



Commonwealth Conference of National Human Rights Institutions
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“Towards a Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions”

*A Scoping Paper by the Human Rights Unit on the Proposed Commonwealth Forum for
National Human Rights Institutions*

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Introduction

Institutions, like individuals, can greatly benefit from actively belonging to an established network of peers, and its collective voice. While a third of Commonwealth members have national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights, and while some others are either working towards the establishment of such an institution, or have other national mechanisms with a ‘human rights’ mandate (including offices of the Ombudsman), at present there is no shared formal mechanism, institution or forum for National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) in the Commonwealth for receiving, sharing or giving joint expression to matters, information or experiences that might be of common interest or concern.

So it is that as well as reflecting on experiences since the last Commonwealth Conference of NHRIs (Cambridge, 2000) and reaffirming the principles of the Commonwealth Secretariat’s ‘Best Practice’ Guidelines for NHRIs (2001), a primary purpose of this meeting is for participants to consider the merits of establishing, as between themselves, a forum of Commonwealth NHRIs (CNHRIs),¹ and together to decide the nature, structure and functions of such an entity. It is envisioned that such a forum might facilitate networking and partnerships for capacity building between Commonwealth NHRIs (and with others), and enable countries working towards an NHRI to better draw on the experience of established institutions. A forum, premised on the commitment to political and human rights values with which the Commonwealth is widely associated, might also provide a platform for joint advocacy or standard-raising, and for increased interaction between CNHRIs and governments, civil society organisations, and international bodies, including at events such as CHOGM (Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting) or meetings of the UN Human Rights Council.

The purpose of this paper, prepared by the Human Rights Unit (HRU), is to provide a platform for discussion by the participants of the options and considerations in the establishment of a forum, including in the light of the existence and experiences of other regional and international forums for NHRIs.²

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, in this Paper this expression refers both to National Human Rights Institutions and to Offices of the Ombudsman exercising a human rights protective or promotional mandate or function.

² It should be noted that while this Paper sets out some historical background relating to NHRIs in the Commonwealth, it is directed only towards the issue of a forum. It makes no attempt to describe the experiences and activities of NHRIs in the Commonwealth in recent times, nor does it purport to catalogue or analyse all recent NHRI-related activities of the HRU, nor to set out future directions for NHRIs in the Commonwealth.

Background Part A: The Commonwealth & NHRIs

The Commonwealth Secretariat and its human rights mandate

- Commonwealth countries have, under the 1991 *Harare Declaration*, committed themselves to the 'principles of justice and human rights, including the rule of law and accountable administrations'. Heads of Government have reaffirmed this commitment at successive CHOGMs.
- In 1995 the *Millbrook Commonwealth Action Programme of the Harare Declaration* requested the Secretariat to provide advice, training and other forms of technical assistance to governments in promoting Commonwealth's fundamental values, including assistance in creating and building the capacity of national human rights institutions.
- The mandate of the HRU, which became a free-standing unit in the Secretariat in 2002, is primarily of a promotional and capacity-building nature. It includes assisting member countries to establish or strengthen national human rights institutions to effectively carry out their mandate for the promotion and protection of human rights. The HRU has been involved in a range of advisory and capacity building activities with NHRIs and countries seeking to establish these. HRU also endeavours to work with UN-OHCHR, under an 1998 MOU.
- In 2001, the HRU developed the '*Best Practice Principles for National Human Rights Institutions in the Commonwealth*,' in line with the *Paris Principles*. These are now accepted and used by most Commonwealth countries and other non Commonwealth countries in relation to the process of establishment and operation of national human rights bodies, and their powers and mandate.

NHRIs in the Commonwealth

- In the past 20 years, a large number of Commonwealth member countries have established institutions for the promotion of public awareness about human rights and the protection of citizens' rights generally, including as a check on the exercise of executive authority by the government. The central and vital feature of a viable NHRI, in terms of Commonwealth 'Best Practice', is its independence. The Commonwealth Secretariat attaches great importance to the effective functioning of these institutions, which help member countries to uphold the association's fundamental political values.
- There are currently over 60 national and regional institutions in the Commonwealth that deal with specific human rights related issues. While commitment to the *Paris Principles* and consistency with the 'Best Practice' guidelines are relevant (including for international recognition or accreditation before various forums), in the Commonwealth, "National Human Rights Institutions" take many shapes and forms, often corresponding to the size and resources of the country. Some deal only with human rights issues; others combine a number of functions including oversight over

the public sector and administrative decisions, community and race relations; while others have few powers beyond those of a traditional ombudsman. It is also the case that some have a wide human rights mandate, involving monitoring, inspection and investigatory powers and the capacity to refer matters to the courts, while others are principally concerned with education and awareness programmes.

