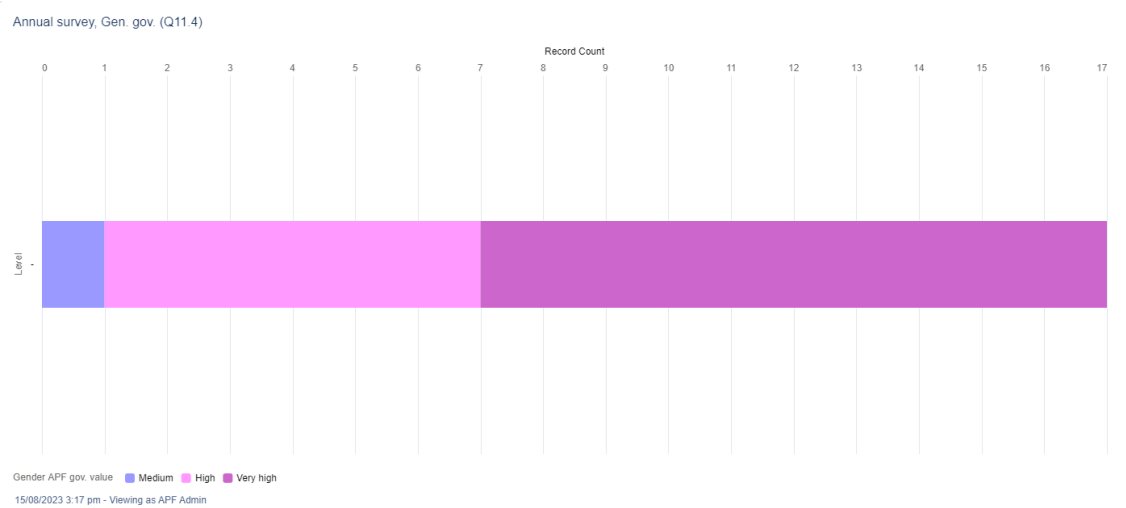
Promoting gender equality is a priority for APF and has been identified as a strategic cross-cutting human rights issue in its new Strategic Plan 2022 – 2027. Over the years, the APF has worked to ensure gender considerations are mainstreamed throughout the organisation both in its internal operations and external programming. To ensure the organisation is on track to meet its identified goals, improve its processes, and assist with future planning, the APF conducted an internal gender audit.

As part of its dedicated programmes to support members to achieve gender equality outcomes, the APF developed a world first resource: *Facilitating an NHRI Gender Audit*. Commencing in February 2023 and completed in June 2023, the APF undertook an internal Gender Audit by an external consultant (Dr. Jill Chrisp). The Gender Audit methodology was designed to:

- assess and establish a baseline of information against which progress can be compared and measured on how well the secretariat considers and incorporates gender equality outcomes in its external work and internal organisational operations and practice, including an assessment of internal staffing structure for equity across the organisation.
- identify good practices and areas for improvement.
- develop a set of recommendations for future internal and external work.
- provide support to the APF to develop a gender strategy that addresses findings from the gender audit.

### **Figure 15: Satisfaction with the implementation of gender under Outcome 4**

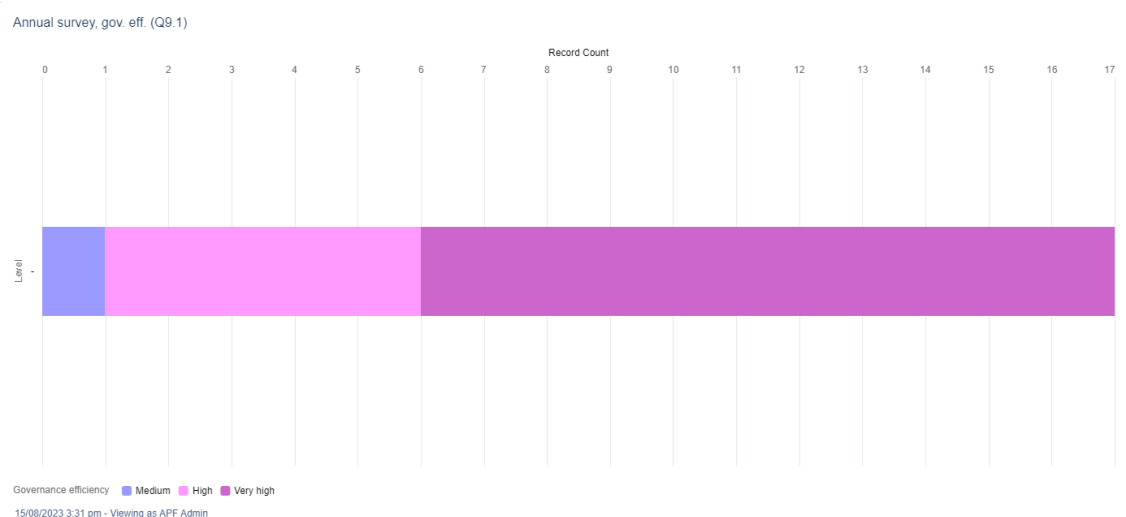
We asked our members to rate their satisfaction with the implementation of gender equity and equality in our provision of opportunities for engagement with the governance of the APF under Outcome 4. Of the 17 members that responded, ten members rated it as 'very high' and six members rated it as 'high' (a total of 94%) and one member rated it as 'medium'.



## 7.5.8 Member Feedback

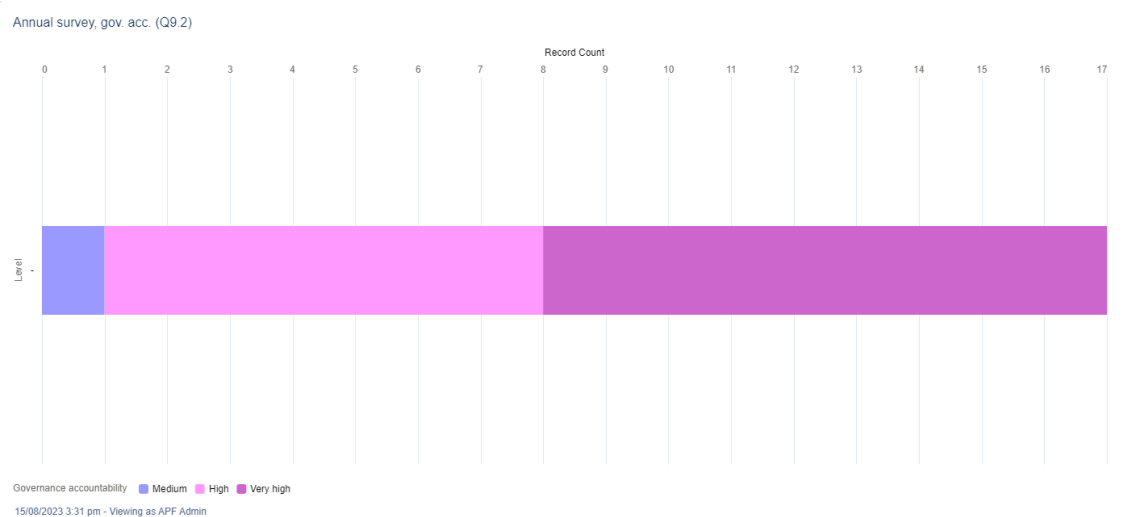
**Figure 16: Value of the efficiency of the APF's governance**

The APF seeks to be a well-functioning and governed network with an engaged membership. We asked our members to rate their satisfaction with the efficiency of the APF's governance as at 31 May 2023. Of the 17 members that responded, eleven members rated our support as 'very high' and five members rated it as 'high' (a total of 94%), and one member rated it as 'medium'.



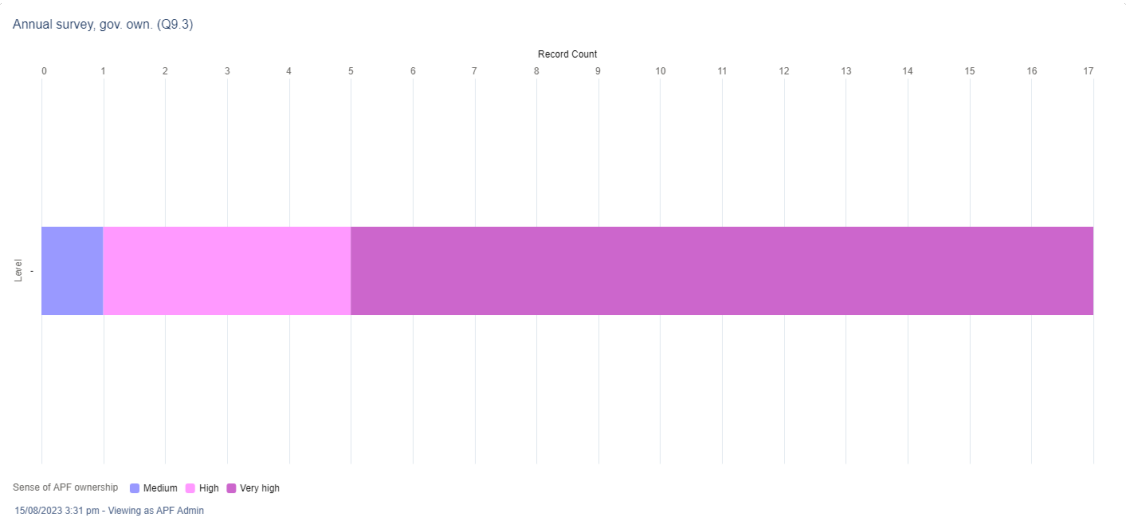
**Figure 17: Value of the accountability of the APF's governance**

The APF seeks to be a well-functioning and governed network with an engaged membership. We asked our members to rate their satisfaction with the accountability of the APF's governance as at 31 May 2023. Of the 17 members that responded, nine members rated our support as 'very high' and seven members rated it as 'high' (a total of 94%), and one member rated it as 'medium'.



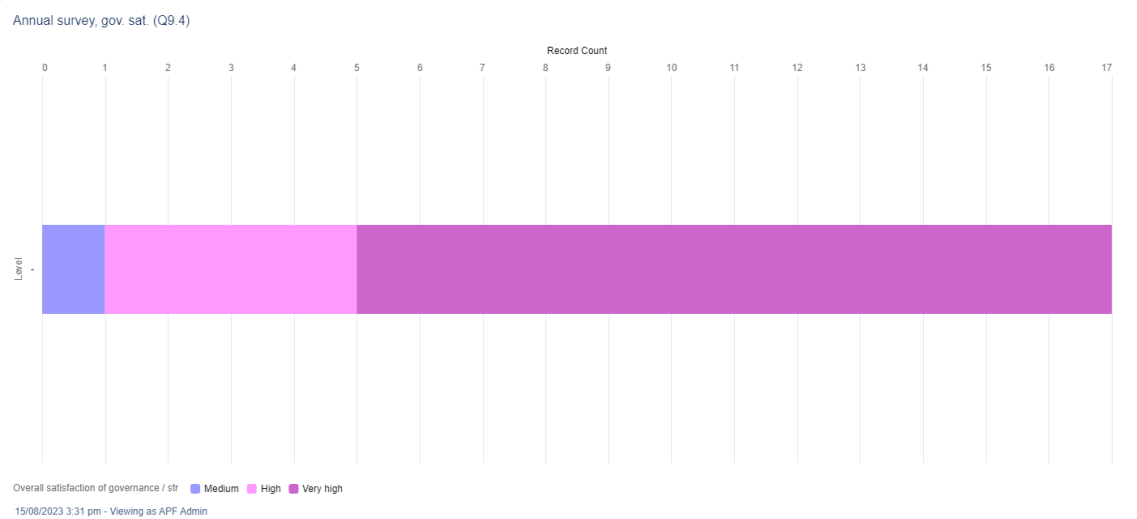
**Figure 18: Sense of ownership of the APF**

The APF seeks to be a well-functioning and governed network with an engaged membership. We asked our members to rate their sense of ownership of the APF as at 31 May 2023. Of the 17 members that responded, twelve members rated their ownership as ‘very high’ and four members rated it as ‘high’ (a total of 94%), and one member rated it as ‘medium’.



**Figure 19: Overall satisfaction with the APF’s governance and structure**

The APF seeks to be a well-functioning and governed network with an engaged membership. We asked our members to rate their overall satisfaction with the APF’s governance and structure as at 31 May 2023. Of the 17 members that responded, twelve members rated their ownership as ‘very high’ and four members rated it as ‘high’ (a total of 94%), and one member rated it as ‘medium’.



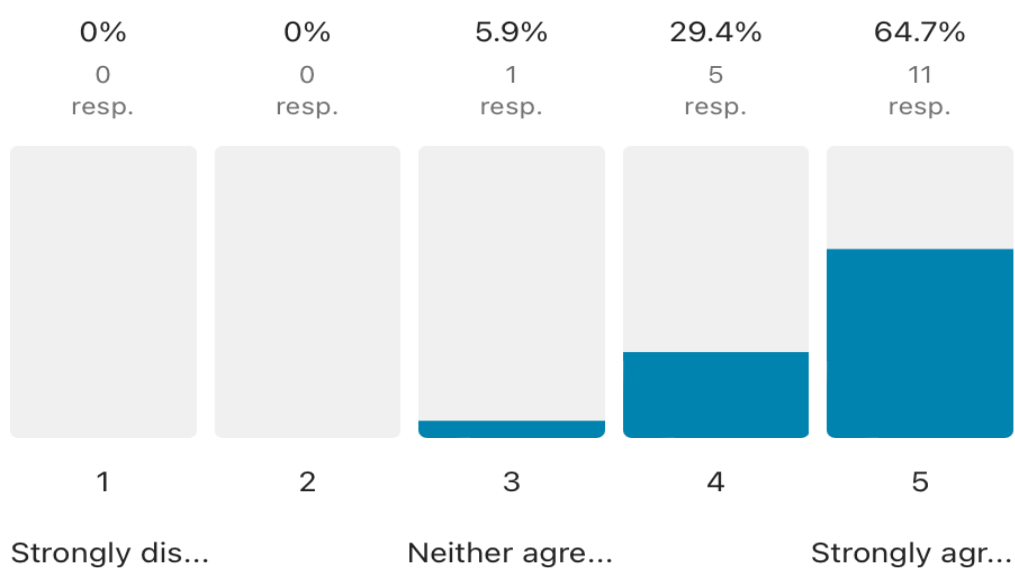
**Figure 20: Relevant content on the APF website**

The APF employs a number of communication channels to support members to strengthen links and understanding between members and demonstrate the role and performance of the APF. We asked our members to tell us whether the APF website provides content that is relevant. Of the 17 members that responded, eleven members 'strongly agreed' and five members 'agreed' (a total of 94%) and one member 'neither agreed or disagreed'.

