



ASIA PACIFIC FORUM
ADVANCING HUMAN RIGHTS IN OUR REGION

Strategic Plan 2015–2020

Protecting people, securing rights	3
NHRIs are drivers of change.....	4
Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions.....	5
Our theory of change	7
Our vision and mission.....	7
Our priorities.....	8
Functions.....	10
Outcomes	12
Monitoring, evaluation and reporting	13
APF Strategic Plan 2015–2020.....	14

© Copyright Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions 2017

The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the APF concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

APF Strategic Plan 2015 – 2020

No reproduction is permitted without prior written consent from the APF.

Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions
GPO Box 5218
Sydney NSW 1042
Australia
E: apf@asiapacificforum.net
W: www.asiapacificforum.net

Protecting people, securing rights

The Asia Pacific – the world’s most populous and diverse region – is in a state of enormous flux, with many fundamental human rights under grave threat.

Conflict and insecurity has led millions of people cross to borders in recent years, forced from their homes to seek safety, but often left in precarious and exploitative situations.

The rise of populism and extremism in some countries has seen basic human rights come under direct challenge, while also fanning division, blame and mistrust within communities. Individuals and groups calling for justice and equality have been detained and threatened under new and old laws.

At the same time, entrenched discrimination continues to undermine the dignity and limit the opportunities of women, ethnic minorities, indigenous peoples, LGBTI communities, people with disabilities and many others.

The human rights challenges across the Asia Pacific are vast. But change is possible. People’s lives can be improved.

Strong and independent national human rights institutions (NHRIs), often working in very challenging situations, make a lasting difference in the lives of people of all ages and backgrounds. For those on the margins of society, NHRIs are often their only avenue to seek justice.

Our member NHRIs investigate complaints and secure redress for people whose rights are violated, while also helping protect others from abuse.

They inspect places of detention to put an end to torture and ill-treatment, hold perpetrators to account and improve detention systems.

They speak up against the voices of division and counter the negative community attitudes that can lead to violence, harassment and discrimination.

They also empower vulnerable communities to advocate for their own rights.

NHRIs are drivers of change

NHRIs are **established by law** with **powers to promote and protect human rights**. Importantly, they **operate independently from government**.

This means they are uniquely positioned to make change happen by:

- **Monitoring the human rights situation** in the country and making their findings available to the public in order to raise awareness of human rights abuses, to publically hold perpetrators to account, and to protect and uphold the rights of vulnerable peoples
- **Providing advice to government** so that laws and policies reflect and comply with fundamental national and international human rights standards
- **Receiving, investigating and resolving complaints** so that victims of human rights violations can be heard, have a means of seeking redress and can be protected against further abuse
- **Delivering human rights education programs** that help change attitudes and behaviour on the part of institutions, law enforcement agencies and the community, particularly in relation to the use of violence and torture, and the treatment of marginalised and discriminated persons
- **Engaging with the international human rights community** to raise pressing issues and advocate for recommendations that make a difference back home.

NHRIs established in compliance with the United Nations 'Principles Relating to the Status of National Institutions' (more commonly known as the Paris Principles) are provided with an explicit mandate to protect, promote and monitor human rights as enshrined under their constitution and international law.

The APF provides the leadership teams and staff of NHRIs in the region with advice, training and support so they can be powerful advocates for human rights and deliver tangible changes that improve people's lives.