- Many Commonwealth members are small island states with limited human and financial resources. In fact, over 90% of the Commonwealth member states will fall under the category of small and/or developing countries. However, differences in size and level of development does not preclude the ability to share common values as evidenced by the near complete sharing of a system of law across the Commonwealth which facilitates the development of common standards of legal behaviour, common definitions and a common understanding of the importance of laws which are in harmony with fundamental rights and freedoms.

Commonwealth NHRIs as a Group - Ottawa 1992, Cambridge, 2000

- HRU organised the first Commonwealth Workshop on NHRIs in Ottawa in 1992 to share operational experiences on respective mandate and functions. In 2000, representatives from 41 Commonwealth countries and NHRIs met in Cambridge for an HRU meeting to develop consensus on the *Paris Principles* and to encourage the move towards a new era of human rights thinking. That meeting also mandated the convening of an expert group to identify best practices in the establishment and operation of NHRIs, which eventually led to the elaboration of the Commonwealth 'Best Practice'.
- Since that conference, new NHRIs have been established, some have moved from strength to strength, while others have encountered difficulties. There has been growing recognition of the importance of networking of NHRIs, as evidenced by various networks which have been established over recent years (see below).

Commonwealth NHRIs as a Group - Networking to date

- While some CNHRIs have had the opportunity to meet with each other at a range of (non-Commonwealth) meetings, the HRU has worked in the past specifically to improve networks between, and open channels of communication among civil society/human rights defenders, and CNHRIs. It brought these parties together in regional groupings in Asia (Oct 2003), the Caribbean (Feb 2004), Africa (Sept 2004) and the Pacific (June 2004), to share common challenges and opportunities under a Commonwealth umbrella. These meetings resulted *inter alia* in statements made by the groups there assembled.³

³ The Secretariat (Governance and Institutional Development Division) has also worked with networking Offices of the Ombudsman in the Commonwealth, including in relation to human rights issues. For example, it convened a seminar in St Kitts and Nevis in January 2004 with the Caribbean Ombudsman Association which, among other things, examined the role and mandate of the Ombudsman in promoting and protecting human rights, especially in countries where a separate free-standing NHRI is not viable.

- The British Council's project on CNHRIs ran from 2002 to 2006 and aimed at strengthening networks between NHRIs in Commonwealth countries, including through staff exchanges, information sharing, and capacity building. Relevantly for the subject of this paper, this well regarded project has helped, among other things, to crystallize Commonwealth NHRIs into a more coherent and distinct community.

Background Part B: Existing networks and forums for NHRIs

Participants will be aware of a number of standing networks and forums which have been set up over the years (networks of Ombudsman not included). Consideration of certain of the features of some of these forums may be relevant to determining the possible makeup of a CNHRI Forum:

- (i) International - the *International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights* (ICC), is the foremost representative body of NHRIs, established for the purpose of providing a collective body and voice for NHRIs (mainly for their representation within the UN human rights mechanisms, facilitated by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)), strengthening of existing NHRIs and assistance with establishing new NHRIs, and for peer monitoring of conformity with the *Paris Principles*. The ICC has regional groupings: Africa, Europe, Americas, and Asia-Pacific.⁴
- (ii) International - the *National Human Rights Institutions Forum* (NHRIF), supported by the Danish Institute of Human Rights along with the OHCHR, is in effect a virtual (electronic) research and information platform and forum for the benefit of all NHRIs.⁵
- (iii) Asia-Pacific - the *Asia Pacific Forum for National Human Rights Institutions* (APF, founded 1996, at the same time as the setting out of the 'Larrakia Declaration' setting out principles for the functioning of NHRIs) is an independent non-profit organisation that 'supports, through regional cooperation, the establishment and development of national institutions [for the protection of human rights]' and provides a framework/forum for 'regional cooperation for the development and implementation of practical programs [personnel and shared expertise, training, etc]...to improve the enjoyment of human rights.' It classifies member institutions

⁴ In accordance with its Rules of Procedure, the ICC Sub Committee on Accreditation considers new applications (and mandatory periodic re-applications by members wishing to continue as such) and classifies members either as 'A' (Compliant with *Principles*), 'B' (Observer status: not fully in compliance or insufficient information for a determination) and 'C' (Non-compliant).