**The APF website provides content that is relevant to our institution.**

Avg. 4.6

17 out of 17 people answered this question

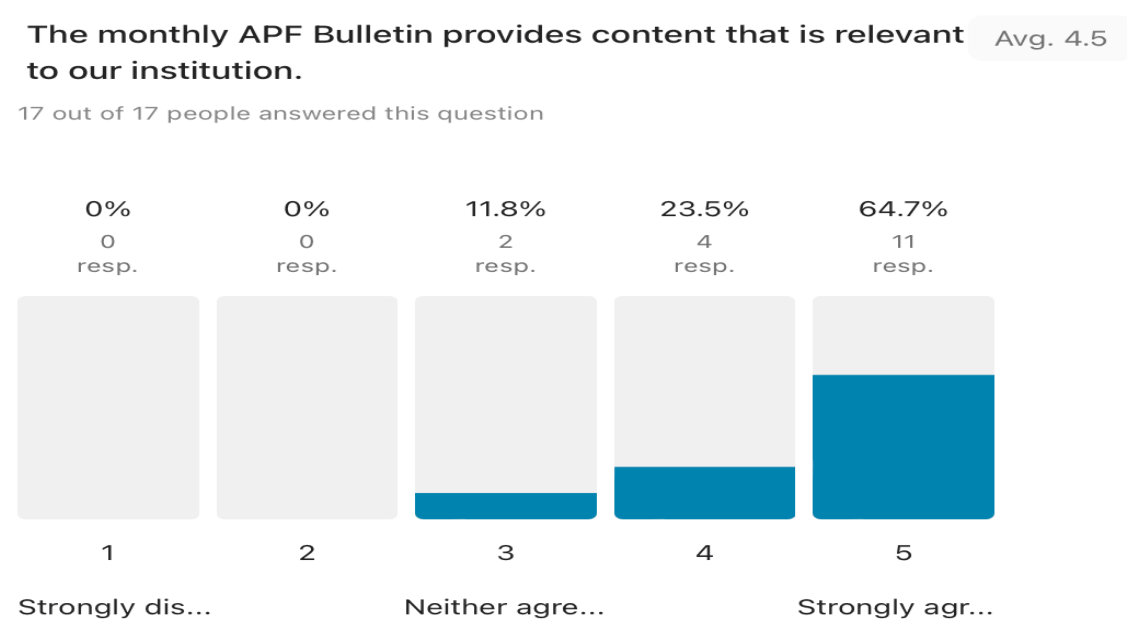


**Figure 21: Relevant content on the APF Bulletin**

We asked our members to tell us whether the APF monthly Bulletin provides content that is relevant. Of the 17 members that responded, eleven members 'strongly agreed'

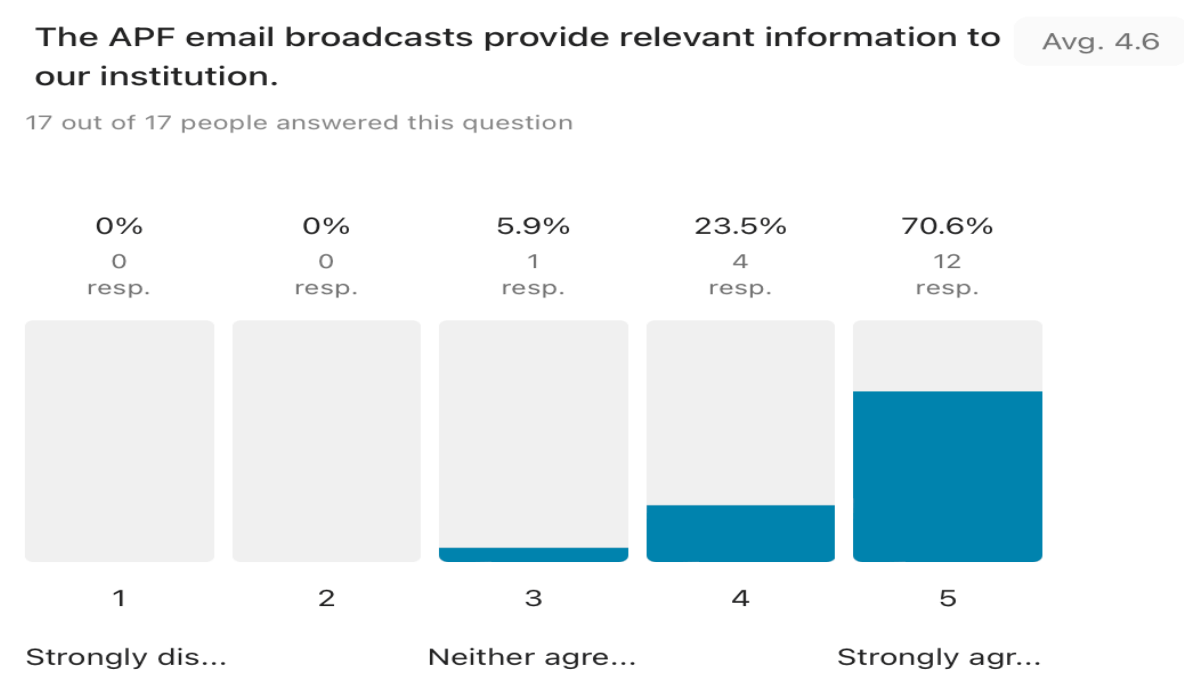


and four members ‘agreed’ (a total of 88%) and two members ‘neither agreed or disagreed’.



**Figure 22: Relevance of APF email broadcasts**

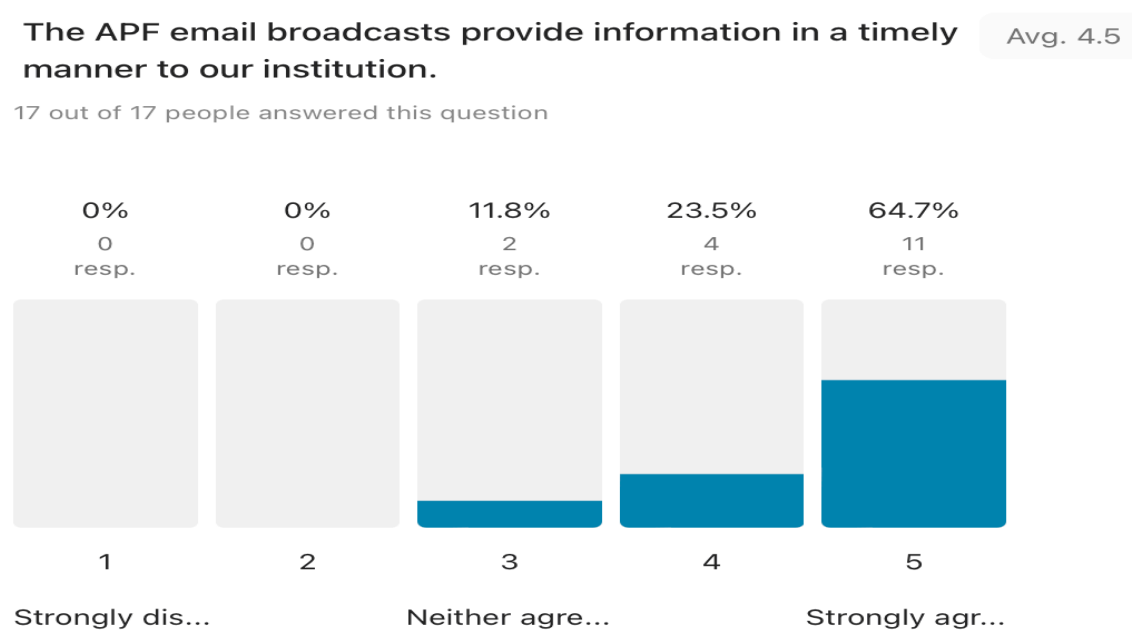
We asked our members to tell us whether the APF’s email broadcasts provide relevant information. Of the 17 members that responded, twelve members ‘strongly agreed’ and four members ‘agreed’ (a total of 94%) and one member ‘neither agreed or disagreed’.



**Figure 23: Timeliness of email broadcasts**

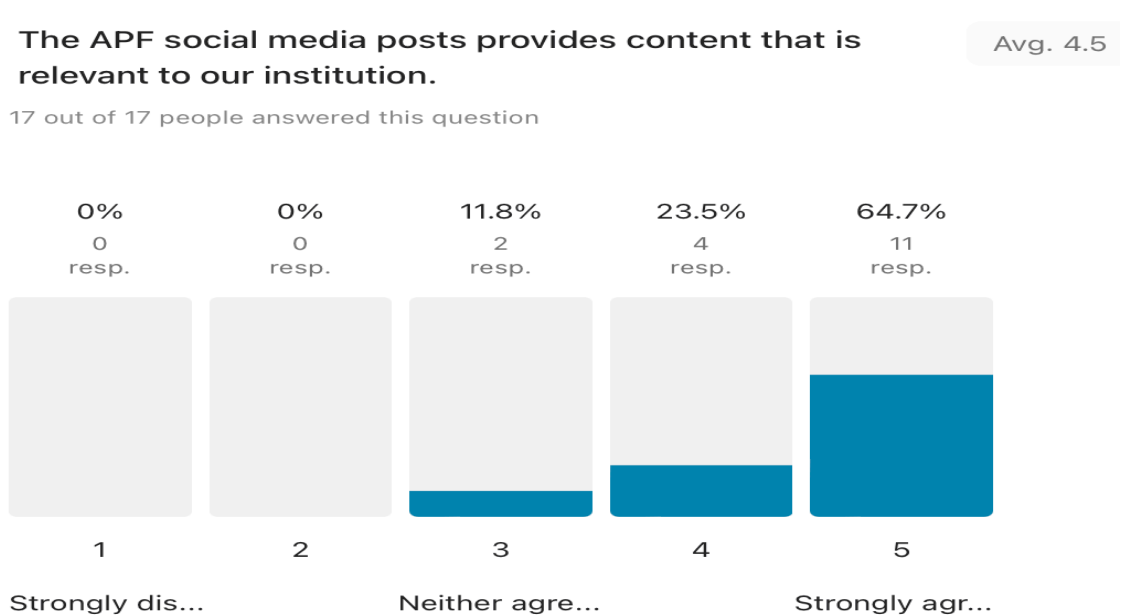
We asked our members to tell us whether the APF’s email broadcasts were undertaken in a timely manner. Of the 17 members that responded, eleven members ‘strongly

agreed’ and four members ‘agreed’ (a total of 88%) and two members ‘neither agreed or disagreed’.



**Figure 24: Relevance of APF social media**

We asked our members to tell us whether the APF’s social media posts provide relevant information. Of the 17 members that responded, eleven members ‘strongly agreed’ and four members ‘agreed’ (a total of 88%) and two members ‘neither agreed or disagreed’.



## 7.6 List of APF Activities in 2022 – 2023

The following major activities were undertaken by the APF during the reporting period:

**Figure 25: APF Activities**

<b>JULY 2022</b>	
4 to 8/7	Meeting on establishment of a Cambodian NHRI
4 to 8/7	Fiji NHRI Strategic Planning Workshop
18/7	APF Virtual Dialogue on People with Disabilities and the role of NHRIs
19 to 20/7	ASEAN and Covid Webinar
20/7	APF and UN Working Group on Discrimination Against Women Meeting
26 to 28/7	Turkmenistan Capacity Assessment Virtual Preparatory Meeting
<b>AUGUST 2022</b>	
9 to 10/8	Consultation with the stakeholders on potential Cooks Islands NHRI
22/8	Briefing with Commissioner for Human Rights of Kazakhstan and UNDP Kazakhstan on draft constitutional law advocacy
23 to 25/8	IGM Project Pacific Workshop
26/8	Meeting with Cook Islands Ombudsman on prospective amendments to <i>Ombudsman Act 1984</i>
26/8	APF Virtual Dialogue on Discrimination in Employment
<b>SEPTEMBER 2022</b>	
14 to 15/9	APF Annual General Meeting
16/9	Meeting with South Pacific Community
20 to 22/9	Fiji NHRI MEAL Workshop
23/9	Coordination Meeting to Develop a Regional Framework on Environmental Rights in ASEAN
<b>OCTOBER 2022</b>	
1 to 2/10	GANHRI SCA Retreat
3 to 7/10	GANHRI SCA October 2022 Session
3 to 14/10	Turkmenistan NHRI Capacity Assessment
10 to 12/10	Establishment of a NHRI in Cambodia Workshop
10/10 to 6/11	Online Human Rights Community Led Development Course
11/10 to 31/10	Online course on advancing human rights in humanitarian action
19 to 21/10	APF IGM Project Pacific Workshop
27 to 28/10	GANHRI Bureau Meeting

31/10 to 2/11	Mongolian NHRI High Level Dialogue
<b>NOVEMBER 2022</b>	
01/11/2022-31/04/2023	Implementation of Small Grants Program by the NHRIs of Samoa, Fiji, Thailand and the Philippines
10/11	APF Virtual Dialogue on Climate Change
10 to 12/11	IMS Nepal Workshop on NHRIs and Journalists
21 to 22/11	Central Asian NHRI Seminar
21 to 23/11	AICHR Working Group on Regional Environmental Declaration
21 to 25/11	Pacific Human Rights Community Led Development Workshop
22 to 23/11	GANHRI Working Group and Korean NHRI Ageing Seminar
24 to 25/11	APF IGM Project South-East Asia Workshop
24 to 25/11	GANHRI TPP and Task Force Meetings
<b>DECEMBER 2022</b>	
30/11 to 1/12	GANHRI-OHCHR-UNDP Tripartite Meeting
5/12	APF Governance Committee Meeting
<b>JANUARY 2023</b>	
23/1 to 10/2	APF Annual Program on GANHRI Accreditation - online course
18/1	GANHRI Bureau Task Force Meeting
27/1	GANHRI-APF Meeting
<b>FEBRUARY 2023</b>	
1/2 to 30/6	APF Gender Audit
7/2	Meeting with ENNHRI on NHRI engagement with regional mechanisms
13 to 17/2	GANHRI SCA Pre-Session
13/2 to 10/3	Regional Online MEAL Course
20 to 22/2	Pacific NHRI Regional Forum Workshop
21 to 22/2	APF Annual Program on GANHRI Accreditation Workshop
24/2	Regional meeting between APF and OHCHR SE Asia Regional Office - UN-ESCAP Bangkok
27/2	APF-OHCHR-UNDP Meeting on potential Capacity Assessment with Kyrgyzstan Ombudsman
28/2	Publication of the NHRI Leadership Guide
<b>MARCH 2023</b>	
2/3	NHRI Roundtable at LGBTIQ World Pride Human Rights Conference

6 to 10/3	APF fundraising meetings with various European governments
7/3- 9/3	HRCLD Workshop in Apia, Samoa
9/3	Chairperson Leadership Outreach Program – Jordan NHRI
13 to 17/3	GANHRI Bureau and Annual General Meeting
20 to 24/3	GANHRI Sub-Committee on Accreditation
22/3	APF-UNFPA Online Seminar of Reproductive Rights
22/3	Introduction to the APF Program- with Timor-Leste Provider
<b>APRIL 2023</b>	
17/4	APF-UAE NHRI Meeting
21/4	APF-OHCHR-UNDP meeting on prospective dismissal of Kyrgyz Ombudsperson
15 to 27/4	Federated States of Micronesia NHRI Validation Mission
<b>MAY 2023</b>	
2/5	APF-Taiwan NHR Meeting
3 to 5/5	Kazakhstan Capacity Assessment Preparatory Meetings
8/5	Meeting of APF Human Rights Defenders Working Group
10/5	Introduction to APF Program with Jordan NCHR Chairperson
10 to 11/5	APF IGM Project Pacific Workshop
10-12/5	Mission to the Solomon Islands on NHRI establishment
22/5	NHRI Reproductive Health Advocacy Plan workshop
23 to 26/5	GANHRI-UNDP-OHCHR Tripartite Meeting
3-6/5	Asian Regional Death Penalty Seminar
30 to 31/5	APF-ASEAN-EU Business and Human Rights, Environment and Climate Change – APF IGM Project South-East Asia
31/5	Migration of the APF Community to the new platform
<b>JUNE 2023</b>	
5 to 7/6	APF-UNDP Business and Human Rights and NHRIs Workshop
19 to 30/6	Kazakhstan Capacity Assessment
19 to 23/6	Timor-Leste NHRI MEAL Workshop
20/6	APF-SPC briefing to FSM Human Rights and SDGs task force on NHRI establishment

## 8 Promoting Gender Equality

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### 28<sup>th</sup> AGM of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions Meeting Paper

Title:	Promoting Gender Equality
Summary of issue:	<p>The APF report on its gender equality strategy provides a detailed overview of the APF's work to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Support the APF membership to prioritise and focus on the human rights of women and girls in all their diversity;</li><li>2. Support gender mainstreaming processes for NHRIs within the APF's membership; and</li><li>3. Mainstream gender within the operations of the APF secretariat</li></ol>
Recommendation:	<p>That APF members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Note the Report.</li></ul>
Relevant considerations:	As set out in the following report
Submission prepared by:	Secretariat
Officer responsible:	Chairperson

## 8.1 Introduction

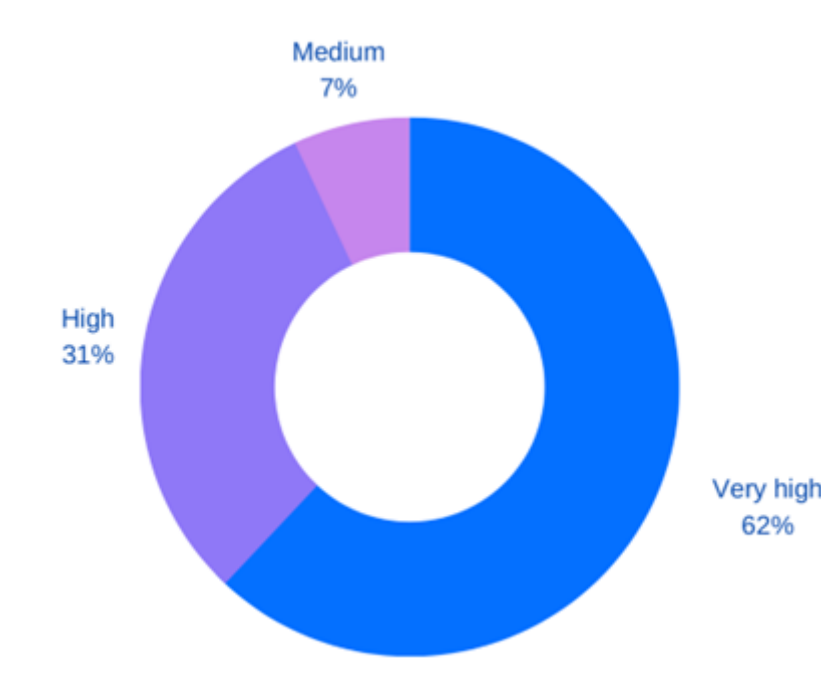
Across the Asia Pacific, women, girls, and people of diverse gender identities, continue to face entrenched discrimination and violations of their human rights. It is therefore essential that the APF supports its members to champion the rights of all genders in our work. We encourage our members to advance gender equality within the internal operation of their NHRIs and work to ensure that gender is mainstreamed across all aspects of the APF secretariat.