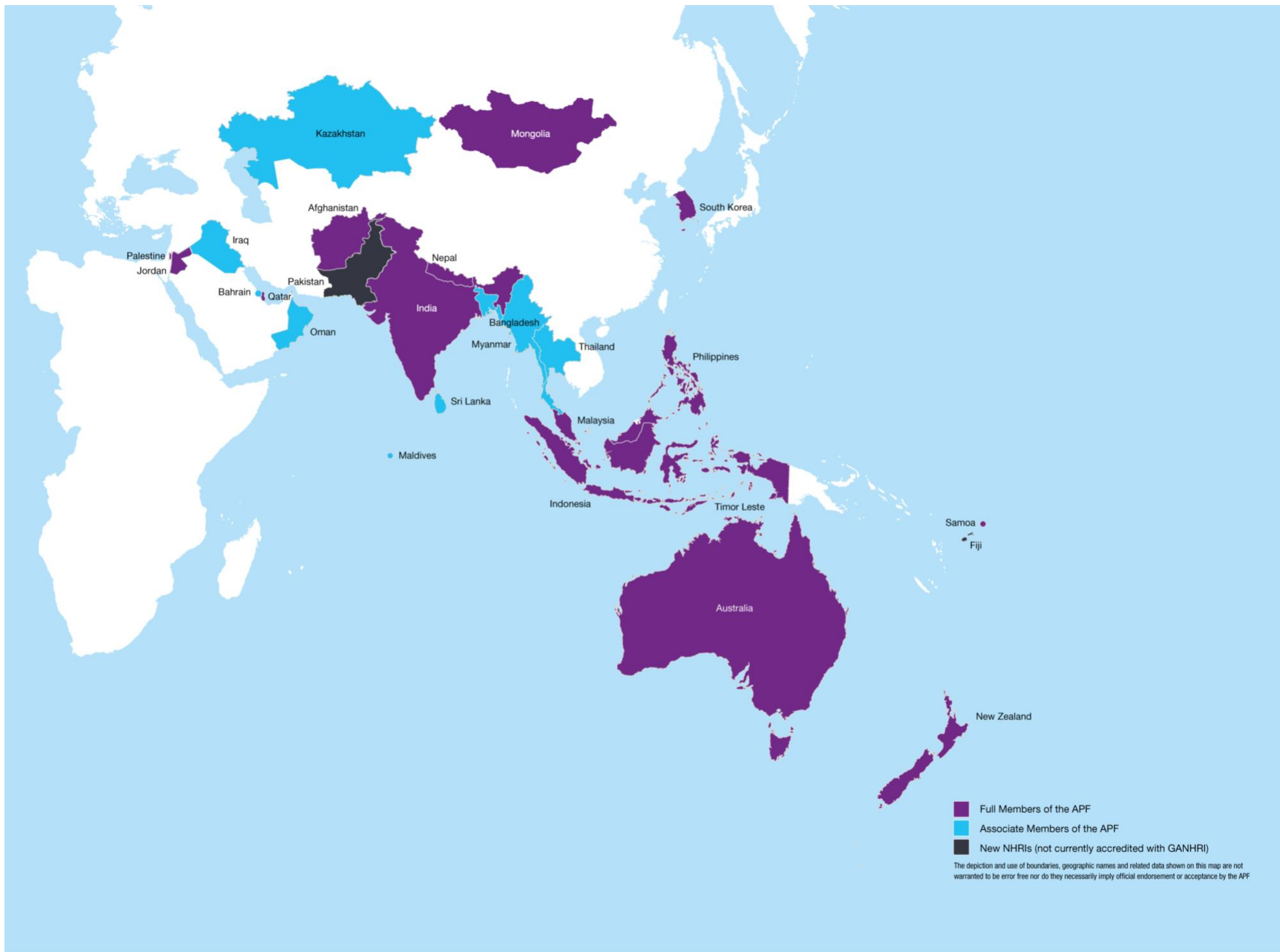
This Strategic Plan provides an overview of the APF's key activities for the five year period 2015 to 2020.

Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions

The Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (APF) is a membership organisation consisting of national human rights institutions (NHRIs) of the Asia Pacific region.

The APF currently has the following 24 member institutions:

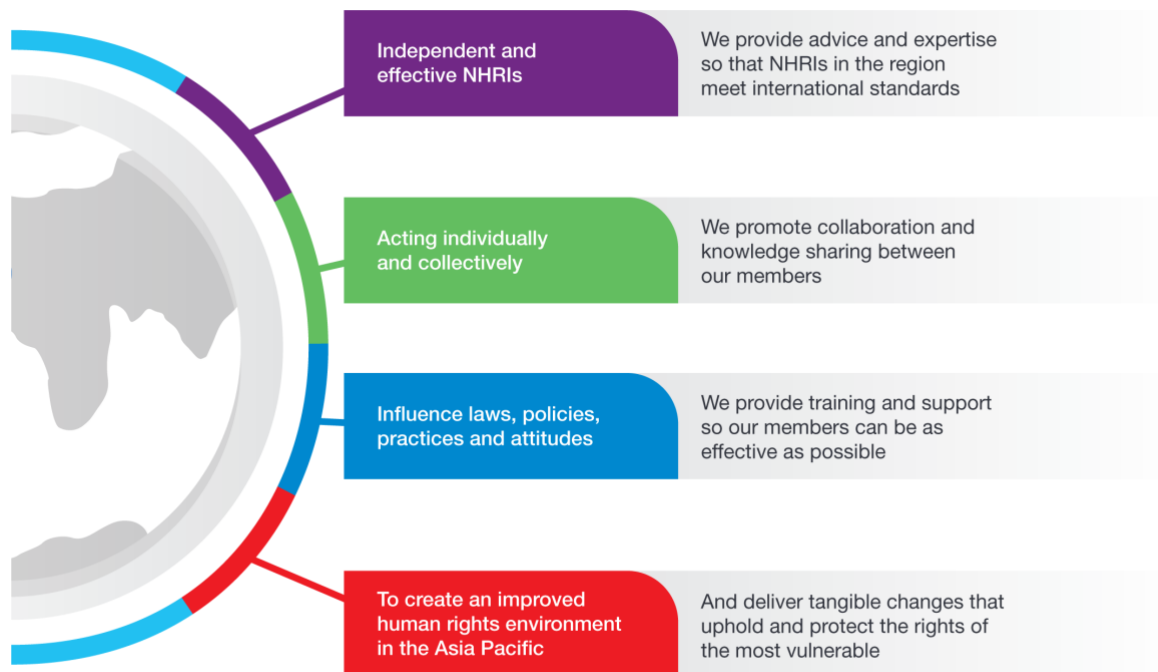
- the **Afghanistan** Independent Human Rights Commission
- the **Australian** Human Rights Commission
- the National institution for Human Rights in the Kingdom of **Bahrain**
- the National Human Rights Commission of **Bangladesh**
- the National Human Rights Commission of **India**
- the **Indonesian** National Commission on Human Rights
- the High Commissioner for Human Rights of **Iraq**
- the **Jordan** National Centre for Human Rights
- the National Centre for Human Rights of **Kazakhstan**
- the National Human Rights Commission of **Korea**
- the Human Rights Commission of **Malaysia**
- the Human Rights Commission of the **Maldives**
- the **Myanmar** National Human Rights Commission
- the Human Rights Commission of **Mongolia**
- the National Human Rights Commission of **Nepal**
- the **New Zealand** Human Rights Commission
- the National Human Rights Commission of **Oman**
- the **Palestine** Independent Commission for Human Rights
- the **Philippines** Commission on Human Rights
- the National Human Rights Committee of **Qatar**
- the Ombudsman of **Samoa**
- the Human Rights Commission of **Sri Lanka**
- the National Human Rights Commission of **Thailand**, and
- the Provedor for Human Rights and Justice of **Timor-Leste**.



Our theory of change

The APF's 'theory of change' informs our strategic direction. It asserts that:

Independent and effective NHRIs, acting individually and collectively to influence laws, policies, practices and attitudes, will create an improved human rights environment in the Asia Pacific to better protect, defend and uphold the rights of the most vulnerable and marginalised.



Our vision and mission

In delivering our work we are guided by the common purpose and values of the APF's vision and mission.

The APF's vision is:

An Asia Pacific region where everyone enjoys human rights.

The APF's mission is:

The APF, as a network of national human rights institutions in the Asia and Pacific region, provides advisory, networking and capacity-building services to our members to support them in their efforts to promote and protect human rights and to comply with international norms and standards.

Our priorities

The vast majority of people who are at risk of human rights violations are isolated and vulnerable on multiple fronts.

Whilst we believe that everyone should enjoy human rights, over the life of the strategic plan, the APF will specifically focus on the following vulnerable groups:

- Children
- Women
- People with disabilities
- Mass movement of people (including asylum seekers, refugees, migrants, internally and externally displaced persons)
- Older Persons
- Victims of torture
- Victims of the death penalty
- Victims of corporate human rights abuses
- Victims of sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics discrimination
- Indigenous peoples
- Human rights defenders
- Individual victims of human rights abuses seeking domestic redress
- Individual victims of human rights abuses seeking international redress.

EMPOWERING PEOPLE TO REALISE THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS: THE HEART OF WHAT WE DO

To help empower isolated and vulnerable people (*rights holders*) to realise their rights and to assist those responsible for upholding rights (*duty bearers*), the APF will work in partnership with our members at the national level. Through forging strategic partnerships with our national members, the APF works to:

- Provide support to address the most pressing human rights priorities at the national level
- Focus attention on those who are most at risk and vulnerable of human rights violations
- Promote and uphold the full range of human rights, with equal attention given to the realisation of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, and
- Measure the impact of our work to ensure the realisation of human rights, particularly amongst vulnerable groups.

