

## Human Rights Initiatives of the Commonwealth Secretariat

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### Workshop on National Action Plan on Human Rights

Workshops on National Human Rights Action Plans are designed for countries that are in the process of drafting national policies related to human rights. The workshops provide an occasion both to share expertise on good practice for the consultation and policy development process for National Action Plans and to engage relevant stakeholders in the process. They also ensure that stakeholders, including representatives from the ministries, civil society organisations, media and other actors, are well informed about the importance and benefits of establishing a National Action Plan.

### Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions

Since its establishment in 2007, the Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (CFNHRI) has grown in membership and in its substantive engagement. The Forum encourages collaboration and peer-to-peer learning among NHRIs, particularly as new NHRIs join the process. The Forum also aims to build a collective voice and collective learning on key human rights issues, for example it has established a working group on climate change and human rights. It has held two formal meetings, one at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting at Kampala in 2007 and the other at Port of Spain in 2009.

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The CFNHRI also takes the opportunity to hold informal meetings in the margins of the international conferences and meetings of the International Coordinating Committee of NHRIs.

Further details of the CFNHR can be found at:  
[www.commonwealthnhri.org](http://www.commonwealthnhri.org)

### UPR Mid-Term Review Meeting

The UPR Mid-Term Review Meeting took place in London in March 2010. With the UPR process reaching mid-cycle the meeting provided an opportunity for states, NHRIs and NGOs to reflect and share their experiences of engaging with UPR, including good practice, challenges, lessons learnt and hopes for the future of UPR. Much like the regional seminars, the Mid-Term Review Meeting was designed to encourage dialogue on all three stages of the UPR process: preparation of the country report, the Geneva-based review and recommendations for follow-up.

### UPR Seminars / Commonwealth Regional Seminars on UPR

The Commonwealth Secretariat holds regional events designed to strengthen Commonwealth countries' engagement with the UPR process. Following in the tri-partite spirit of the UPR the three key stakeholders in the UPR process – government ministries, NHRIs and NGOs – are all invited to participate.

Regional UPR Seminar events allow countries that share regional similarities and contexts to come together to discuss, develop and share effective practice and lessons learnt so far. Recognising that the UPR process continues long after the review in Geneva, opportunities are created

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to discuss achievements and challenges with regards to the implementation of accepted UPR recommendations.

### Commonwealth Human Rights Workshop for Police

Workshops for police trainers are designed to strengthen a culture of human rights in policing. This is done by increasing the level of awareness of human rights standards and practices. The workshops develop practical tools with participants, which they may use to apply a rights-based approach to their everyday work. Workshops also raise awareness of the international norms of ethical policing.

### Human Rights Leadership Seminar for Senior Police

In June 2010 the Secretariat facilitated a pilot seminar for senior police officers. The seminar focused on the role that senior police can play in developing a human rights culture within the police service. The seminar was designed to highlight the role of modern policing in line with international human rights standards and the integration of human rights in police leadership. The project was piloted with a view to developing a module for rights-based leadership to be implemented gradually across several countries in the Commonwealth.

### Human Rights Training for Youth Leaders

The Youth Leaders workshop on human rights is an awareness-raising initiative designed to engage youth workers with human rights. The training introduces those working with young people to the concept of human rights, as well as to the key UN mechanisms which seek to protect rights. The training allows youth workers to explore their own role in human rights work, and helps them to plan human rights initiatives.

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## Orientation Workshop for Malawi Human Rights Commission / National Consultative Conference on the Swaziland Commission on Human Rights and Public Administration

Any Commonwealth country that wishes to establish a national human rights institution can ask the Secretariat to facilitate consultations and workshops and bring expertise to support the process. Whether the state is just starting the process or ready to appoint commissioners, these events aim to share best practice by bringing together international experts and/ or experts from other states that already have successfully functioning institutions. The topics addressed at these events are tailored to meet the requirements of each state, but typically include the relationship management and co-operation with stakeholders, NGOs and the media, practical solutions on capacity building, and the challenges involved in delivering the mandate.

## Barbados Human Rights Seminar

In September 2010, Barbados asked the Human Rights Unit to hold a seminar for all government ministries with mandates that relate to human rights. The seminar focused on promoting human rights for citizens of Barbados, touching on international human rights treaties and the recommendations Barbados received during its Universal Periodic Review. The seminar's objective was to raise awareness amongst relevant government ministries about the importance of their roles in both promoting human rights at a national level and engaging with international human rights mechanisms. Representatives from over 20 government ministries participated in the event.