This reporting cycle, the APF continues to report on the APF Gender Strategy. The three main objectives of the Strategy are:

1. Support the APF membership to prioritise and focus on the human rights of women and girls in all their diversity;
2. Support gender mainstreaming processes for NHRIs within the APF's membership; and
3. Mainstream gender within the operations of the APF secretariat.

The APF's work on promoting gender equality continues to be highly valued by APF members. 93% of members rated it as very high or high.<sup>1</sup>

**Figure 26: Promoting gender equality – value to members**



## 8.2 Supporting the APF membership

### 8.2.1 APF/UNFPA research project on reproductive health rights

In 2022, the United Nations Population Fund ('UNFPA') Asia Pacific human rights focal points drafted an initial human rights work plan for the region building on the Strategic Plan to institutionalize human rights in the region. It includes five pillars in which one of the pillars refers to collaboration with the NHRIs. This work coincided with a research project carried out between UNFPA and APF with the objective to examine the progress made by the NHRIs in the area of gender equality and human rights in respect to reproductive rights, which led to the publication, 'Integrating reproductive rights into the work of NHRIs of the Asia Pacific region' and a revised and updated study of the views, practices, challenges and opportunities between 2011 and 2021.

Early on in this research it was agreed to take the recommendations from this study forward. On 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2023 an on-line workshop was held to develop and populate a draft advocacy plan on reproductive rights. Following up from the workshop, an additional workshop was held with UNFPA Country Offices and NHRIs to further populate the advocacy plan on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2023 in Bangkok, Thailand. The objectives of the workshop were:

- To facilitate exchange and knowledge sharing on human rights good practices and lessons learned.
- To support the alignment of priorities with human rights commitments and national systems.
- To support the development of advocacy plans on the countries' accepted recommendations from UPR and/ or treaty bodies.

## 8.2.2 Gender integrated into capacity development activities

Gender continues to be integrated into capacity development activities, as APF staff checklists are used during the planning, implementation, and reporting stages of activities.

Specialised gender content was added to the APF's capacity development activities in relation to strategic planning, capacity assessments, MEAL, humanitarian action, human rights defenders, torture prevention and human rights community led development. Gender focused activities were also undertaken including work on reproductive rights and gender audits.

## 8.2.3 Samoan NHRI gender audit

In 2022, the APF conducted a Gender Audit of the Office of the Ombudsman, Samoa. The audit revealed that the Office maintains a gender-respectful environment with staff supported to effectively carry out their roles. Gender mainstreaming is a cross-cutting outcome in the most recent strategic plan. There is a balance of female and male staff, with female staff employed in the majority of senior leadership roles. The Office recognises the value and importance of promoting and protecting gender equality, demonstrated by its willingness to undertake a gender audit.

The Gender Audit also proposed that the Office could strengthen its commitment to gender equality by formalising its 'informal' gender-friendly nature and ensuring that



the inclusion of gender in planning documents filtered through to policy, practice, monitoring and evaluation of impact. During 2023, a gender policy was developed for the Samoa Ombudsman’s Office with support from the APF.

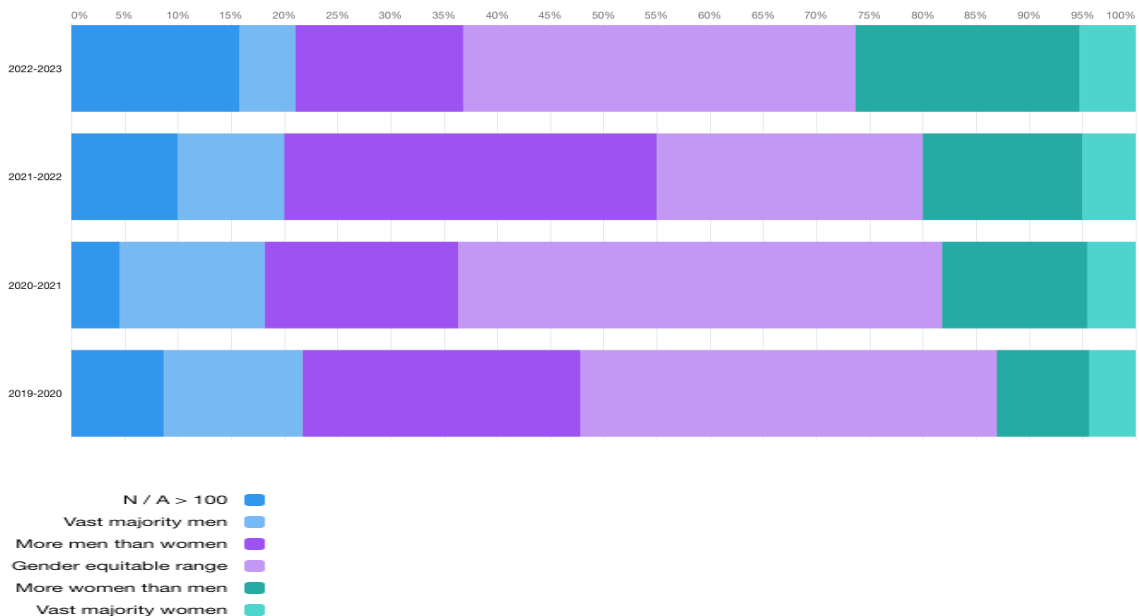
### 8.3 Gender representation within the APF membership

One of the main indicators the APF have been tracking is the representation of genders among the APF membership. For this reporting period, 17 members responded out of 26 member NHRIs.

#### Representation at leadership levels

At the commissioner<sup>2</sup> level, of those NHRIs that responded this year, 37.5% of NHRIs fell within the gender equitable range<sup>3</sup>, up from 32% during the last reporting period.

Figure 27: Gender analysis of the region at Commissioner level over time



It is worth noting that the NHRIs of India, Nepal, Oman, Fiji, Malaysia, Myanmar and Palestine have never had a woman in their top leadership Chairperson position. It is recommended that those NHRIs investigate the structural, cultural or other barriers, if any, that have prevented women from being appointed to these positions. APF members should collectively reflect and discuss strategies to remove any such barriers.

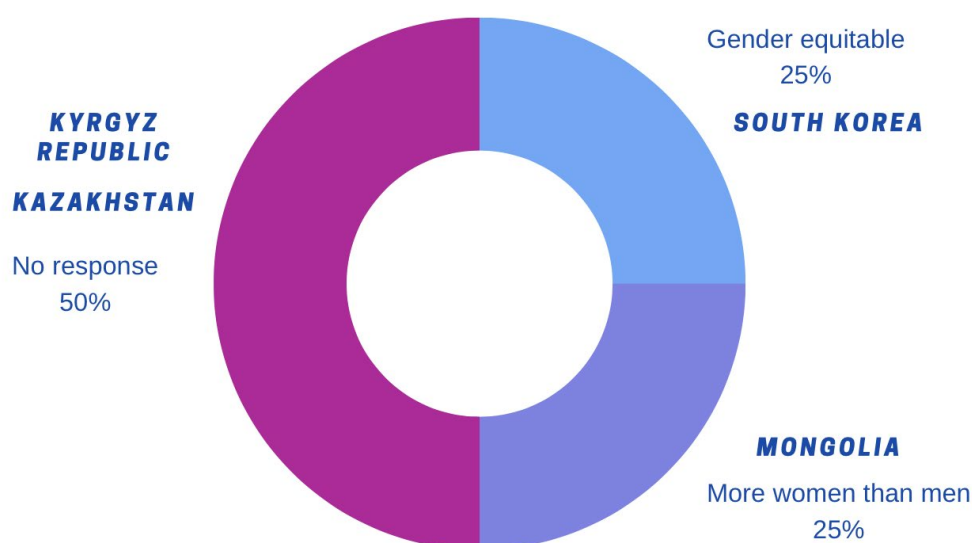
#### Sub-regional gender representation at leadership levels

For the purposes of this report, the APF region is divided into five sub-regions<sup>4</sup> to further explore the trends. Three of the sub-regions (South Asia, South-East Asia and West Asia) contain six member NHRIs each, while Central/North Asia and Pacific/Oceania each include four member NHRIs.

## North/Central Asia

In North/Central Asia, both Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic are Ombuds Offices and report one person at the top leadership position. These organisations will always fall on the extreme end with the vast majority being men or women depending on the gender of the single person in the position at the time. However, both Kazakhstan the Kyrgyz Republic did not respond to the APF annual survey this year, therefore are not included in the current reporting. South Korea fell within the gender equitable range while Mongolia reported more women than men at the Commissioner level.

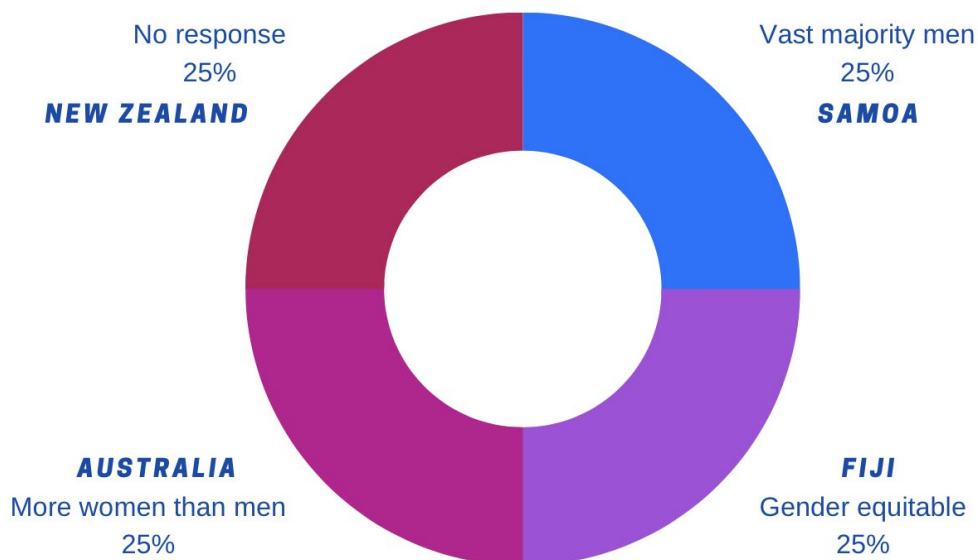
Figure 28: North / Central Asia - Commissioners



## Oceania/Pacific

In the Pacific, the Office of the Ombudsman of Samoa is headed by the Ombudsman. In 2021, a woman was appointed as the Ombudsman for the first time in the history of the organisation which was established in 1990 (although its mandate expanded to become an NHRI in 2013). Australia has an NHRI with a commission model and reported more women than men at Commissioner level.

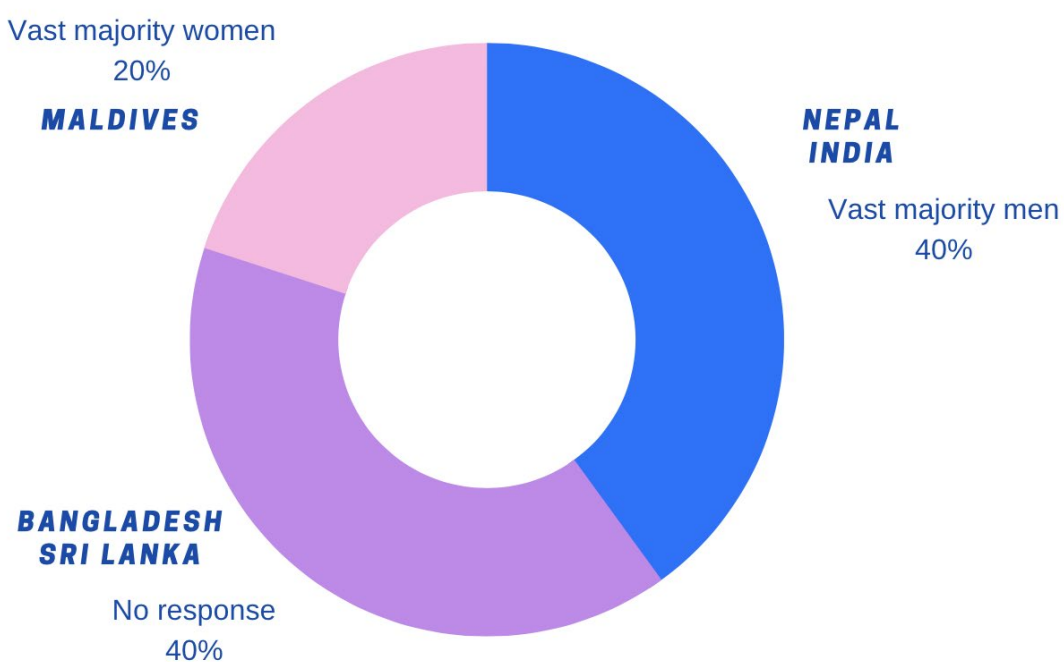
Figure 29: Oceania/Pacific – Commissioners



### South Asia

South Asia includes six APF member NHRIs with larger organisations in terms of staffing capacity and with multi-person leadership. In this sub-region, India and Nepal have remained in the category of either having more men, or vast majority men for the last eight years.

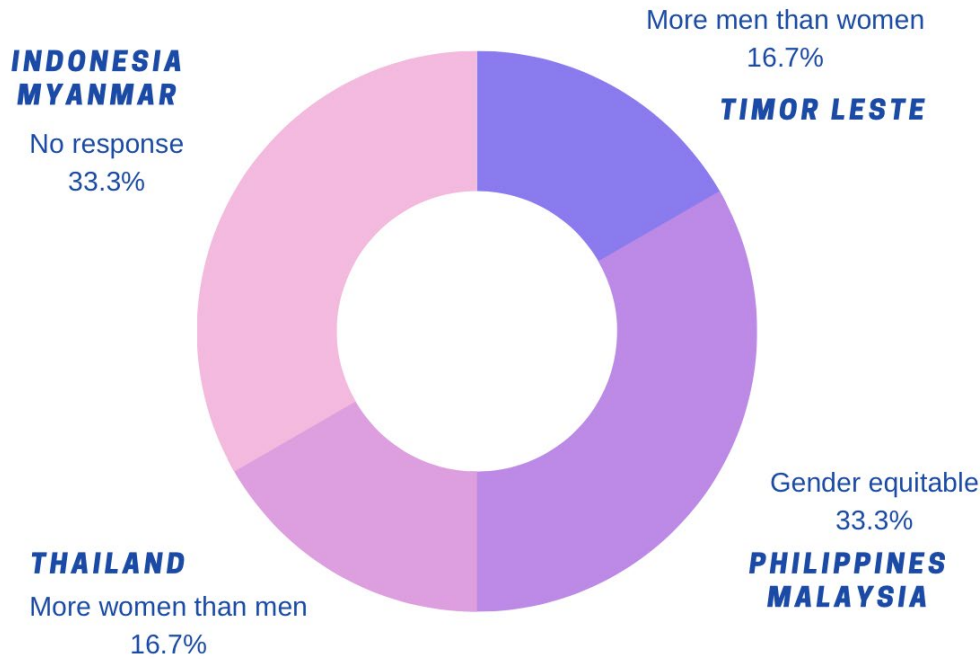
Figure 30: South Asia – Commissioners



**South-East Asia**

In South-East Asia, 33% of NHRIs have Commissioners in the gender equitable range, with Thailand reporting more women than men, and Timor Leste reporting more men than women.

