SAMOA DECLARATION


The workshop participants from the Pacific island states of Samoa, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, and civil society representatives:

- Express appreciation to the Government of Samoa for hosting this Regional Workshop on the Establishment of National Human Rights Mechanisms in the Pacific and, in particular, to the Attorney-General, the Hon Aumua Ming Leung Wai, for officially opening the workshop;
- Express appreciation to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions for co-organising this Regional Workshop;
- Acknowledge the participation of the UNDP Representative and the UN Resident Coordinator’s Office in Samoa and, as resource persons, the National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) from Australia, Maldives, New Zealand, Philippines, Timor-Leste, and the South Pacific Community (SPC) through the Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT);
- Emphasise the importance of NHRIs to making human rights values part of everyday life and language;
- Emphasise the relevance of NHRIs as key actors in strengthening human rights promotion and protection;
- Recognise the role and leadership civil society actors bring to human rights protection and promotion;
- Recognise the role of human rights mechanisms in empowering all people to understand and exercise their human rights;
- Acknowledge the comprehensive overview given and discussions held on the establishment of NHRIs, their historical and legal background, the minimum standards NHRIs have to comply with, as well as the core functions, main features and methods of operation of NHRIs;
• Recognise the importance of taking necessary measures in order to establish NHRIs in compliance with the Paris Principles;

• Emphasise the importance of sensitising Governments, Parliaments, and other relevant national stakeholders on the values and benefits of establishing NHRIs;

• Recognise the importance of the Biketawa Declaration on Human Rights arrived at in 2000 by Pacific island states;

• Welcome the practical focus of the Workshop in facilitating the sharing of expertise and experiences, and in empowering participants to promote and explore the establishment of Paris Principles compliant NHRIs in their respective countries;

• Recognise that while Pacific Island countries have unique challenges concerning the establishment of NHRIs, that assistance, support and advice from OHCHR, UNDP as well as PIF, SPC, the APF and donor agencies in establishing NHRIs, are available at the request of Member States.

Mulifanua, Samoa, 29 April 2009