⁵ This summary does not otherwise include occasional conferences and other temporary or ad-hoc networking spaces, or virtual platforms such as run from time to time (for example) by Equitas or the British Council.

by assessment of their degree of compliance with the *Paris Principles*. It also allows for the development and expression of joint positions on issues of common concern.⁶

- (iv) Africa - the *Coordinating Committee of African National Institutions* (CCANI, 1996) was established to support African NHRIs, to encourage cooperation between them and in respect of collective interaction with other mechanisms, and to follow up on decisions taken jointly and in the ICC. It has held a number of conferences (being established at the 1st Conference in Cameroon, 1996), which have contributed incrementally towards ensuring a sense of group solidarity and identity among African NHRIs.

The CCANI initially lacked a secretariat and was convened on an ad-hoc basis. Most recently, (since the 4th African Conference in Uganda in 2002), the South African Human Rights Commission has formally hosted, or acted as the Secretariat for the CCANI until 2005, when it was handed over to Kenya at the 5th Conference of African National Human Rights Institutions in Abuja, Nigeria in 2005. At the conference, delegates agreed to set up a Permanent Secretariat in Nairobi, Kenya with the assistance of the Kenya National Human Rights Commission. OHCHR is currently assisting African NHRIs in the process of establishing this Secretariat. A draft constitution exists which was prepared by OHCHR and a Steering Committee of African institutions.⁷

- (v) Africa (West) - NHRIs in the ECOWAS countries recently agreed (Nov 2006, in conjunction with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights) to

⁶ APF has an inclusive membership policy and is open to all A-P NHRIs, but it has three membership categories: Full Members (fully compliant with the *Paris Principles* – can elect a Councillor to the APF's Forum Council which is its decision-making body), Candidate Members (non-complying members which are however considered as possibly able to comply within a reasonable period, and only if a commitment is given by an NHRI applying for this level of membership that 'active steps' will be taken to meet the *Principles*. They may participate in APF activities but may not be elected to the Council), and Associate Members (do not comply and are unlikely to do so within a reasonable period, they must possess at the minimum a broad human rights mandate). Members pay a fee which varies according to membership category (\$3000pa Full, \$1500pa Candidate and Associate). Certain information is required to be considered for membership, which is something undertaken by the Council after advice from the APF Secretariat. It has a Constitution, and Director reporting to the Chairperson (elected) and Councillors. The Advisory Council of Jurists (full members can elect a member each) provides APF members with independent authoritative advice on issues affecting members from time to time, and undertakes development of jurisprudence relating to NHRIs.

⁷ Members of the CCANI served a 2 year period and are drawn from 11 countries from the 5 regions of Africa. While the African regional group of NHRIs included institutions not formally accredited by the ICC, members of the Committee had to be from an accredited NHRI. There has existed a 'Steering Committee of the Coordinating Committee' which oversaw the activities of the Secretariat and Director. It consisted of the immediate past, current and future CCANI Chairs, and the host Chair (the South African HRC hosted the Secretariat and provided office facilities). The purposes of the Secretariat have been, essentially, to implement collective CCANI decisions, and other typical functions undertaken by such a secretariat. The new Network of African NHRIs effectively has the same broad purposes and functions as the CCANI.

establish a *Network for National Human Rights Institutions in West Africa*, to 'serve as a platform for strengthening the capacity of NHRIs to protect and promote human rights in West Africa'.⁸ For the interim period, the ECOWAS Secretariat will act as the coordinating office for this Network.

- (vi) Americas - in November 2000, drawing on the experience of the APF, and with the assistance of OHCHR, American institutions considered *Paris Principles*-based, established the *Network of National Institutions of the Americas*. The only Commonwealth member of that body is Canada. At its inception, the Mexican National Commission acted as interim Secretariat for the Network.

⁸ Including 'exchange of ideas and experiences, encourage harmonisation of legislation and policy... identify gaps...promote partnerships...facilitate the creation of independent NHRIs in West African countries where such do not exist.' At its establishment, the participating NHRIs called on West African governments *inter alia* to pay particular attention to the issue of appointment and security of tenure of Commissioners including protection against interference whilst in the discharge of their duties' and 'provide adequate funding to NHRIs'. This indicates the sort of group advocacy that the Network might be capable of.