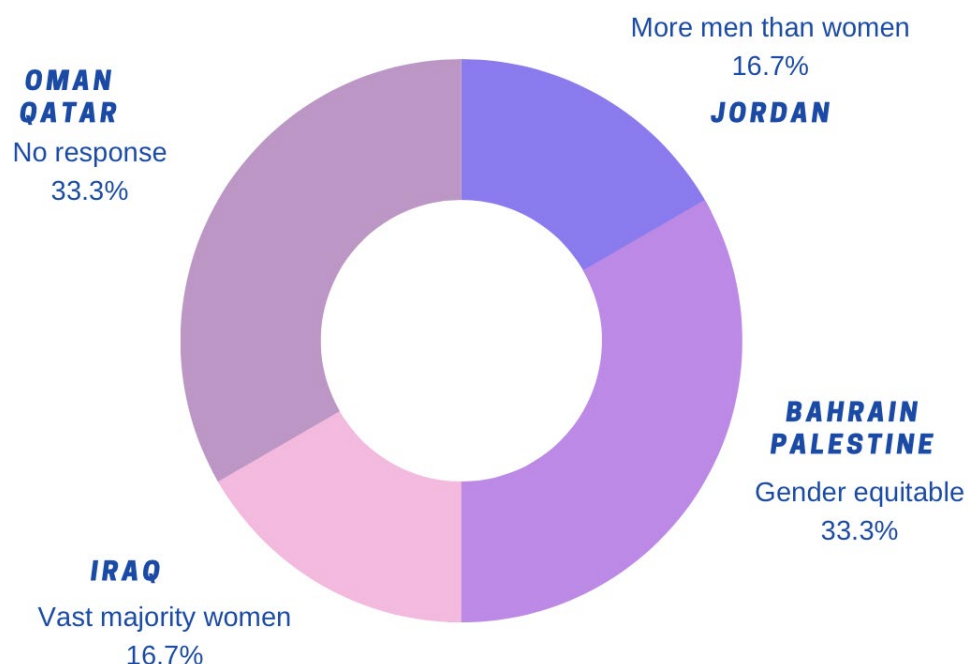
**Figure 31: Southeast Asia - Commissioners**



**West Asia**

In this reporting cycle the majority of NHRIs in West Asia have more men than women at commissioner levels. For 2020, only one of six NHRIs (16.7%) fell within the gender equitable range, which increased to 50% (three NHRIs) for 2021, and down to 33% this reporting cycle. In this sub-region, both Iraq and Qatar have remained in the category of either having more men, or vast majority men for the last 6 years.

Figure 32: West Asia Commissioners

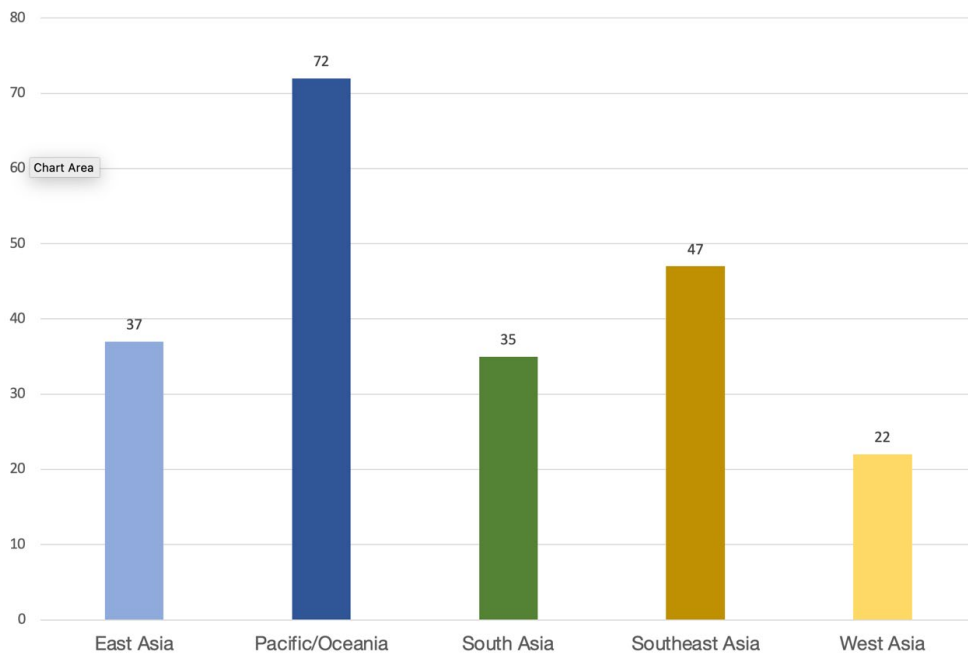


### Representation at staff levels

It is important to consider the changes and improvement of representation at staff levels. NHRIs, as independent organisations, can exercise independent policies and decision-making in relation to hiring and sourcing staff for the organisation, in line with the Paris Principles requirement of pluralism and equitable gender representation.

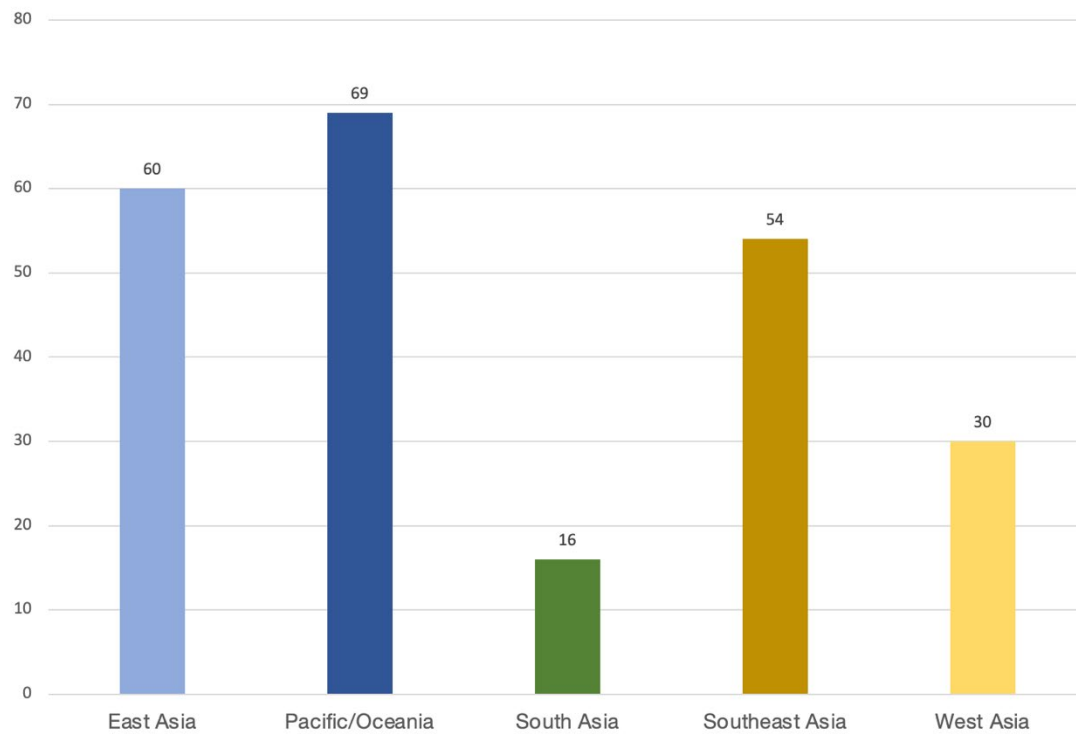
At senior staff level, across the membership, an average of 40.6% of senior staff are female. However, this varies widely from region to region. The Pacific region recorded the highest percentage of senior female staff, at 72%; East Asia 37%; South Asia 35%, Southeast Asia 47% and in West Asia, 22% of senior NHRI staff are female. The NHRIs in Central Asia did not respond to the 2022-23 APF Annual Survey.

Figure 33: % female senior staff across the region



Across the APF membership, an average of 40.6% of junior staff are female, down from 47% last year.

**Figure 34: % female junior staff across the region**



## 8.4 Gender mainstreaming within APF activities

### 8.4.1 Outcome 1 – More NHRIs in the Asia Pacific comply with the Paris Principles and can exercise their mandate in safety

It is important that gender considerations are discussed during the establishment phase of new NHRIs. As detailed in Outcome 1 section of the performance report, the APF within this reporting cycle has continued to work with the Cook Islands and Cambodia to assist in the NHRI establishment process and have raised gender considerations during the process. In relation to existing NHRIs, the accreditation process also provides an opportunity for reviewing and highlighting issues for improvement of gender representation and ensuring pluralism.

### 8.4.2 Outcome 2 – NHRIs have strengthened capacity to effectively promote, protect, and respond to human rights issues

The APF can demonstrate increasing considerations for gender in relation to outcome 2 (for more details please refer to outcome 2 section of the performance report).

It has been observed that activities on specific thematic issues relating gender equality, have included more female than male participants. The APF recommends that member NHRIs ensure consideration to include men in these activities.

### 8.4.3 Outcome 3 – NHRIs voices are amplified in regional and international fora

In strengthening the engagement of NHRIs internationally and regionally, the APF actively applied its policy on gender equality and mainstreaming in terms of both representation and thematic content.

For example, with regards to APF representation, the APF actively promotes senior women NHRI office holders as official APF representatives in international and regional events.

For example, of the APF's four representatives on the GANHRI Bureau, there is an equal 50%-50% split between men and women. In terms of our IGM participants, approximately 75% were female and 25% male.

In terms of thematic content, the APF's interventions and contributions to international and regional activities highlighted the gender impact of various human rights issues, including COVID-19, women human rights defenders across the region, older people, climate change induced displacement, torture prevention, and disability. For example, at our co-organised international conference on the rights of older persons, 53% of the speakers were male and 47% were female.

#### 8.4.4 Outcome 4 – The APF is a well-functioning and governed network with an engaged membership

##### **Governance**

The governance structure of the APF currently includes two main bodies, the Governance Committee (GC) and the Forum Councillors (FC).

In terms of the APF GC the APF only received three nominees – the APF Chairperson (Korea), Deputy Chairperson (Mongolia) and the remaining member (India). All identified as male (100%). The APF will therefore hold an election at the next AGM to elect an additional two female representatives to the committee.

At the most recent APF AGM, 100 participants attended, and the gender composition of the meeting was 52% female and 48% men.

At the APF there are currently ten staff in the 'Head Office' secretariat, one of whom is on maternity leave. Of these staff, seven identify as female (70%) and three identify as male (30%).

In the appointment process of GC members, APF continues to encourage members to consider gender equitable representation in making nominations.

##### **Development and financials**

The target the APF has set for itself for the percentage of expenditure on gender related work is to have it between 15 – 20%. Between the years 2016 to 2020 the percentage of expenditure related and attributed to gender equality work remained between 11 – 14%. During last reporting cycle this dropped to 8%, and dropped further for this reporting cycle to 7%. This is due to no travel costs associated with most gender specific activities. Regardless, the APF should review and implement strategies increasing funds made available for gender equality related activities.

When looking at the total value of all fundraising proposals submitted by the APF for financial support (within the reporting period), 36% of the combined value was targeted at gender specific activities. This is an increase from last year where it was 28%.

##### **Communications**

The APF's commitment to gender equality and the rights of women and girls is demonstrated in the news articles, publications, and materials curated and disseminated across our communication channels. This work is guided by the APF gender mainstreaming strategy.

In 2022-23, 23 gender-related articles, digital stories and other resources were featured in the APF Bulletin. In terms of visual representation, 54.5% of images in the



Bulletin featured women and 45.5% of images featured men. The APF is dedicated to advancing gender equality and will strive to amplify the voices of all individuals, including people of diverse gender identities, in our future publications.

### **APF secretariat gender audit**

Promoting gender equality is a priority for APF and has been identified as a strategic cross-cutting human rights issue in its new Strategic Plan 2022 – 2027. Over the years, the APF has worked to ensure gender considerations are mainstreamed throughout the organisation both in its internal operations and external programming. To ensure the organisation is on track to meet its identified goals, improve its processes, and assist with future planning, the APF conducted an internal gender audit.

As part of its dedicated programmes to support members to achieve gender equality outcomes, the APF developed a world first resource: *Facilitating an NHRI Gender Audit*. Commencing in February 2023 and completed in June 2023, the APF undertook an internal Gender Audit by an external consultant (Dr. Jill Chrisp). The Gender Audit methodology was designed to:

- assess and establish a baseline of information against which progress can be compared and measured on how well the secretariat considers and incorporates gender equality outcomes in its external work and internal organisational operations and practice, including an assessment of internal staffing structure for equity across the organisation.
- identify good practices and areas for improvement.
- develop a set of recommendations for future internal and external work.
- provide support to the APF to develop a gender strategy that addresses findings from the gender audit.

### **APF Gender Focal Point**

According to the APF Gender Policy, adopted by the Forum Council at the APF's 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, the Gender Focal Point in the APF secretariat provides leadership and ensures the coordination and communication of different aspects of gender mainstreaming with the APF.

The Gender Focal Point advocates for greater attention to gender perspectives, provides the necessary rationales and advice on approaches to support gender mainstreaming and advises and supports professional staff to monitor and report on progress towards gender equality. The role also involves disseminating information and supporting the capacity development of staff on gender mainstreaming.

With the incumbent Gender Focal Point currently on maternity leave (the APF Manager of Capacity Development and Gender Programmes), an acting Gender Focal Point has now been appointed (the APF Communications and Networking Officer) who will commence work on developing the new APF Gender Strategy.

## 9 Audited Accounts

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### 28<sup>th</sup> AGM of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions Meeting Paper

Title:	Audited Accounts
Summary of issue:	The audited accounts are at Annex 3.
Recommendation:	<p>That APF members adopt the Audited Financial Accounts and pass the following resolution:</p> <p>“That on the 20 September 2023 the ‘A’ status members of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions approve the “Directors’ Declaration” as set out in the audited financial reports for the year ended 30 June 2023 and authorise Doo-Hwan Song to sign the report on their behalf and the associated management letter to the auditors.”</p>
Relevant considerations:	These procedures are required in order to satisfy the APF’s obligations under the <i>Corporations Act</i> (Cth) 2001 (the Act).
Submission prepared by:	Director
Officer responsible:	Director

## 10 Status of APF Members following GANHRI Accreditation

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### 28<sup>th</sup> AGM of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions

#### Meeting Paper

Title:	Membership status of APF members following GANHRI Accreditation decisions
Summary of issue:	The GANHRI Bureau has taken the following accreditation decisions on APF Members: Sri Lanka – downgraded to “B” status.
Recommendation:	That Forum Councillors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Note the accompanying briefing paper; and</li><li>• In line with GANHRI accreditation decisions, classify Sri Lanka as a “B” status APF member.</li></ul>
Relevant considerations:	As set out in the following paper.
Submission prepared by:	Secretariat
Forum Councillor or officer responsible:	Chairperson

## 10.1 APF Constitution

Rule 11 of the APF Constitution governs APF membership and sets out the requisite qualifications, and the admission process, for 'A' and 'B' accredited APF members. It states that in determining APF membership, accreditation by GANHRI may be taken as evidence of compliance with the Paris Principles.

Rule 11.5 of the APF Constitution governs a review of a member's compliance with the Paris Principles. Rules 11.5(a) and (b) state:

(a) **Occasion for review and obligation to notify**

- (1) The Forum councillors may, on their own motion and at any time, decide to review the compliance of a member with the Paris Principles.
- (2) A member must notify the Forum if there has been any change to the constitutional and/or legislative base or administration of the institution which materially impacts upon its compliance with, or ability to comply with, the Paris Principles.

(b) **Review**

- (1) Following a decision to review under rule 11.5(a)(1) or receipt of a notification under rule 11.5(a)(2), the Forum councillors must meet to consider whether the institution complies with the Paris Principles.
- (2) If the Forum councillors decide that the institution does not so comply, they may, by resolution, downgrade, suspend or expel a member under rule 12.

Rule 12 of the APF Constitution governs changes to membership status. It states:

### 12.1 Downgrading, Suspending or Expelling a Member

(a) The Forum councillors may, by resolution, suspend or expel a member from the Forum if, in their absolute discretion, they decide it is not in the interests of the Forum for the institution to remain a member.

(b) The Forum councillors may downgrade the membership status of, or suspend or expel the member if the Forum councillors determine that the member no longer complies or no longer partially complies with the Paris Principles following a review under rule 11.5.

(c) If the Forum councillors intend to propose a resolution under rule 12.1(a) they must give the member written notice at least 21 days before the meeting at which the resolution is to be proposed:

- (1) stating the date, place and time of the meeting;
- (2) setting out the intended resolution and the grounds on which it is based; and
- (3) informing the member that a representative of the member may attend the meeting and may give an oral or written explanation or submission before the

resolution is put to the vote, and the member must be given a reasonable opportunity to respond before a decision is made by the Forum councillors.

### **12.3 Suspension of Membership**

A suspended member does not have voting rights but may attend and participate in Forum activities at the invitation of the Forum councillors.

## **10.2 Background**

The reports of the GANHRI Subcommittee on Accreditation (SCA) can be found at: <https://ganhri.org/accreditation/sca-reports/>

In its October 2022 session, the SCA recommended to the GANHRI Bureau that the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka be downgraded to 'B' status.

## **10.3 Recommendation**

That Forum Councillors:

- In line with Rule 12.1 of the APF Constitution, downgrade the membership of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka to 'B' status.