Ending human rights violations requires the empowerment of individuals and communities to claim their rights and be key agents of change for the realisation of human rights for everyone. Sustainable progress requires building effective partnerships between individuals/communities and the State. As the bridge between these two groups, NHRIs are ideally placed to foster empowerment and sustainable partnerships.

Operationally, the APF works with NHRIs, governments, parliaments, courts, civil society, regional organisations and the United Nations to develop and strengthen capacity, particularly at the national level, for the promotion and protection of human rights.

Institutionally, the APF is committed to strengthening NHRIs and providing them with the highest quality support.

Functions

Respect for human rights helps create communities where each person can live with dignity and make choices for their life.

Respect for human rights is not an abstract concept. It is grounded in day-to-day life.

It is about being able to go to school and get a decent education, and to receive adequate medical help when it is needed.

It is about being treated fairly by others, regardless of your race, gender, age, what you look like, who you love or what you believe.

It is about having safe working conditions and being paid fairly for your labour.

It is also about being free from torture and ill-treatment, from arbitrary arrest, and from all forms of violence and harassment.

NHRIs work to deliver on the promise of human rights so that people can lead the lives they choose and contribute to their communities.

As independent bodies with powers to investigate and report on human rights violations, NHRIs stand up for those in need of protection and hold their governments to account for their human rights obligations.

The APF provides support and advice for our members so they can help build fair, just and inclusive communities. We are supported in this work by a wide range of partners, including leading UN agencies and non-governmental organisations.

To achieve its vision and mission the APF will undertake the following six functions. The prioritised activities, time frames, responsibilities and targets in this strategic plan are organised according to these functions:

Function 1: Building stronger NHRIs

The APF strengthens the capacity of our members through training, capacity self-assessments and high level dialogues. Stronger NHRIs enable the empowerment of isolated and vulnerable individuals to claim their human rights and forge sustainable partnerships with the State to realise human rights. They achieve this by receiving complaints, investigating abuses, calling for changes to law and policy, providing education on human rights and independently monitoring the State and its human rights performance.

Function 2: Collaborating and sharing knowledge

The APF exchanges information and experiences, builds cooperation and develops professional human rights networks to encourage peer to peer learning. The APF rarely uses professional experts. Rather we harness the expertise and experience that resides within our member institutions. Our 'experts' are the Commissioners and staff of our member NHRIs and their

unique knowledge enables us to ‘purpose built’ solutions to resolving complex human rights issues for vulnerable individuals in each domestic context. For example, in relation to gender violence/torture/refugees/disability and many other issues, our NHRI experts have designed and implemented ‘real world’ proven solutions.

Function 3: Providing advice and expertise

The APF provides expert advice to our members, governments and civil society in the region. Our role is to assist these key national stakeholders to empower rights holders and educate duty bearers to realise human rights. This type of assistance may be provided in the form of undertaking consultations, at the invitation of States, with vulnerable communities (such as the challenges facing women and girls, young people, the elderly, workers etc) and the options available to States to protect and respect their rights.

Function 4: Contributing at the national, regional and international level

The APF engages nationally, regionally and internationally to promote our members participation and views and to share their expertise with others. Our role is to assist those that have suffered human rights violations to seek redress at the national, regional and international level, to bring their needs to the attention of governments and the community, and to ensure that duty bearers are aware of their obligations and are held accountable for violations.

Function 5: Promoting gender equality

Women and girls in all countries across the Asia Pacific are at risk of serious violations of their human rights, such as gender-based violence and harassment. Entrenched roles, attitudes and stereotypes also mean that many experience poverty, discrimination and unequal access to health services and the education and justice systems. NHRIs in the Asia Pacific have made a commitment to take concrete steps to advance gender equality and to promote and protect the human rights of women and girls in their respective countries. The APF promotes gender equality and integrates gender considerations across all its work. The APF believes that gender-led human rights empowerment is critical to the realisation of human rights for everyone.

Function 6: Strengthening organisational leadership and governance

The APF needs to be a diverse, effectively governed and sustainably resourced organisation. The APF is a membership organisation and its strategic operations and priorities are determined by its members, working individually and collectively with a common purpose. The APF must reflect the views of our members and be their collective ‘voice’.