Outlook

As a logical follow up to both the work to date in bringing together Commonwealth NHRIs, as described in preceding sections, and the development of other networks and forums outlined above, the HRU decided to organise this meeting to consider, among other things, the establishment of a Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions.

The remainder of this Paper deals *firstly* with expanding on the rationale for such a forum, and *secondly* with the options for what such a forum might consist of.

Rationale for the Commonwealth Forum for NHRIs

- *“Inherent value of cooperation and networking”*: Experience to date shows that cooperation and networking among national institutions and other bodies on whatever subject greatly enhances the exchange of information, expertise and experience. It is clear that such networking, and the bodies thereby created (whether permanent or ad-hoc) also allow for collective expressions of support, encouragement or concern (as may be the case) for the better defense and promotion, in this case of human rights.
- *“The emergence of a Commonwealth NHRI community”*: As the preceding sections highlighted, this meeting is not the first time that Commonwealth NHRIs have been drawn together. The result of various projects and events, in particular the British Council project, is that CNHRIs can now be described as a discernable group, and/or do now conceive of themselves as being, in addition to other identities, *Commonwealth* NHRIs. This is against the backdrop of common history reinforcing a sense of group identity, such as similar legal structures, and of course shared commitment to Commonwealth values on human rights, good governance and the rule of law.

The establishment of the Forum would in one way ensure that the British Council’s work through its NHRI project, continues. HRU has been in discussions with the British Council to ensure within its limited capacity and resources, to preserve as much as possible the good work of the BC-NHRI project for the benefit of CNHRIs. Specifically, the HRU intends to take over the newsletter service for an interim period.

- *“Lack of a formal mechanism for CNHRIs”*: While there exists a number of international and regional networks and forums to which possibly most CNHRI are affiliated in some manner or the other, there exists no single and formal forum which can effectively ascertain, consolidate and transmit, within the Commonwealth system, the common concerns and views of NHRIs as *Commonwealth* NHRIs, as a distinct body identifying themselves around the organisation’s values. There is no forum for formal interaction with bodies such as CHOGM or other international/regional organizations. Neither is there any formal system for exchange information or expertise, for

assistance to proposed or new CNHRIs, for peer support and protection for CNHRIs experiencing difficulties, or for coordination of any other such activity of interest and assistance to CNHRIs.

- *“Increased interaction with Commonwealth Heads of Government”*: The Forum will work to promote increased access, dialogue and interaction with Commonwealth Heads of Government especially during their meetings (CHOGM), with members of civil society during CHOGM related events, within other NHRI gatherings, and within the UN human rights mechanisms (Human Rights Council, UN General Assembly, treaty bodies, etc). For example, the Forum could enable CNHRIs to make formal submissions to Commonwealth Heads of Government for their consideration during their meetings.
- *“Same but different”*: The Commonwealth is a unique organisation, where NHRIs from both developed and developing countries can share their common and varying experiences, adding to the richness of the lessons to be learned. While the HRU has acted in a coordinating capacity in the past and continues to work with individual NHRIs, at present there is no systematic way to transfer expertise, knowledge, etc, between NHRIs from different Commonwealth countries, especially following the end of the BC-NHRI project in 2006.
- *“Advance Commonwealth values”*: The idea of setting up a Forum advances the Commonwealth’s commitment to the promotion and awareness of, and respect for, human rights, and follows naturally from the specific reference to NHRIs in the *Millbrook Action Programme*. Moreover, the organization has long been recognized as presenting an inclusive, trusted and familial space for the exchange of views and advancement of common aims.
- *“Mandate and Objective of HRU”*: Work to enhance the collective and respective capacity and independence of CNHRIs is squarely within the mandate of the Secretariat, with one of the founding objectives of HRU being the creation and strengthening of NHRIs in the Commonwealth. The Forum could benefit from that institutional support of HRU, particularly in the inception period.
- *“The Various Functions”*: The strongest rationale for the Forum might perhaps be derived from considering (in the context of the above) the following (non exhaustive) range of functions, which it might conceivably have:
 - to be an inclusive forum for networking and sharing of experiences, information and knowledge among CHRNIs;
 - to promote and facilitate the exchange of ideas and expertise on improving the performance, capacity and independence of NHRIs in the Commonwealth, especially those confronting difficulties to function effectively within their resources or to comply with international standards;