## 11 Election of APF Governance Committee

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### 28<sup>th</sup> AGM of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions Meeting Paper

Title:	Election of APF Governance Committee
Summary of issue:	Nominations from Forum Councillors are called for two positions on the APF Governance Committee.
Recommendation:	<p>That 'A' accredited APF members review the roles and responsibilities outlined in the following paper and consider whether they wish to nominate individual Forum Councillors from "A" accredited to these positions.</p> <p>Nominees should submit an expression of interest as set out in Annex 4 by close of business on <u>Friday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2023</u>.</p>
Relevant considerations:	As set out in the following paper.
Submission prepared by:	Director
Officer responsible:	Director

## 11.1 Introduction

Nominations are now called for two positions on the APF Governance Committee from 'A' accredited Forum Councillors. This paper outlines the role, function and election process for the Governance Committee.

## 11.2 APF Governance

The APF governance structures are set out below:

1. The APF's General Assembly has responsibility to consider and make determinations in relation to Strategic Plans, Annual Directors and Auditors reports, constitutional amendments and changes to rules of procedure, membership, and the election of board members.
2. The General Assembly consists of representatives from:
  - a. 'A' accredited members, who have voting and participatory rights; and
  - b. 'B' accredited members, who have participatory rights.
3. The APF Forum Council is the APF's decision-making body and is comprised of individuals nominated by 'A' accredited members. The Forum Council is also the APF's board of directors under Australian law.
4. The APF Forum Council has established a five (5) member Governance Committee, to be elected from amongst Forum Councillors at the APF General Assembly.
5. The Governance Committee will meet at least four times per year and have responsibility for:
  - a. making recommendations to the General Assembly on a range of issues including: strategic planning, the biannual and annual Directors and Auditors Reports; applications for membership; proposed Constitutional Changes and changes to Rules of Procedures; ACJ referrals;
  - b. adopting an annual Operational Plan;
  - c. providing assistance, on request, to NHRIs 'at risk'; and
  - d. supervising the activities of the APF in the implementation of the APF Strategic Plan.
6. Positions on the Governance Committee are held by individual Forum Councillors, elected by secret ballot for a period of 2 years, and cannot be delegated to another member of their institution.
7. The composition of the Governance Committee should promote gender and regional diversity with, ideally, no more than 1 position held by any one sub-

region. No more than three Governance Committee positions may be held by more than one gender.

8. There is a direct election for the Chairperson of the Governance Committee and this person also becomes the APF Chairperson and an APF representative on the GANHRI Bureau.
9. Any 'A' or 'B' accredited member can now nominate to host an APF Biennial Conference; and
10. One position on the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) Bureau is retained for the APF Chairperson and that the remaining positions are open to election from all 'A' members subject to the finalisation of the terms of office of representatives.

### 11.3 Who comprises the APF Governance Committee?

The five (5) member Governance Committee is comprised of Forum Councillors from 'A' status APF members – a Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, Member 1, Member 2, Member 3.

In 2022 the following individuals were elected to the Governance Committee:

- APF Chairperson (Doo-Hwan Song, National Human Rights Commission of Korea);
- APF Deputy Chairperson (Mr Khunan Jargalsaikhan, Mongolian Human Rights Commission);
- Member 1 (Justice Arun Kumar Mishra, National Human Rights Commission of India).

There were no further nominees and therefore the two final members of the Governance Committee are vacant.

### 11.4 What are the terms of office of the APF Governance Committee?

The Governance Committee was elected at APF 27 (2022) and it serves a two year term which ends at the conclusion of APF 29 (2024).

The term of office for the two vacant positions will therefore be for a one-year period ending at the conclusion of APF 29 in 2024.



## 11.5 What are the duties of the APF Governance Committee?

The Governance Committee Charter (Article 5.1) sets out the following responsibilities that APF members have delegated to the Governance Committee.

- a. Review, consider and make recommendations to the General Assembly in relation to:
  - i. Strategic Planning;
  - ii. The Director's and Auditor's reports;
  - iii. Proposed Constitutional changes, if any;
  - iv. Changes to the Rules of Procedure, if any;
  - v. The admission of new members or changes to the status of existing members;
  - vi. ACJ references.
- b. Review reports of standing committees and advisory committees as established by the General Assembly from time to time;
- c. Consider quick responses to assist NHRIs at risk in times of crisis or concern and develop a protocol for such response;
- d. Supervise the activities of the APF secretariat in implementing the Strategic Plan and Annual Operation Plans;
- e. Oversight of operations:
  - i. Review organisational performance, activities and finance;
  - ii. Monitor financial performance against the approved annual budget and ensure accurate and timely financial reports of the Forum are produced;
  - iii. Consider and address such other matters as the Chairperson or General Assembly place on the agenda.
- f. Compliance:
  - i. Establish and monitor the performance of the APF's compliance, risk management and control systems, and ensure that they are operating effectively, including through periodic reviews of policies, protocols and procedures developed in relation to the management of operations and compliance risks;
  - ii. Ensure the APF complies with its statutory reporting requirements to Australian regulatory bodies regarding the registered office, annual information statement and other notifications or returns that require lodgement; and
  - iii. Make recommendations to the General Assembly regarding the selection, appointment and removal of the external auditor, and regularly evaluate the auditor's performance.
- g. Planning and development
  - i. Review and assist with the development of the Strategic Plan, the Operations Plan and the annual budget, as proposed by APF secretariat and which will be submitted for approval by the General Assembly;

- ii. Consider and review policy and make recommendations to the General Assembly;
  - iii. Make recommendations to the General Assembly regarding the appointment and removal (where appropriate) of the APF Director and his or her terms of employment including remuneration;
  - iv. Initiate and maintain a self-evaluation and training programme for the APF members.
- h. Such other matters as the Governance Committee Chairperson or General Assembly consider necessary or determine from time to time.

## 11.6 What are the eligibility requirements for the APF Governance Committee?

The rules and criteria for appointment to the APF Governance Committee are located in Article 7 of the Governance Committee Charter.

Article 7 of the Governance Committee Charter requires nominees to meet the following criteria:

- be a current serving member of the APF Forum Council;
- be a serving Chairperson, Commissioner or senior executive officer, or equivalent, with at least 2 years remaining in their domestic tenure;
- reflect the gender diversity of APF membership;
- reflect the regional diversity of APF membership; and
- have demonstrated an ability to act in the best interests of the APF.

Please note the requirement that the composition of the Governance Committee should promote gender and regional diversity with, ideally, no more than 1 position held by any one sub-region and no more than 3 positions held by one gender.

Given the above, the APF is seeking nominations from female Forum Councillors from the regions of West Asia, South-East Asia and the Pacific to fill the two vacant positions.

## 11.7 What is the election process for the APF Governance Committee?

Each 'A' status accredited member may nominate one individual representative for appointment to the Governance Committee.

The Governance Committee Charter requires that the Committee members shall be elected by sequential secret ballots (one vote, one value).

### **Prior to the AGM**

Nominees for the Governance Committee must complete and forward an Expression of Interest (EOI) to the APF secretariat no later than Friday 8th September 2023. The EOI requires information including the nominee's current position, gender, region, qualifications for a position on the Committee and a personal statement demonstrating their ability to act in the best interests of the APF.

The APF secretariat will distribute the EOIs to members on Monday 11 September 2023.

### At the AGM

Each 'A' status Forum Council member will have the opportunity to vote via a sequential secret ballot for the positions of Members 2 and 3.

### Election of Member 2

The ballot paper for Member 2 would contain, for example, the following information (please note: the institutions and genders are examples only):

Ballot Paper Governance Committee	
Position: <b>Member 2</b>	
<b>Pacific Region</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Australia, Female	(Name/office) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> New Zealand, Male	(Name/office) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Samoa, Male	(Name/office) _____
<b>South East Asia</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Indonesia, Male	(Name/office) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Malaysia, Female	(Name/office) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Philippines, Female	(Name/office) _____
<b>South Asia</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Afghanistan, Female	(Name/office) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> India, Male	(Name/office) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Nepal, Female	(Name/office) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Sri Lanka, Female	(Name/office) _____
<b>West Asia</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Jordan, Male	(Name/office) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Palestine, Female	(Name/office) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Qatar, Male	(Name/office) _____
<b>Central/North Asia</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Mongolia, Male	(Name/office) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Korea, Female	(Name/office) _____

The nominee that receives the most votes will be elected as Member 2 of the Governance Committee. The APF secretariat will tally the votes. The successful nominee to be elected will be announced.

### Election of Member 3

The region from which Member 2 resides will then be removed from the vote for the election of Member 3 (provided there are sufficient nominees from the remaining regions) to promote regional diversity.

For example, if Member 2 was elected from the South-East Asia region, this sub-region will be removed from the vote for the election of Member 3.

The vote will then be held for the position of Member 3. The secretariat will count the votes. The nominee that receives the most votes will be elected as Member 3.

Ballot Paper Management Advisory Committee	
Position: <b>Member 3</b>	
<b>Pacific Region</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Australia, Female	(Name/office) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> New Zealand, Male	(Name/office) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Samoa, Male	(Name/office) _____
<b>South East Asia</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Indonesia, Male	(Name/office) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Malaysia, Female	(Name/office) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Philippines, Female	(Name/office) _____
<b>South Asia</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Afghanistan, Female	(Name/office) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> India, Male	(Name/office) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Nepal, Female	(Name/office) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Sri Lanka, Female	(Name/office) _____
<b>West Asia</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Jordan, Male	(Name/office) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Palestine, Female	(Name/office) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Qatar, Male	(Name/office) _____
<b>Central/North Asia</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Mongolia, Male	(Name/office) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Korea, Female	(Name/office) _____

## 11.8 Recommendation

That 'A' accredited members:

- Consider the above requirements for election for two vacant positions to the APF Governance Committee;
- If your institution wishes to nominate an individual, please fill out the 'Expression of Interest' at Annex 4 and submit it to the APF secretariat by close of business on **Friday 8 September 2023**;
- Expressions of interest received by close of nominations will be circulated to all APF members by close of business on Monday 11 September 2023.

## 11.9 Attachments Annex 4

- Expression of Interest.

## 12 Report of the GANHRI Secretary

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### 28<sup>th</sup> AGM of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions Meeting Paper

Title:	Report of the GANHRI Secretary
Summary of issue:	The GANHRI Secretary will provide a report on GANHRI activities.
Recommendation:	That APF members note the report.
Relevant considerations:	None.
Submission prepared by:	GANHRI Secretary
Officer responsible:	Director

## 13 General Business

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### 28<sup>th</sup> AGM of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions Meeting Paper

Title:	General Business
Summary of issue:	The discussion of additional General Business items.
Recommendation:	That APF members determine whether discussion of any additional general business items is required.
Relevant considerations:	None.
Submission prepared by:	Director
Officer responsible:	Chairperson

## Annexure

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Annex 1 – APF Rules of Procedure

Annex 2 – APF 27 Draft Program

Annex 3 – APF Audited Accounts

Annex 4 – Expression of Interest for APF Governance Committee

Annex 5 – Proxy Form





**ASIA PACIFIC FORUM**  
ADVANCING HUMAN RIGHTS IN OUR REGION

# ANNEX 1

## Rules of Procedure

### Annual General Meeting Annual Conference

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#### **APF 28**

The 28<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Asia  
Pacific Forum of National Human Rights  
Institutions

New Delhi, India, 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> September 2023

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# Annex 1 – APF Rules of Procedure

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## Annual General Meeting

### Table of Contents

- 1. Statement of purpose**
- 2. Convening the Annual General Meeting**
  - 2.1 Frequency, time and place
  - 2.2 Extension of time for holding the Annual General Meeting
  - 2.3 Notice of Annual General Meeting
  - 2.4 Adjourning Annual General Meeting
- 3. Documentation for Annual General Meeting**
  - 3.1 Provision of background papers
  - 3.2 Communications/submissions by member institutions prior to Annual General Meeting
- 4. Attendance, Representation and Credentials**
  - 4.1 Full member institutions/ Forum Councillors/ Auditor
  - 4.2 Representation at Annual General Meetings
  - 4.3 Candidate and Associate member institutions and Observers
  - 4.4 Credentials
- 5. Conduct of the Meeting**
  - 5.1 Chairperson
  - 5.2 Agenda
  - 5.3 Business to be discussed
  - 5.4 Quorum
  - 5.5 Order for discussion
  - 5.6 Speaking rights
  - 5.7 Decision-making
  - 5.8 Working language of the Annual General Meeting
- 6. The APF secretariat**
  - 6.1 Role
  - 6.2 Reporting
- 7. Adoption and Amendment of Rules of Procedure**
  - 7.1 Adoption and amendment
  - 7.2 Matters not covered by the Rules

## **Rules of Procedure for Annual General Meetings of the APF**

### **1. Statement of Purpose**

The following Rules of Procedure apply to Annual General Meetings of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (the APF).

The APF must hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) each year in order to satisfy its obligations under the Australian Corporations Act (Cth) 2001 (the Act). The purpose of the Annual General Meeting (which is hosted by one of the full member institutions of the APF) is to enable the full members of the APF to receive the APF's annual financial report, directors' report and auditor's report.

### **2. Convening an AGM**

#### **2.1 Frequency, time and place**

The APF must hold an AGM once in each calendar year and within 5 months after the end of its financial year.

#### **2.2 Extension of time for holding the AGM**

If an extension of time is needed for holding the AGM beyond 5 months after the end of the financial year, the Forum Councillors must apply to the Australian Securities and Investments Commission for that extension in accordance with Section 250P of the Act.

#### **2.3 Notice of an AGM**

At least 6 weeks notice of an AGM must be given to every full member institution, each Forum councillor and the auditor of the APF personally, by facsimile, by e-mail or by pre-paid post. The notice must specify the date, time and place of the meeting and state the general nature of the business to be transacted at the meeting.

#### **2.4 Adjourning an AGM**

Prior to an AGM, the Forum Councillors may change the venue for, postpone or cancel the Meeting (in accordance with clause 13.1 of the Constitution).

At the AGM, the Chairperson may, and must if so directed by the meeting, adjourn the meeting time and place. The only business that can be discussed at any adjourned meeting is the unfinished business from the meeting at which the adjournment took place.

### **3. Documentation for the AGM**

#### **3.1 Provision of background papers**

Background papers will be available to all full member institutions 14 days prior to the meeting.

### **3.2 Communications/submissions by member institutions prior to an AGM**

Any communications, submissions or documents to be tabled at an AGM must be forwarded to the APF Secretariat by electronic mail within 21 days of the date of the meeting.

## **4. Attendance, Representation and Credentials**

### **4.1 Full member institutions/ Forum Councillors/ Auditor**

All full member institutions may attend and vote at AGMs. Forum Councillors may attend and speak at AGMs. The APF's auditor or his/her representative is also entitled to attend and speak at an AGM.

### **4.2 Representation at AGMs**

Each full member institution has one vote and may vote by proxy, attorney or representative in accordance with clause 13.9 of the Constitution.

### **4.3 Candidate and Associate Member Institutions and Observers**

Any person may attend an AGM if invited by the Forum Councillors and, with the permission of the Chairperson, may speak but not vote at the meeting.

### **4.4 Credentials**

All invitees should inform the Secretariat of their intention to participate in an AGM in writing at least two weeks in advance. If that invitee is an organisation, it must nominate, in writing, one spokesperson.

## **5. Conduct of the Meeting**

### **5.1 Chairperson**

The Chairperson of Forum Councillors must preside as Chairperson at each AGM and shall be responsible for the control of all sessions of the meeting and for ensuring that the Rules of Procedure are adhered to. Any question arising relating to the order of business, procedure or conduct of the meeting must be referred to the Chairperson whose decision is final.

If that Chairperson is not present, or not willing to act as Chairperson of the meeting, the full member institutions present must elect a Chairperson of the meeting.

### **5.2 Agenda**

The Forum Councillors shall approve the provisional agenda prepared by the Secretariat.

### **5.3 Business to be discussed**

The business of an AGM shall be the consideration of the annual financial report, directors' report and auditor's report, the fixing of the auditor's remuneration and any other item on the Agenda approved by the Forum Councillors.

The Forum Councillors must present the following reports to the AGM:

- The financial report;
- The directors' report;
- The auditors' report.

The Chairperson must also allow a reasonable opportunity for full member institutions to ask questions about, or comment upon, the management of the Forum.

If the auditor or his/her representative attends the AGM, the Chairperson must also allow a reasonable opportunity for full member institutions to ask questions about the conduct of the audit and the preparation and content of the auditor's report.

#### **5.4 Quorum**

No business may be transacted at an AGM, except the election of a Chairperson and adjournments, unless a quorum of full member institutions is present when the meeting proceeds to business. A quorum is either a number determined by the full member institutions or, if the full member institutions have not fixed a number, by the following method:

- (i) If the number of full member institutions is 9 or less, 3 full member institutions;
- (ii) If the number of full member institutions is between 10 and 15, 4 full member institutions; or
- (iii) If the number of full member institutions exceeds 15, 5 full member institutions.