Outcomes

The APF has identified four key outcomes for its work from 2015 to 2020. The effectiveness of the APF in influencing the human rights environment in our region will be measured against these outcomes:

- Outcome 1:** Increased number of NHRIs complying with UN and international standards, as robust, independent institutions are effective in protecting and promoting the rights of the most marginalised and vulnerable.
- Outcome 2:** NHRIs are better able to perform their functions in the areas of complaints, education, monitoring, advocacy and reporting to effectively respond to and address human rights abuses to vulnerable people, and promote systematic change.
- Outcome 3:** A more conducive environment for the recognition of NHRIs at the national, regional and international level, and their important role in creating an improved human rights environment and allowing individuals to seek redress.
- Outcome 4:** APF is well governed, sustainably resourced, strategically directed and member-owned, and is effective in facilitating the coordination and cooperation of members in pursuit of a common purpose.

In line with our theory of change we believe that these four outcomes will lead to independent and effective NHRIs and that these NHRIs, acting individually and collectively to influence laws, policies, practices and attitudes, will create an improved human rights environment for everyone in the Asia Pacific and in particular, the most vulnerable.

Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

The business of the APF is complex, long term and unpredictable. It aims for an Asia Pacific region where everyone enjoys human rights. Over the five year period of this strategic plan, the APF will prioritise a range of specific groups as the ultimate beneficiaries of its activities. The APF will do so by working with its member NHRIs in the Asia Pacific. It will support them in developing strong legislation for their effective operation and seek to help them strengthen their capacity in the areas of complaints, education, monitoring, advocacy and reporting. The APF also seeks to develop a greater recognition of NHRI roles at national, regional and international levels including within the UN system. In all these tasks, the APF is focused on its own good governance and sustainable resourcing.

The APF will implement a straightforward and valid means of evaluating its effectiveness and monitoring its performance in the implementation of the 2015–2020 strategic plan. A framework of indicators and measurement methods will measure performance against outcomes and APF functions. At the outcomes level, monitoring will focus on results achieved. At the functions level, monitoring will focus on the relevance and quality of APF's interventions, particularly in protecting those most in need. This monitoring, evaluation and reporting framework will generate useful performance information to help inform management decisions, satisfy donor reporting requirements and communicate APF performance in implementing its Strategic Plan to members and other stakeholders.

APF Strategic Plan 2015–2020

Functions	Activities	Priority	Timeframe
Outcome 1: Increased number of NHRIs complying with UN and international standards			
Function 1: Advising The APF provides expert advice on NHRIs to our members, governments and civil society in the region	1.1 Paris Principles compliance: 1.1.1 Maintain expert capacity in Paris Principles compliance 1.1.2 Constant communication with members regarding relevance of advice, face-to-face engagement, accessibility and cultural and political sensitivity	High High	Ongoing Ongoing
	1.2 GANHRI accreditation: 1.2.1 Participation in GANHRI accreditation processes and interpretation of standards 1.2.2 Support and advice on accreditation and legislation for existing NHRIs	High High	Ongoing Ongoing
	1.3 Legislative advice to governments and NHRIs: 1.3.1 Support and advice on legislation to establish or improve existing NHRIs 1.3.2 Scoping missions	High Medium	Ongoing Ongoing
Function 2: Networking The APF exchanges information and experiences, builds cooperation and develops professional human rights networks to encourage peer-to-peer learning	2.1 Annual General Meetings 2.1.1 Maintain expert capacity in stakeholder management and facilitation 2.1.2 Build collegiality and shared purpose	High High	Annual Annual
	2.2 Biennial Conferences 2.2.1 Relationships built	Medium	2015, 2017, 2019
	2.3 Senior Executive Officer Network: 2.3.1 Deliver SEO Round Table 2.3.2 Encourage peer interaction and learning 2.3.3 Facilitate knowledge & skills transfer between staff placement & host NHRI 2.3.4 Review the need for other specialised peer to peer networks	Medium High Low Low	Annual Ongoing Occasional 2016