- to promote and facilitate partnership between CNHRIs themselves and between CNHRIs and bilateral and international donors and agencies, including for the purposes of seeking funding opportunities for the Forum (should delegates decide on a form of Forum requiring any overheads: see below);
- to facilitate the process towards establishment, where conditions are right, of NHRIs in member countries presently lacking these, by drawing on and facilitating the advice and support of CNHRIs to the national consultative and other processes preceding any such development;
- to gather and disseminate information of interest to CNHRIs on a systematic basis;
- to allow for collective (consensus-based) expressions of support, encouragement or concern (as may be the case), in relation to particular events and developments in individual CNHRIs from time to time, for the better defense and promotion of human rights;
- to coordinate and articulate the development of common positions on issues affecting CNHRIs.

The possible functions of a Commonwealth Forum, '*What such a Forum might do,*' partly determine the question of '*What such a Forum might look like.*' That is what this Paper now turns to, with the following *caveats*:

- (i) that it is for the national institutions representatives attending the London meeting to decide on the nature and structure of a forum from the various options, and
- (ii) to bear in mind that the initial form of the proposed *Forum* might differ from the final form it takes eventually over time. It is not necessary, and may not be realistic, that the finer details and composition of the Forum be determined at this meeting. All things being equal in terms of the merits of having a forum, delegates may wish to appoint a **Steering Committee** to coordinate discussion of these details (see '*Way Forward*' below).

Constituting a Commonwealth Forum of NHRIs - Options

Delegates might wish to consider the following (not exhaustive) options on the following structural issues: Purpose and Functions; Membership and Accreditation; Organisation - A Secretariat and any possible role of the HRU.

(A) Purpose and Functions

The purposes and functions of the Forum have been covered in the preceding section at '*Rationale*' under "*The Various Functions.*" The meeting might consider whether the Forum might take on some or all of these functions, which self-evidently reflect certain purposes sought to be achieved.

As has been mentioned before, the just concluded British Council Project on Commonwealth National Human Rights Commissions was successful in that it developed a network and support system for CNHRIs and increased the impact of their work. Part of the purpose of the Forum would conceivably be to cultivate further this sought of groundwork.

(B) Membership, Accreditation and Subscription

- This is to be decided by the delegates themselves. It is the view of HRU, that in keeping with the Commonwealth way, the issue of membership perhaps be approached from an 'inclusive' standpoint. That is, to take a more 'generous' interpretation to understand the term 'National Human Rights Institutions'.⁹
- However, it is also the case that the HRU's own *Best Practice Guidelines*, drawing on and affirming, as they do, the *Paris Principles*, might be seen to be relevant to the issue of assessing membership. This may be particularly relevant if it is anticipated that the Forum be mandated to express positions on events that are seen to undermine or be at odds with international standards for NHRIs.
- By definition, it would seem that a forum for 'national' institutions precludes membership of sub-national or intra-State institutions. However, it may not be possible in all cases, to strictly distinguish on this point. The definition of 'national' is a matter on which the ICC is, as at October 2006, seeking further definition (for instance in relation to Northern Ireland).
- It is open to consider *inter alia* one of these options:
 - (i) open and equal membership without differentiation;
 - (ii) an interim situation with open and equal membership, pending advice of the proposed Steering Committee (as proposed later in this paper);
 - (iii) a range of membership categories ('Full' cf. 'Observer' or 'Candidate), such as the ICC and APF do have, by reference any criteria seen as relevant, including *inter alia* degree of compliance with *Paris Principles*. The latter would suggest a form of accreditation being necessary - either one supervised by the Forum itself, or one that uses existing accreditation mechanisms such as the ICC mechanism and considers this as authoritative on the matter; whereby only ICC 'A' accredited

⁹ It should be noted that representatives of some Offices of the Ombudsman have been invited to the London meeting. Some Ombudsman's offices have ICC accreditation alongside 'Commissions' so-called. The Forum would need to take a position on the status of offices of the Ombudsman. On the same vein, the issue of strict compliance with ICC criteria regarding NHRI accreditation may also need to be considered in assessing membership to the Forum.

CNHRIs are Full Members with ICC 'B' and 'C' as 'Observers' or 'Candidates' or an analogous category, for the purposes of voting, attendance at meetings, etc. This remains, to an extent, inclusive.