If there is no quorum 30 minutes after the starting time of an AGM then it can be adjourned to another date. If there is no agreement about the date for the adjourned AGM it must be adjourned to the same day in the next week at the same time and place.

#### **5.5 Order for discussion**

The order for discussion is progression through the agenda.

#### **5.6 Speaking Rights**

Full member institutions may speak to each agenda item and then candidate and associate member institutions and other observers may speak (with the permission of the Chairperson) prior to moving onto the next agenda item.

## **5.7 Decision-making**

Decisions at AGMs will, as far as possible, be arrived at by consensus. Where the Chairperson deems that there is no consensus the matter will be decided by a majority of votes by hand. Only full member institutions may vote on agenda items and each full member institution present has one vote. A proxy, attorney or representative is entitled to a separate vote for each full member institution that the person represents. Where the votes are equal the proposed resolution is lost. Candidate and associate member institutions do not have voting rights.

## **5.8 Working language of AGMs**

The working language of the meetings of the APF shall be English.

## **6. The APF secretariat**

### **6.1 Role**

The Secretariat shall facilitate the work of the AGMs of the full member institutions by:

- (i) Providing necessary advice, clarifications, inputs and information;
- (ii) Acting as resource persons – particularly in the preparation of background papers; and
- (iii) Summarising discussions and preparing the final report of the meeting.

### **6.2 Reporting**

The Secretariat will publish the executive summary of the AGM within 60 days of the meeting being held.

## **7. Adoption and Amendment of Rules of Procedure**

### **7.1 Adoption and Amendment**

These Rules shall come into force on adoption by the Forum Councillors, will remain in force until amended by the Forum Councillors, and can be amended by the Forum Councillors as required.

### **7.2 Matters not covered by the Rules**

Any matter not covered by these rules may be determined by a vote of the full member institutions.

# Annual Conference

## Table of Contents

- 1. Statement of Purpose**
- 2. Representation and Attendance**
  - 2.1 Attendees
  - 2.2 Proxies/representatives
- 3. Conduct of the Conference**
  - 3.1 Working Language
  - 3.2 Frequency, time and place of Conference
  - 3.3 Notice requirements
  - 3.4 Agenda
  - 3.5 Chairing of Conference and Conference sessions
  - 3.6 Background papers
  - 3.7 Communications/submissions prior to the Conference
  - 3.8 Order for discussion
- 4. Participation**
  - 4.1 Participation of APF member institution representatives
  - 4.2 Participation of the United Nations
  - 4.3 Participation of Government representatives
  - 4.4 Participation of NGOs
- 5. The Final Conference Statement**
  - 5.1 Content of the Final Conference Statement
  - 5.2 Preparation of the Final Conference Statement
- 6. The Role of the APF Secretariat**
  - 6.1 Role
  - 6.2 Reporting
- 7. Adoption and Amendment of the Rules of Procedure**
  - 7.1 Adoption and amendment
  - 7.2 Matters not covered by the Rules

## **Rules of Procedure for APF Conference**

### **1. Statement of Purpose**

The Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (APF) plenary Conference (the Conference) is the key participatory Conference for all APF member institutions and registered observers in the Asia Pacific region. The aim of the Conference is to bring together national human rights institutions, the United Nations (UN), governments and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in a harmonious and practical setting in order to mobilise co-operation for regional human rights initiatives and to facilitate the establishment of new national human rights institutions in accordance with the Paris Principles. At the Conference, APF member institutions and registered observers hear and discuss reports from APF member institutions, Asia-Pacific governments and NGOs and discuss human rights issues of regional significance.

### **2. Representation and Attendance**

#### **2.1 Attendees**

The Conference may be attended by all APF member institutions (full, candidate and associate), representatives of the OHCHR (and other UN agencies), government and NGO representatives, other relevant institutions and individuals who have been invited to observe or address the Conference.

All invitees should inform the Secretariat of their intention to participate in the Conference in writing at least four weeks in advance and must nominate one spokesperson for their organisation that has been granted powers by a proper authority enabling him or her to represent the organisation at the Conference.

#### **2.2 Proxies/representatives**

If an attendee has given notice of their intention to participate but they cannot subsequently be present at the Conference, she/he may nominate, in writing, one representative/proxy to attend instead.

### **3. Conduct of the Conference**

#### **3.1 Working Language.**

The working language of the Conference of the APF shall be English.

#### **3.2 Frequency, time and place of Conference**

The frequency, time and place of the Conference shall be determined by the APF Forum Councillors.

#### **3.3 Notice requirements**

The APF Forum Councillors shall provide notice of the Conference at least 6 weeks prior to the Conference date by electronic mail. Notice will be given to all APF



member institutions, representatives of the OHCHR and any other UN agencies invited to address the Conference, government and NGO and other relevant institutions.

### **3.4 Agenda**

The Chairperson of the Forum Councillors shall approve the provisional agenda prepared by the APF Secretariat.

### **3.5 Chairing of Conference and Conference sessions**

The Chairperson of the Forum Councillors (Chairperson) shall preside at the Conference and ensure that the Rules of Procedure are adhered to. Any question arising relating to the order of business, procedure or conduct of the Conference must be referred to the Chairperson whose decision is final.

Conference's sessions will be chaired by an APF full member institution (session Chairperson) as determined by the agenda. The session Chairperson will be responsible for the control of the session and for ensuring that the Rules of Procedure are adhered to. The session Chairperson shall endeavour to allow all who wish to make interventions to do so during the allotted time.

### **3.6 Background papers**

Background papers prepared for sessions will be available, where possible, to all participants or can be downloaded from the APF website at [www.asiapacificforum.net](http://www.asiapacificforum.net).

### **3.7 Communications/submissions prior to the Conference**

Any communications, submissions or documents to be tabled at the Conference are to be forwarded to the APF Secretariat by electronic mail at least 14 days prior the date of the Conference.

### **3.8 Order for discussion**

The order for discussion is progression through the agenda.

## **4. Participation**

### **4.1 Participation of APF member institution representatives**

Member institutions of the APF are the principal actors of the Conference and interventions by them will take place before those of other participants.

For each session, APF member representatives may make initial introductory presentations and make subsequent comments. If APF member institutions propose to make introductory presentations they should provide a copy or outline of the presentation to APF Secretariat in electronic format 14 days before the Conference.

The responsibility for finalising the Conference conclusions lies with the Forum Councillors.

#### **4.2 Participation of the United Nations**

Representatives of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and other specified United Nations agencies may be invited to observe or address the Conference.

United Nations representatives with prepared written statements are requested to provide a copy of these to the APF Secretariat in electronic format 14 days before the Conference.

The session Chairperson should allow an appropriate opportunity for interventions by representatives of the United Nations.

#### **4.3 Participation of Government representatives**

Representatives of Government may be invited to observe or address the Conference.

Government representatives with prepared written statements are requested to provide a copy of these to the APF Secretariat in electronic format 14 days before the Conference.

The session Chairperson should allow an appropriate opportunity for interventions by government representatives.

#### **4.4 Participation of NGOs**

NGO representatives may be invited to observe or address the Conference.

NGO representatives are encouraged to prepare a collective report and to nominate a single representative to make any oral submissions. A copy of the collective report should be provided to the APF Secretariat in electronic format 14 days before the Conference.

The session Chairperson may allow, if time permits, an opportunity for additional interventions by NGOs.

### **5. Final Conference Statement**

#### **5.1 Content of the Final Conference Statement**

The Final Conference Statement may only contain a summary of items discussed during the Conference.

#### **5.2 Preparation of the Final Conference Statement**

Only Forum Councillors may draft and adopt the Final Conference Statement and they will do so in closed session(s). Candidate and associate member institutions may observe the session(s).

## **6. The Role of the APF Secretariat**

### **6.1 Role**

The Secretariat shall facilitate the work of the Conference by:

- (i) Providing necessary advice, clarifications, inputs and information;
- (ii) Acting as resource persons – particularly in the preparation of background papers;
- (iii) Assisting the Chairperson and session Chairperson; and
- (iv) Summarising discussions and preparing the final report of the Conference.

### **6.2 Reporting**

The Secretariat will publish the executive summary of the Conference on the APF website within 60 days of the Conference being held.

## **7. Adoption and Amendment of the Rules of Procedure**

### **7.1 Adoption and amendment**

These Rules shall come into force on adoption by the Forum Councillors and may be amended by the Forum Councillors as required.

### **7.2 Matters not covered by the Rules**

Any matter not covered by these rules may be determined by a vote of the Forum Councillors.



**ASIA PACIFIC FORUM**  
ADVANCING HUMAN RIGHTS IN OUR REGION

# ANNEX 2

## Agenda

### Annual General Meeting

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#### **APF 28**

The 28<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Asia  
Pacific Forum of National Human Rights  
Institutions

New Delhi, India, 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> September 2023

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**28<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING and  
BIENNIAL CONFERENCE of the  
ASIA PACIFIC FORUM OF NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS**

**20 – 21 September 2023**

**Vigyan Bhawan**

**New Delhi, INDIA**

<b>Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2023</b> <b><u>OPENING CEREMONY – 2023 CONFERENCE</u></b>		
09:00 – 09:30	Transportation to venue	Hyatt Regency Delhi hotel
09:30 – 10:00	Arrival – Security and Seating	Vigyan Bhawan
10:30 – 11:30	<b>Opening Ceremony</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. MC Welcome</li> <li>2. Lighting of the Lamp</li> <li>3. Keynote Addresses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chairperson, Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions</li> <li>• Chairperson, National Human Rights Commission of India</li> <li>• Speaker (TBC)</li> <li>• Speaker (TBC)</li> <li>• Hon. Prime Minister of India (TBC)</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Vote of Thanks</li> </ol>	Plenary Hall
11:30 – 12:00	High Tea Break	Pre-function area

<b><u>ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING</u></b> (Closed meeting of Forum Councillors, APF members and invited observers only)		
11:30 – 12:00	<b>REGISTRATION</b> (AGM delegates only)	Hall 2 & 3
12:00 – 13:00	<b>APF and CSOs Dialogue</b>  The dialogue will provide an opportunity for NHRIs and civil society representatives to discuss opportunities for partnership and collaboration; and to share and learn good practice.  <b>Discussion and ‘Questions and Answers’ session</b>	Hall 2 & 3
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch	
14:00 – 15:30	<b>APF Forum Councillors and Annual General Meeting</b>  <i>Chair: Doo-Hwan Song</i> <i>Chairperson, APF</i> <i>Chairperson, National Human Rights Commission of Korea</i>  <b>Agenda</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirmation of Attendance and Apologies</li> <li>• Adoption of Agenda</li> <li>• APF Chairperson’s Welcome</li> <li>• Host (NHRC India) Chairperson’s welcome</li> <li>• APF Performance Report</li> <li>• Gender Mainstreaming</li> <li>• Audited Accounts</li> <li>• Elections</li> <li>• International engagement               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ GANHRI</li> <li>○ United Nations Agencies</li> </ul> </li> <li>• General Business</li> </ul>	Hall 2 & 3
15:30 – 16:00	Afternoon Tea	
16:00 – 17:00	<b>Continuation of business items</b> (if required)	
17:00	Transportation back to hotel	
18:00-20:00	<b>Welcome Dinner</b> (invited delegates only)  Kindly hosted by the National Human Rights Commission of India	Hyatt Regency Delhi hotel

Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> September

**BIENNIAL CONFERENCE**

***‘Celebrating the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the adoption of the Paris Principles, along with the 75th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights’***

09:00 – 09:30	Transportation to Venue	
09:00 – 10:00	<b>Registration of Conference Delegates</b>	Foyer of Hall 6
<b>10:00 – 11:15</b>	<b>Session 1: Setting the Scene – 30 years of Promoting and Protecting Human Rights across Asia and the Pacific</b>	Hall 6
<i>Objective: We’ll set the scene and discuss the role of NHRIs in protecting and promoting human rights; and take stock of their achievements across the Asia Pacific region. We’ll also hear about the importance of partnerships and collaborating with stakeholders such as CSOs and UN agencies.</i>		
11:15 – 11:45	Morning Tea	
<b>11:45 – 13:00</b>	<b>Session 2: Advancing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its promise of freedom, equality, and justice for all</b>	Hall 6
<i>Objective: We’ll dive into the importance of the UDHR and hear some of the challenging and difficult environments NHRIs have had to navigate. Speakers will share their experiences on how they continue to tackle present and/or future challenges; and we’ll consider how the network can collectively support its members.</i>		
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch	
<b>14:00 – 15:30</b>	<b>Session 3: The role of NHRIs in responding to and mitigating the human rights impacts of climate change – national, regional, and international actions</b>	Hall 6
<i>One of the most urgent human rights issues facing communities across the Asia Pacific region is the impact of climate change and environmental harm.</i>  <i>Across the region, millions of people are at risk from rising sea levels, extreme weather events, increasing salination, drought, disease and other changes caused by a warming planet. In addition, the operations of national and transnational corporations can result in emissions, pollution and other environmental damage that compromises the health and livelihoods of communities.</i>  <i>We also know that the human rights impact on vulnerable groups – including women, children, people with disabilities and indigenous peoples – is greatly magnified.</i>		

*This session final session will consider the human rights impact of climate change and discuss the vital role of NHRIs in responding to and mitigating these impacts. Speakers will highlight case studies, and participants will share their experience on linking international commitments made by their State with national actions. Speakers will also highlight examples of regional and international actions and experiences; and consider recommendations on how we can support and partner with each other to further promote and protect human rights.*

<b>15:30– 16:00</b>	Afternoon Tea	
<b>16:00 – 16:30</b>	<b>Presentation of Conference Statement</b>	Hall 6
<b>16:30 – 17:30</b>	<b>Closing Ceremony</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Arun Kumar Mishra</u> Chairperson, National Human Rights Commission of India</li> <li>• <u>Doo-Hwan Song</u> Chairperson, National Human Rights Commission of Korea Chairperson, Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions</li> </ul>	Hall 6
<b>17:30 – 18:00</b>	Transportation back to hotel	
<b>18:30 – 20:30</b>	<b>Cultural Event and Dinner</b> (invited delegates only)  Kindly hosted by the National Human Rights Commission of India	TBA





**ASIA PACIFIC FORUM**  
ADVANCING HUMAN RIGHTS IN OUR REGION

# ANNEX 3

## Audited Accounts

## Annual General Meeting

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### **APF 28**

The 28<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Asia  
Pacific Forum of National Human Rights  
Institutions

New Delhi, India, 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> September 2023

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# **Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions**

**ABN 98 099 972 997**

**Financial Statements - 30 June 2023**



Directors' report	2
Auditor's independence declaration	4
Statement of income and retained earnings	5
Statement of financial position	6
Statement of cash flows	7
Notes to the financial statements	8
Directors' declaration	16
Independent auditor's report	17

The directors present their report, together with the financial statements, on the Company for the year ended 30 June 2023.

### Directors

The following persons were directors of the Company during the whole of the financial year and up to the date of this report, unless otherwise stated:

Shaharзад Akbar (resigned 14 September 2022)	Chairperson, Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission
Rosalind Croucher	President, Australian Human Rights Commission
Leanne Smith (non-voting)	Executive Director, Australian Human Rights Commission
Doo-Hwan Song	Chairperson, National Human Rights Commission of Korea
Khunan Jargalsaikhan	Chairperson, National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia
Rhiel Gharaibeh (resigned 14 September 2022)	Chairperson, Jordan National Centre for Human Rights
Justice Sri Arun Kumar Mishra	Chairperson, National Human Rights Commission of India
Maryam Al Attiya	Chairperson, National Human Rights Committee of Qatar
Othman bin Hashim (resigned 14 September 2022)	Chairperson, Human Rights Commission of Malaysia
Top Bahadur Magar	Chairperson, National Human Rights Commission of Nepal
Jesuina Maria Ferreira Gomes (resigned 5 November 2022)	Providor, Timor Leste Office of the Providor for Human Rights and Justice
Luamanuvao Katalaina Sapolu	Ombudsman of Samoa
Paul Hunt	Chief Commissioner, New Zealand Human Rights Commission
Ahmad Damanik (resigned 14 September 2022)	Chairperson Indonesian National Commission on Human Rights
Issam Younis	Commissioner General, Palestine Independent Commission for Citizen's Rights
Justice Rohini Marasinghe	Chairperson, Sri Lanka Human Rights Commission

### Principal activities

During the financial year the principal continuing activities of the Company consisted of:

- APF Membership increase
- Increase member capability to deliver their mandate
- Strengthened NHRI engagement internationally and regionally
- Ensure APF is member owned and well managed

### Company secretary

The following person held the position of Company Secretary at the end of the financial year:

Kieren John Fitzpatrick - Director, Secretariat of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions. Mr. Fitzpatrick is employed by the Company and was appointed as Company Secretary on incorporation.

