Millions of people around the world are deprived of basic economic and social rights, such as food, water, health, housing, and education. Because these deprivations are often chronic and entrenched, solving them can seem impossible. Such injustices are often the result of shortcomings in the design or implementation of social and economic policies, however, and NHRIs armed with the right analytical tools are well-placed to uncover deficiencies and make recommendations to address them.

In late 2011, the Asia Pacific Forum and the Center for Economic and Social Rights embarked on a joint project to strengthen ESCR monitoring by NHRIs. The project applies the Center’s OPERA Framework, which offers a blueprint for combining evidence based on numbers, ratios, and percentages—including demographic information, service delivery indicators, and budgetary data—with more traditional fact-finding techniques to visualize the scope and scale of chronic rights deprivations.

At the workshop, NHRIs that have partnered in the project to date will share their experiences. It will also be an opportunity for participants to discuss some of the practical challenges their institutions have faced in tackling ESCR issues, as well as new approaches to help overcome them.