- (iv) an interim situation for (iii) above, with the ICC accreditation system relied on for the meantime (eg for the purposes of the way forward and Steering Committee elections/eligibility).

Whatever may be the option, some organ of the Forum would need to be empowered to decide on membership (if it is open and therefore relatively automatic) or to receive and process applications for membership (from existing and any future CNHRIs).

Delegates may also wish to consider whether membership will entail any annual fee or **subscription** and, if so, how the subscription will be assessed. The Forum might otherwise seek to rely on donor funds. Again, this might be something for a Steering Committee to pursue, seeking and taking into account the positions of members. The level of financial outlay will depend on what form of Forum is envisioned.

Other issues to be considered would be an **enabling instrument** and regulatory rules of procedures for the Forum (and its interim form if any).

(C) Organisation - A Secretariat? The role of the HRU

Conceivably, the Forum would need to be governed by a Committee to be appointed by the general meeting (as provided for in any eventual rules of procedure, charter, etc), and/or some initiating or exploratory 'Steering Committee' (see below). There are a number of options which delegates may wish to take into account when looking at the organizational establishment of a Forum. Clearly, (a) the level of central organisation may only solidify or gather momentum over time and (b) the level of organisation, that is the financial and other load it entails, depends very much on what the Forum is constituted to do (and deliberately refrain from doing or attempting).

In all these options the role of the Human Rights Unit of the Secretariat will have to be properly determined, considering its own staff and resource limitations.

- (i) *A Permanent Secretariat?* This would entail a full fledged secretariat coordinating the day to day affairs of the Forum. Delegates or their nominees would also have to decide on the location of the Secretariat, either standing alone, or permanently within an existing CNHRI, or some other agency. Of course there is a heavier financial implication to this option.

- (ii) *A Rotating Secretariat?* That the Forum would have no permanent Secretariat, but rather a revolving Secretariat hosted by CNHRIs themselves by rotation either on voluntary basis or by asking the sitting Chair to host. The implication would be that the hosting CNHRI would be responsible for any provision or outlay for the Secretariat for the duration of the hosting period.

- (iii) *No Secretariat?* Another option is to have no Secretariat at all for the Forum, but only regional or 'relay' coordinating CNHRIs. With the coordination of the Human Rights Unit between meetings, the Forum could periodically convene, possibly in the wings of major meetings such as the Human Rights Council sessions, CHOGM, ICC, and of course the next Commonwealth NHRI meeting following the present one. Member institutions can also regularly meet in their regions. With this option the Human Rights Unit would have a more defined role in coordinating the activities of the Forum, assuming to a great extent the secretariat functions of the Forum.

Way Forward

Assuming that the idea of a Forum (or the value in exploring a Forum) is received favourably, in whatever level of detail as to the three issues (purpose, membership, organisation), delegates may wish to consider appointing a **Steering Committee**. The purpose of this would be to oversee the process of, and look into the specific issues and modalities of, establishing the Forum. The Steering Committee could also be responsible for drafting any necessary documentation (charter, rules of procedure, etc), proposing activities, beginning to explore any funding arrangements or needs, determining a more detailed action plan, and taking forward any recommendations of the London Conference with regard to the establishment of the Forum. It is understood, and perhaps would be the most practical way forward, for any Steering Committee to work closely with the Human Rights Unit.

It is further proposed that the representatives attending the London Conference, in the position as provisional or actual members of the Forum, might agree to meet in Kampala later this year in the wings of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting to review progress made by the Steering Committee.¹⁰

Points to Ponder

- Rationale, objectives and functions of a Commonwealth NHRI Forum

¹⁰ It is understood that the Uganda Human Rights Commission is already planning for a meeting of CNHRIs during that time. A Peoples' Forum takes place in the sidelines of each CHOGM, and includes civil society and human rights organisations. The Forum could have its first meeting as part of such a sideline event.

- Membership, accreditation, and criteria for membership (including the place of the Ombudsman offices and other national mechanisms)
- Subscription and rules of procedure
- Organisation of the Forum: question of any secretariat and its structure and form
- Role of, or relationship with, other organisations or existing forum
- Role of the Human Rights Unit, Commonwealth Secretariat
- Way forward post-March 2007: Steering Committee? Meeting on the sidelines of the Kampala CHOGM?.