### Meetings of directors

The number of meetings of the Company's Board of Directors ('the Board') held during the year ended 30 June 2023, and the number of meetings attended by each director were:

	Full Board Attended	Held
Shaharзад Akbar	1	1
Rosalind Croucher	1	1
Leanne Smith	1	1
Doo-Hwan Song	1	1
Khunan Jargalsaikhan	1	1
Rhiel Gharaibeh	1	1
Justice Sri Arun Kumar Mishra	1	1
Othman bin Hashim	1	1
Top Bahadur Magar	1	1
Jesuina Maria Ferreira Gomes	1	1
Luamanuvao Katalaina Sapolu	1	1
Paul Hunt	1	1
Ahmad Damanik	1	1
Issam Younis	1	1
Justice Rohini Marasinghe	1	1
Maryam Al Attiya	1	1

Held: represents the number of meetings held during the time the director held office.

### Contributions on winding up

In the event of the Company being wound up, ordinary members are required to contribute a maximum of \$100 each. Honorary members are not required to contribute.

The total amount that members of the Company are liable to contribute if the Company is wound up is \$1,100 (2022: \$1,600), based on 11 (2022: 16) current ordinary members.

### Auditor's independence declaration

A copy of the auditor's independence declaration as required under Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* is set out immediately after this directors' report.

This report is made in accordance with a resolution of directors.

On behalf of the directors

\_\_\_\_\_  
Doo-Hwan Song  
Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
September 2023

## **Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions**

### **Auditor's Independence Declaration to the Directors of Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions**

I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, during the year ended 30 June 2023, there have been:

- (i) no contraventions of the auditor independence requirements as set out in Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* in relation to the audit; and
- (ii) no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

Rupaninga Dharmasiri  
Partner

LBW & Partners  
Chartered Accountants  
Level 3, 845 Pacific Highway  
CHATSWOOD NSW 2067

Dated this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2023

**Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions**  
**Statement of income and retained earnings**  
**For the year ended 30 June 2023**



	<b>Note</b>	<b>2023</b> \$	<b>2022</b> \$
<b>Revenue</b>	4	3,084,818	2,257,515
Net foreign exchange (loss)/gain		29,585	32,027
Interest revenue calculated using the effective interest method		79,449	9,526
Total revenue		<u>3,193,852</u>	<u>2,299,068</u>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Administration expenses		(136,068)	(81,795)
Consultancy expenses		(464,103)	(583,964)
Depreciation and amortisation expense		(6,980)	(5,408)
Employee benefits expense		(1,363,908)	(1,298,114)
Meeting expenses		(103,984)	(8,591)
Occupancy expenses		(27,341)	(27,000)
Project expenses		(67,418)	-
Travel expenses		(746,591)	(83,387)
Total expenses		<u>(2,916,393)</u>	<u>(2,088,259)</u>
<b>Surplus before income tax expense</b>		277,459	210,809
Income tax expense		-	-
<b>Surplus after income tax expense for the year</b>		277,459	210,809
Retained surpluses at the beginning of the financial year		<u>2,583,068</u>	<u>2,372,259</u>
<b>Retained surpluses at the end of the financial year</b>		<u><u>2,860,527</u></u>	<u><u>2,583,068</u></u>

*The above statement of income and retained earnings should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes*

	Note	2023 \$	2022 \$
<b>Assets</b>			
<b>Current assets</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	6	958,442	1,469,629
Trade and other receivables		47,780	19,301
Contract assets	7	42,014	6,331
Other financial assets - term deposits		2,375,372	2,329,865
Deposits and prepayments		52,056	17,747
Total current assets		<u>3,475,664</u>	<u>3,842,873</u>
<b>Non-current assets</b>			
Property, plant and equipment		13,142	9,847
Total non-current assets		<u>13,142</u>	<u>9,847</u>
<b>Total assets</b>		<u>3,488,806</u>	<u>3,852,720</u>
<b>Liabilities</b>			
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Trade and other payables	8	177,859	132,655
Contract liabilities	9	64,585	756,183
Employee benefits	10	364,683	363,307
Total current liabilities		<u>607,127</u>	<u>1,252,145</u>
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>			
Employee benefits	10	21,152	17,507
Total non-current liabilities		<u>21,152</u>	<u>17,507</u>
<b>Total liabilities</b>		<u>628,279</u>	<u>1,269,652</u>
<b>Net assets</b>		<u>2,860,527</u>	<u>2,583,068</u>
<b>Equity</b>			
Retained surpluses		<u>2,860,527</u>	<u>2,583,068</u>
<b>Total equity</b>		<u>2,860,527</u>	<u>2,583,068</u>

The above statement of financial position should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes



	Note	2023 \$	2022 \$
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
Australian government grants received (inclusive of GST)		935,000	935,000
Other grants and revenue received (inclusive of GST)		1,508,643	1,680,931
Payments to suppliers and employees (inclusive of GST)		(2,978,497)	(2,135,800)
Interest received		33,942	5,573
Net cash from/(used in) operating activities		(500,912)	485,704
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		(10,275)	(6,106)
Net cash used in investing activities		(10,275)	(6,106)
Net cash from financing activities		-	-
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		(511,187)	479,598
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year		1,469,629	990,031
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year	6	958,442	1,469,629

*The above statement of cash flows should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes*

## Note 1. General information

The financial statements cover Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (the Company) as an individual entity. The financial statements are presented in Australian dollars, which is the Company's functional and presentation currency.

The Company is a not-for-profit unlisted public company limited by guarantee, incorporated and domiciled in Australia. Its registered office and principal place of business is:

Level 3, 175 Pitt Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

A description of the nature of the Company's operations and its principal activities are included in the directors' report, which is not part of the financial statements.

The financial statements were authorised for issue, in accordance with a resolution of directors, on \_\_\_\_ September 2023.

## Note 2. Significant accounting policies

The principal accounting policies adopted in the preparation of the financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all the years presented, unless otherwise stated.

### New or amended Accounting Standards and Interpretations adopted

The Company has adopted all of the new or amended Accounting Standards and Interpretations issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board ('AASB') that are mandatory for the current reporting period.

Any new or amended Accounting Standards or Interpretations that are not yet mandatory have not been early adopted.

### Basis of preparation

These general purpose financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosures issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board ('AASB') and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, as appropriate for not-for profit oriented entities.

#### Historical cost convention

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

#### Critical accounting estimates

The preparation of the financial statements requires the use of certain critical accounting estimates. It also requires management to exercise its judgement in the process of applying the Company's accounting policies. The areas involving a higher degree of judgement or complexity, or areas where assumptions and estimates are significant to the financial statements, are disclosed in note 3.

### Foreign currency translation

Foreign currency transactions are translated into Australian dollars using the exchange rates prevailing at the dates of the transactions. Foreign exchange gains and losses resulting from the settlement of such transactions and from the translation at financial year-end exchange rates of monetary assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies are recognised in profit or loss.

### Revenue

The Company recognises revenue under AASB 1058 or AASB 15 when appropriate. In cases where there is an 'enforceable' contract with a customer with 'sufficiently specific' performance obligations, the transaction is accounted for under AASB 15 where income is recognised when (or as) the performance obligations are satisfied (i.e. when it transfers control of a service to a customer). Revenue is measured based on the consideration to which the Company expects to be entitled in a contract with parties.

In other cases, AASB 1058 applies when a not-for-profit entity enters into transactions where the consideration to acquire an asset is significantly less than the fair value of the asset principally to enable the entity to further its objectives and the excess of the asset recognised (at fair value) over any 'related amounts' is recognised as income immediately.

The Company recognises revenue from the following major sources:

## Note 2. Significant accounting policies (continued)

### *Grants*

When the Company receives grants, it assesses whether the contract is enforceable and has sufficiently specific performance obligations in accordance with AASB 15.

When both these conditions are satisfied, the Company:

- identifies each performance obligation relating to the grant;
- recognises a contract liability for its obligations under the agreement; and
- recognises revenue as it satisfies its performance obligations.

Grant income without sufficiently specific performance obligations is recognised under AASB 1058.

Within grant agreements there may be some performance obligations where control transfers at a point in time and others which have continuous transfer of control over the life of the contract.

Where control is transferred over time, generally the input methods being either costs or time incurred are deemed to be the most appropriate methods to reflect the transfer of benefit.

### *Donations*

Donations are recognised as revenue in accordance with AASB 1058 when controls are established.

### *Membership fees*

The Company's membership is made up of National Human Rights Institutions from across the Asia Pacific Region. There are two membership categories being full members and associate members. Annual membership fee of US\$3,000 for full members and US\$1,500 for associate members is recorded as contract liabilities initially and taken to income over the period of the membership on a straight-line basis.

### *Interest*

Interest revenue is recognised as interest accrues using the effective interest method.

### *Other revenue*

Other revenue is recognised when it is received or when the right to receive payment is established.

## **Income tax**

As the Company is a charity in terms of subsection 50-5 of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*, as amended, it is exempt from paying income tax.

## **Cash and cash equivalents**

Cash and cash equivalents includes cash on hand, deposits held at call with financial institutions, other short-term, highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and which are subject to an insignificant risk of changes in value.

## **Contract assets**

Contract assets are recognised when the Company has transferred services to the customer but where the Company is yet to establish an unconditional right to consideration. Contract assets are treated as financial assets for impairment purposes.

## **Trade and other payables**

These amounts represent liabilities for goods and services provided to the Company prior to the end of the financial year and which are unpaid. Due to their short-term nature they are measured at amortised cost and are not discounted. The amounts are unsecured and are usually paid within 30 days of recognition.

## **Contract liabilities**

Contract liabilities represent the Company's obligation to transfer services to a customer and are recognised when a customer pays consideration, or when the Company recognises a receivable to reflect its unconditional right to consideration (whichever is earlier) before the Company has transferred the services to the customer.

## Note 2. Significant accounting policies (continued)

### Financial instruments

Financial instruments are recognised initially on the date that the Company becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

On initial recognition, all financial instruments are measured at fair value plus transaction costs.

### Financial assets

#### *Classification*

On initial recognition, the Company classifies its financial assets as measured at amortised cost.

Financial assets are not reclassified subsequent to their initial recognition unless the Company changes its business model for managing financial assets.

The Company's financial assets measured at amortised cost comprise trade and other receivables, cash and cash equivalents and term deposits.

Subsequent to initial recognition, these assets are carried at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method less provision for impairment.

Interest income, foreign exchange gains or losses and impairment are recognised in profit or loss. Gain or loss on derecognition is recognised in profit or loss.

#### *Impairment of financial assets*

Impairment of financial assets is recognised on an expected credit loss (ECL) basis.

Impairment of trade receivables have been determined using the simplified approach in AASB 9 which uses an estimation of lifetime expected credit losses. The Company has determined the probability of non-payment of the receivable and multiplied this by the amount of the expected loss arising from default.

#### *Other financial assets measured at amortised cost*

Impairment of other financial assets measured at amortised cost are determined using the expected credit loss model in AASB 9. On initial recognition of the asset, an estimate of the expected credit losses for the next 12 months is recognised. Where the asset has experienced significant increase in credit risk then the lifetime losses are estimated and recognised.

### Financial liabilities

The Company measures all financial liabilities initially at fair value less transaction costs, subsequently financial liabilities are measured at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method.

The financial liabilities of the Company comprise trade payables.

### Employee benefits

#### *Short-term employee benefits*

Liabilities for wages and salaries, including non-monetary benefits, annual leave and long service leave expected to be settled wholly within 12 months of the reporting date are measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liabilities are settled.

#### *Other long-term employee benefits*

The liability for annual leave and long service leave not expected to be settled within 12 months of the reporting date are measured at the present value of expected future payments to be made in respect of services provided by employees up to the reporting date using the projected unit credit method. Consideration is given to expected future wage and salary levels, experience of employee departures and periods of service. Expected future payments are discounted using market yields at the reporting date on national government bonds with terms to maturity and currency that match, as closely as possible, the estimated future cash outflows.

#### *Defined contribution superannuation expense*

Contributions to defined contribution superannuation plans are expensed in the period in which they are incurred.

### Note 3. Critical accounting judgements, estimates and assumptions

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts in the financial statements. Management continually evaluates its judgements and estimates in relation to assets, liabilities, contingent liabilities, revenue and expenses. Management bases its judgements, estimates and assumptions on historical experience and on other various factors, including expectations of future events, management believes to be reasonable under the circumstances. There are no critical accounting judgements, estimates and assumptions that are likely to affect the current or future financial years.

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts in the financial statements. Management continually evaluates its judgements and estimates in relation to assets, liabilities, contingent liabilities, revenue and expenses. Management bases its judgements, estimates and assumptions on historical experience and on other various factors, including expectations of future events, management believes to be reasonable under the circumstances. There are no critical accounting judgements, estimates and assumptions that are likely to affect the current or future financial years.

#### *Grant income*

For many of the grant agreements received, the determination of whether the contract includes sufficiently specific performance obligations was a significant judgement involving discussions with a number of parties at the Company, review of the proposal documents prepared during the grant application phase and consideration of the terms and conditions.

Grants received by the Company have been accounted for under both AASB 15 and AASB 1058 depending on the terms and conditions and decisions made.

### Note 4. Revenue

	2023 \$	2022 \$
<i>Revenue from contracts with customers</i>		
Grants	2,900,945	2,081,234
Membership fees	83,617	64,923
	<u>2,984,562</u>	<u>2,146,157</u>
<i>Other revenue</i>		
Donations	100,220	111,358
Other	36	-
	<u>100,256</u>	<u>111,358</u>
Revenue	<u>3,084,818</u>	<u>2,257,515</u>

#### Note 4. Revenue (continued)

	2023 \$	2022 \$
<i>Sources of grants</i>		
<b>Commonwealth government</b>		
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	850,000	850,000
<b>Overseas grants</b>		
New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade	782,061	614,470
National Human Rights Commission India	323,770	90,004
European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights	648,607	286,044
The Danish Institute for Human Rights, Denmark's National Human Rights Institution	-	152,466
United Nations Development Programme	-	39,938
Foundation Open Society Institute	-	33,640
The Federal Republic of Germany	68,232	14,672
Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions	208,202	-
National Human Rights Commission of Korea	20,073	-
	2,050,945	1,231,234
	2,900,945	2,081,234

#### Disaggregation of revenue

All revenue from contracts with customers are for services transferred over time.

#### Note 5. Expenses

	2023 \$	2022 \$
Surplus before income tax includes the following specific expenses:		
<i>Depreciation and amortisation for non-current assets</i>		
Property, plant and equipment	6,980	5,408
<i>Leases</i>		
Variable lease payments	27,341	27,000
<i>Superannuation expense</i>		
Defined contribution superannuation expense	156,021	156,720

#### Note 6. Cash and cash equivalents

	2023 \$	2022 \$
<i>Current assets</i>		
Cash at bank	958,442	1,469,629

#### Note 7. Contract assets

	2023 \$	2022 \$
<i>Current assets</i>		
Contract assets - grants	42,014	6,331

#### Note 8. Trade and other payables

	2023 \$	2022 \$
<i>Current liabilities</i>		
Trade payables	96,039	32,770
Accrued expenses	40,298	61,417
Other payables	41,522	38,468
	<u>177,859</u>	<u>132,655</u>

#### Note 9. Contract liabilities

	2023 \$	2022 \$
<i>Current liabilities</i>		
Contract liabilities - grants	47,301	740,369
Contract liabilities - membership	17,284	15,814
	<u>64,585</u>	<u>756,183</u>

#### Note 10. Employee benefits

	2023 \$	2022 \$
<i>Current liabilities</i>		
Annual leave	186,103	161,200
Long service leave	178,580	202,107
	<u>364,683</u>	<u>363,307</u>
<i>Non-current liabilities</i>		
Long service leave	21,152	17,507
	<u>385,835</u>	<u>380,814</u>

#### Note 11. Members' Guarantee

The Company is incorporated under the *Corporations Act 2001* and is a Company limited by guarantee. If the Company is wound up, the constitution states that each member is required to contribute a maximum of \$ 100 each towards meeting any outstandings and obligations of the Company. At 30 June 2023 the number of members was 11 (2022: 16)

#### Note 12. Related party transactions

##### *Key management personnel*

Disclosures relating to key management personnel are set out in note 13.