Functions	Activities	Priority	Timeframe
	2.4 Facilitate the development of a Communications Focal Point Network	Medium	2016–2020
	2.5 Communications: 2.5.1 Develop a communications strategy that will also support the APF's fundraising strategy and enhances its visibility and regional leadership role, including: - Website - e-bulletin	High	2015
Outcome 2: NHRIs are better able to perform their functions in the areas of complaints, education, monitoring, advocacy and reporting			
Function 3: Building capacity The APF strengthens the capacity of our members through training, capacity self-assessments and high level dialogues	3.1 Training and education:		
	3.1.1 Maintain expert capacity in human rights training development and delivery	High	Ongoing
	3.1.2 Undertake training needs assessment	High	2016
	3.1.3 Develop an APF training plan that continues to expand the use of blended learning and gives priority to online training to assist language barrier issues	High	2016
	3.1.4 Implement the following training courses:	High	2016–2017
	- Role of NHRIs in monitoring SDG's and economic, social and cultural rights - Role of NHRIs in relation to migrant worker's rights - Role of NHRIs in relation to sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characterises - Torture prevention and detention monitoring - Developing and delivering human rights education - Foundation NHRI course - Implement training courses in Arabic for the West Asia sub-regional office - Train the trainer' program, especially national TOTs to get a critical mass		2016 2016
		High	2016
		High	Ongoing
		High	Ongoing
		Low	
	3.1.3 Participation in any training is conditional on knowledge sharing requirements being met	High	2016
	3.1.4 Liaise with West Asian APF members to ensure quality of translation into Arabic (modern standard)	High	2017
	3.1.5 Review implementation training action plans		
	3.2 Capacity self-assessment:		
	3.2.1 Develop a 2015–2020 capacity assessment program	High	2015
	3.2.2 Review implementation capacity assessment recommendations	High	Ongoing

Functions	Activities	Priority	Timeframe
	3.3 High level dialogues	Medium	Ongoing
	3.4 Advisory Council of Jurists: 3.4.1 FCWG to develop proposal for a revised ACJ structure, composition and reference process 3.4.2 Assist in the implementation of ACJ recommendations on death penalty	High	2016
	3.5 Strategic planning: 3.5.1 Provide expert assistance to members in NHRI strategic planning	Medium	Occasional
Outcome 3: A more conducive environment for the recognition and effectiveness of NHRIs and a greater understanding of the role of NHRIs at the national, regional and international level			
Function 4: Engaging regionally and internationally The APF engages regionally and internationally to promote our members participation and views and to share their expertise with others	4.1 Global Alliance of National Institutions: 4.1.1 Continue expert representation on GANHRI 4.1.2 Continue to support member representation on GANHRI	High High	Annual Ongoing
	4.2 UN bodies and agencies: 4.2.1 Participate in the UN Human Rights Council and its mechanisms 4.2.2 Participate in the General Assembly 4.2.3 Participate in the Commission on the Status of Women 4.2.4 Participate in the Conference of State Parties on Disability 4.2.5 Participate in the UN Open-ended Working Group on Ageing 4.2.6 Monitor in country support for member NHRI participation 4.2.7 Facilitate the development of coalition of support for NHRIs in times of crisis 4.2.8 Review costs and benefits of UN engagement in terms of human rights outcomes	High Medium Medium Medium High Medium High Ongoing	Ongoing
	4.3 Engage with ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights	Medium	Ongoing
	4.4 Engage with Arab League	Medium	Ongoing
	4.5 Engage with Pacific Island Forum	Medium	Ongoing

Functions	Activities	Priority	Timeframe
	4.6 Engage with South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation	Medium	Ongoing
Outcome 4: APF is well-governed, sustainably-resourced, strategically-directed and member-owned			
Function 5: Governance The APF is effectively governed and sustainably resourced through (i) a revised governance structure (ii) strategic planning (iii) human resources and financial management (iv) fundraising strategy and (v) monitoring, evaluation and reporting	5.1 FCWG to develop a proposal for a revised APF governance structure	Medium	2017
	5.2 Strategic planning: 5.2.1 Finalise APF Strategic Plan 2015–2020 5.2.2 Develop a strategic planning process for 2020–2025	High Medium	2015 2018
	5.3 Human resource management	High	Ongoing
	5.4 Financial management	High	Ongoing
	5.5 Develop fundraising strategy 5.5.1 Diversify funding base	High	2015
	5.6 Develop and implement a monitoring, evaluation and reporting program	High	2015
Function 6: Gender equality The APF promotes gender equality and mainstreams gender across all our work	6.1 Continue to implement the APF gender mainstreaming policy 6.1.1 Maintain expert capacity as gender focal point 6.1.2 Finalise gender mainstreaming strategy	High High	Ongoing 2015