## Note 12. Related party transactions (continued)

### Transactions with related parties

The following transactions occurred with related parties:

	2023 \$	2022 \$
<i>- Funding from members:</i>		
National Human Rights Institution of the Republic of Korea	105,691	111,358
National Human Rights Institution of India	323,770	90,004
<i>- Payments to members:</i>		
Fiji Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission	15,000	-
Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines	15,000	-
National Human Rights Commission of Thailand	15,000	-
National Human Rights Institution of Samoa	15,000	-
National Institution for Human Rights in the Kingdom of Bahrain	-	793
National Human Rights Commission of Nepal	-	3,617
Human Rights Commission of Malaysia	-	1,900
Human Rights Commission of the Maldives	-	2,000
Providor for Human Rights and Justice Timor Leste	4,447	-
<i>- Other transactions with director-related entities:</i>		
Occupancy fees paid to the Australian Human Rights Commission ('AHRC'). Ms Rosalind Croucher, a Director of the Company, is the President of the AHRC.	30,361	27,000
Amounts paid to AHRC for the Company's share of the accommodation costs that have been paid by AHRC and AHRC on charges the costs that are to be paid by the Company.	-	3,016

Payments to members pertain to small grants under a specific EU program, travel related expenses for members attendance to training workshops and meetings and consultancy charges for contributions for APF manuals.

There are related party transactions in relation to membership fees paid by the Directors which are on normal commercial terms and conditions no more favourable than those available to other members unless otherwise stated.

### Receivable from and payable to related parties

The following balances are outstanding at the reporting date in relation to transactions with related parties:

	2023 \$	2022 \$
<i>Current receivables</i>		
Membership fee	29,354	12,140

### Loans to/from related parties

There were no loans to or from related parties at the current and previous reporting date.

### Terms and conditions

All transactions were made on normal commercial terms and conditions and at market rates.



### Note 13. Key management personnel disclosures

#### Compensation

The aggregate compensation made to directors and other members of key management personnel of the Company is set out below:

	2023 \$	2022 \$
Aggregate compensation	428,008	388,748

Key management personnel remuneration disclosed above relates to Kieren John Fitzpatrick and Phillippa Erica Dargan, the Director and Principal Adviser Capacity Assessment and International Engagement of the Company respectively.

The other Directors did not receive any remuneration, superannuation or retirement payments from the Company. No Directors have entered into material contract with the Company.

### Note 14. Remuneration of auditors

During the financial year the following fees were paid or payable for services provided by LBW & Partners, the auditor of the Company:

	2023 \$	2022 \$
<i>Audit services</i>		
Audit of the financial statements	11,000	10,500
<i>Other services</i>		
Preparation of the FBT return	500	250
Preparation of the financial statements	1,600	1,500
Other taxation services	-	300
Other assurance services - Audit of funding acquittals	6,500	-
	8,600	2,050
	19,600	12,550

### Note 15. Contingent liabilities

The Company had no contingent liabilities as at 30 June 2023 and 30 June 2022.

### Note 16. Economic dependency

A significant portion of the revenue is dependent on the funding from a small number of donors, including Australian Government and New Zealand Government. At the date of this report the Directors have no reason to believe the donors will not continue to support Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions.

### Note 17. Events after the reporting period

No matter or circumstance has arisen since 30 June 2023 that has significantly affected, or may significantly affect the Company's operations, the results of those operations, or the Company's state of affairs in future financial years.

In the directors' opinion:

- the attached financial statements and notes comply with *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, the *Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosures* and other mandatory professional reporting requirements;
- the attached financial statements and notes give a true and fair view of the Company's financial position as at 30 June 2023 and of its performance for the financial year ended on that date; and
- there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Company will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

This declaration is signed in accordance with subs 60.15(2) of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2022*.

On behalf of the directors

---

Doo-Hwan Song  
Chairperson

\_\_\_\_ September 2023

## Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions

# Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions

### Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial report of Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (the company), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2023, the statement of income and retained earnings and the statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the directors' declaration.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report of the company is in accordance with Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* (the "ACNC Act"), including:

- (i) giving a true and fair view of the company's financial position as at 30 June 2023 and of its financial performance for the year ended; and
- (ii) complying with *Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures* and Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2012*.

### Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. We are independent of the company in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the ACNC Act and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's *APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including independence standards)* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

### Responsibilities of Directors for the Financial Report

The directors of the company are responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with *Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures* and the ACNC Act.

The directors' responsibility also includes for such internal control as the directors determine necessary to enable the preparation of a financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the directors are responsible for assessing the company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the directors either intend to liquidate the company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

## **Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions**

# **Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions**

### **Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report**

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the company's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the directors.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the company to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

**Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions**

**Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions**

We communicate with the directors regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Rupaninga Dharmasiri  
Partner

LBW & Partners  
Chartered Accountants  
Level 3, 845 Pacific Highway  
CHATSWOOD NSW 2067

Dated this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2023

**LBW & Partners**

Chartered Accountants & Business Advisors  
ABN 80 618 803443

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**E** [mail@lbw.com.au](mailto:mail@lbw.com.au)

**P** (02) 9411 4866

**Partners**

Elias Y Bader

Rupa Dharmasiri

George P Rochios

Mark W Willock

18 August 2023

Kieren Fitzpatrick - Director  
Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions  
Level 3, 175 Pitt Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Good Morning Kieren,

## **Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions Audit – 30 June 2023**

We advise having completed our audit of Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (APF) for the year ended 30 June 2023.

As stated in our engagement letter, our audit is designed to form an opinion on the financial report. Because of the test nature of an audit, there is a risk that some material misstatement, fraud or irregularity may remain undiscovered. The matters noted during the audit that we wish to draw to your attention are set out herein. This is not intended to be a comprehensive report of all such matters that may exist.

Should you wish to discuss any of these matters, please contact us.

This report is prepared under the terms of our engagement solely for the information of the directors and management of APF.

You would be aware that the examination which we carried out as part of our audit cannot be expected to disclose every weakness in the entity's system of internal control. For this reason, the matters raised herein are not necessarily the only matters that require your attention.

### **1. OVERVIEW OF PLANNED SCOPE AND TIMING OF THE AUDIT**

*Auditing Standards ASA 260 – Communication with Those Charged with Governance* require that auditors communicate an overview of the planned scope and timing of the audit to those charged with governance. In this regard we wish to report to you the following:

Given the limited number of staff employed in the accounting area, we have decided to not place reliance on the internal control system of the organisation but rather to perform certain level of testing of controls.

For the purpose of this year's audit we have identified the following areas as critical in your organisation. A brief description of our audit approach as set out in Attachment A is also provided for your information.



#### **Audit Timetable:**

Planning and interim audit	June 2023
Final audit:	
• Commencement of audit testing	24 July 2023
• Finalisation of accounts for approval by the Board of Directors	18 August 2023
AGM	20 & 21 September 2023
Lodgement of financial report with ACNC	31 December 2023

## **2. RESULTS OF THE AUDIT**

We are happy to report that, based on our audit work performed we have not identified any significant deficiencies in the systems of internal controls. However, we wish to bring the following matters to your attention:

### **2.1. Annual Leave**

During our audit, it became evident that a number of employees are currently maintaining accumulative leave balances that could be considered excessive. Specifically, these employees have accrued annual leave spanning a duration ranging from 5 to 14 weeks. This observation highlights a potential concern regarding the efficient utilization of annual leave entitlements.

With this in mind, we recommend that the company adopts a proactive approach to ensure that all employees make consistent use of their allotted annual leave entitlements. This will serve to mitigate the accumulation of substantial leave balances, which in turn could necessitate financial settlements based on prevailing pay rates. Taking appropriate action in this regard will contribute to the company's efforts to effectively manage its financial obligations.

Furthermore, it is important to recognise that fostering a culture of regular annual leave consumption carries additional benefits beyond financial considerations. By encouraging employees to take their scheduled leave, the company not only minimises the financial burden associated with accrued leave balances, but also mitigates potential risks, such as fraudulent activities. The practice of one employee temporarily assuming the responsibilities of another during their absence serves as a safeguard against internal improprieties, contributing to enhanced transparency and accountability within the organization.

## **3. OTHER MATTERS**

Furthermore, we wish to bring to your attention that during the course of our audit, we have identified certain minor accounting matters that could benefit from improvement. We would like to inform you that we have engaged in discussions with the Finance Office for these matters. We are pleased to report that we are content with the actions that have been undertaken to address and enhance these specific areas.



#### 4. CONCLUSION

In due course, we would appreciate your comments in respect of the matters detailed herein. We note that it is our desire to discuss these comments with you so that this audit can be of benefit both from an efficiency point of view to your operation as well as satisfying all statutory requirements.

We would like to thank Ms Susan Falon and the team of APF for their co-operation and assistance during the course of our audit.

Yours sincerely,

**Rupaninga Dharmasiri**

rupa@lbw.com.au

Our reference:-715961\_1





## **Attachment A – Summary of Critical Audit Areas and Audit Approach**

### **Grant revenue and other income**

- Analytical review of grant income as compared to previous year
- Review of supporting documentation
- Review controls over receipts
- Review funding agreement for major grants received during the year
- Accuracy of grant and deferred income by reviewing funding agreements
- Analytical review and detail testing of other income items
- Review the reasonability of membership fees recognised during the year compared to the number of full and associate members

### **Expenses and Payments**

- Analytical review of expenses
- Test sample of payments to ensure that payments are supported by appropriate approved supporting documentation and are correctly recorded in the books
- Review of authorisation process
- Review of a sample of expenses to ensure they are appropriately allocated to donors

### **Payroll**

- Compliance with Employee Agreements
- Reconciliation of wages paid as per payroll records to the expenses recorded in the financial records
- Review accuracy of salaries paid to employees
- Test, on a sample basis, staff wages & salaries to employee agreements, recalculation of PAYG and Superannuation contributions
- Review accuracy of provision for employee entitlements
- Review of a sample of payments to employees to ensure they are appropriately allocated to donors

### **Bank Balances including Term Deposits**

- Reliance on direct confirmation for existence
- Review of bank reconciliations for accuracy
- Review of movements in bank accounts

### **Accounts Payable**

- Analytical review of payable balances as compared to last year
- Review of sample of invoices and subsequent payments to ensure payables are complete and accurate

### **Other areas:**

- Risk assessment of significant balances
- Fraud and audit independence review
- Assessment of appropriate Accounting Framework for the Company
- Going concern



20 September 2023

LBW & Partners  
Level 3, 845 Pacific Highway  
Chatswood NSW

Dear Sirs & Mesdames,

**Re: Managements Representations to Auditors**

This representation letter is provided in connection with your audit of the financial report of Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions for the year ended 30 June 2023 for the purpose of expressing an opinion as to whether the financial report gives a true and fair view in accordance with the *Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures* and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*.

We confirm that (to the best of our knowledge and belief, having made such enquiries as we considered necessary for the purpose of appropriately informing ourselves):

***Financial Report***

- We have fulfilled our responsibilities, as set out in the terms of the audit engagement, for the preparation of the financial report in accordance with *Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures* and *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*; in particular the financial report gives a true and fair view in accordance therewith.
- Significant assumptions used by us in making accounting estimates, including those measured at fair value, are reasonable.
- Related party relationships and transactions have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the requirements of Australian Accounting Standards.
- All events subsequent to the date of the financial report and for which Australian Accounting Standards require adjustment or disclosures have been adjusted or disclosed.
- The effects of uncorrected misstatements are immaterial, both individually and in the aggregate, to the financial report as a whole. A list of the uncorrected misstatements is attached to the representation letter.

***Information Provided***

- We have provided you with:
  - Access to all information of which we are aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial report such as records, documentation and other matters;
  - Additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of the audit; and

- Unrestricted access to persons within the entity from whom you determined it necessary to obtain audit evidence.
- All transactions have been recorded in the accounting records and are reflected in the financial report.
- We acknowledge our responsibility for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control to prevent and detect fraud.
- We have disclosed to you the results of our assessment of the risk that the financial report may be materially misstated as a result of fraud.
- We have disclosed to you all information in relation to fraud or suspected fraud that we are aware of and that affects the entity and involves:
  - Management;
  - Employees who have significant roles in internal control; or
  - Others where the fraud could have a material effect on the financial report.
- We have disclosed to you all information in relation to allegations of fraud, or suspected fraud, affecting the entity's financial report communicated by employees, former employees, analysts, regulators or others.
- We have disclosed to you all known instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial report.
- We have disclosed to you all known actual or possible litigation and claims whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial report; and accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards.
- We have disclosed to you the identity of the entity's related parties and all the related party relationships and transactions of which we are aware.

Yours faithfully



-----  
Kieren Fitzpatrick  
Director



-----  
Susan Falon  
Finance Officer



**DECLARATION BY THE APF SECRETARIAT DIRECTOR  
& FINANCE MANAGER TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF  
ASIA PACIFIC FORUM OF NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS**

In our opinion:

- a) About the integrity of the financial report of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions for the year ended 30 June 2023.

The financial statements and the notes referred to in paragraph 295(3)(b) of the Corporations Act 2001 comply in all material respects with the Accounting Standards.

The financial statements and notes give a true and fair view, in all material respects of the financial position as at 30 June 2023 and performance of the company for the year then ended as required by Section 297 of the Corporations Act 2001, and

There are reasonable grounds to believe that the company will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

- b) Regarding the financial records and systems of risk management and internal compliance and control of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions for the year ended 30 June 2023.
- i) The financial records of the company have been properly maintained in accordance with Section 286 of the Corporations Act 2001.
  - ii) The statements made in (a) above regarding the integrity of the financial statements are founded on a sound system of risk management and internal compliance and control which, in all material respects, implements the policies adopted by the Board of Directors.
  - iii) The risk management and internal compliance and control systems of the company and consolidated entity relating to financial reporting, compliance and operations objectives are operating efficiently and effectively, in all material respects, based on the criteria for effective internal control established; and
  - iv) Subsequent to 30 June 2023, no changes or other matters have arisen that would have a material effect on the operation of risk management and internal compliance and control systems of the company.

Kieren Fitzpatrick  
Director

Susan Falon  
Finance Officer

20 September 2023



**ASIA PACIFIC FORUM**  
ADVANCING HUMAN RIGHTS IN OUR REGION

# ANNEX 4

## Expression of Interest

### APF Governance Committee

## Annual General Meeting

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#### **APF 28**

The 28<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Asia  
Pacific Forum of National Human Rights  
Institutions

New Delhi, India, 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> September 2023

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## APF Governance Committee Nomination Form

Please note: Only representatives from A-status institutions that are on the Forum Council are eligible to apply.

Surname (Family name):		
First name (Given name):		
Email:	Phone:	
Work address:		
Date of Birth:	Gender:	Name of NHRI:
Sub-Region* (please tick): <input type="checkbox"/> Pacific <input type="checkbox"/> South East Asia <input type="checkbox"/> South Asia <input type="checkbox"/> Central/North Asia <input type="checkbox"/> West Asia		
Current position/occupation in member NHRI: <input type="checkbox"/> NHRI Chair <input type="checkbox"/> NHRI SES <input type="checkbox"/> Equivalent position (please specify)		
Has your institution paid all outstanding membership fees of: <input type="checkbox"/> APF? <input type="checkbox"/> GANHRI? APF Policy, as adopted by our members, is that only members that have fully paid their membership fees to the APF and GANHRI are eligible for nomination.		
Time remaining in current appointment:		
Signature		
For office use only		
Date of application:		
Received by:		
Supporting document attached: <input type="checkbox"/> NHRI Expression of Interest		

## Nominee Expression of Interest

Please provide a 1-2 page statement explaining:

- This statement will be circulated electronically to APF Members prior to the APF AGM.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Applicant signature:

Date:     /     /





**ASIA PACIFIC FORUM**  
ADVANCING HUMAN RIGHTS IN OUR REGION

# ANNEX 5

## Proxy Form

### Annual General Meeting

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#### **APF 28**

The 28<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Asia  
Pacific Forum of National Human Rights  
Institutions

New Delhi, India, 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> September 2023

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**PROXY FORM**  
**for the**  
**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
**of the**  
**ASIA PACIFIC FORUM OF NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS**

NOTE: Rule 13.10 of the APF Constitution provides that an A status accredited member may vote by proxy. If the nominated Forum Councillor is unable to attend an Annual or Annual General Meeting, this proxy form should be completed, and a copy provided to the APF Secretariat Director prior to the commencement of the meeting. The Form can be forwarded by email or by hand but must be received prior to the commencement of the meeting.

**To: The Chairperson,**  
**Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions**

I .....<sup>1</sup>

of .....<sup>2</sup>

hereby appoint

.....<sup>3</sup>

to vote on my behalf at the Annual General Meeting of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions to be held in New Delhi, India, on 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> September 2023 and at any adjournment thereof.

.....  
Signature of APF Councillor

.....  
Name of APF Councillor (Print)

.....  
Contact Number of APF Councillor

.....  
Date

<sup>1</sup> Insert the name of the Forum Councillor

<sup>2</sup> Insert the name of your National Human Rights Institution

<sup>3</sup> Insert the name of the person who will represent your National Human Rights Institution