High-Level Briefing on the Partnership to Support NHRI

“A Complementary Approach to Working across the UN Charter for Agenda 2030”

Event co-hosted by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the United Nations Development Programme

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Speech by Professor Dr Beate Rudolf, GANHRI Chairperson

Your Excellency Minister Sanz

Madam Administrator Clark

Madam Deputy High Commissioner Gilmore

Ambassador White of Costa Rica

Ambassador Dr Dalil of Afghanistan

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen
Thank you all for being here, on the first day of the 34th session of the Human Rights Council. Your presence on this very day marks the importance that you attach to National Human Rights Institutions and their role in promoting and protecting human rights and in building and maintaining peaceful and inclusive societies.

It is a pleasure for the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions to co-host this event together with our long-standing partners, OHCHR and UNDP. I am also grateful for the support by the co-sponsors of today’s event, the Permanent Missions of Australia, Afghanistan, Costa Rica, Germany, and Sierra Leone, and also for their leadership at global levels in support of NHRI and GANHRI worldwide.

Ladies and gentlemen,

in adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the UN Member States resolved – and I quote – “to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies and to protect human rights.”¹ (end of quote). Member States highlighted that the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, to which they committed, “seek to realize the human rights of all.”² And they affirmed that “There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development.”³

Therefore, the 2030 Agenda is a powerful instrument to bring together the peace and security agenda, the development agenda, and the human rights agenda. The 2030 Agenda is to be implemented by “all countries and all stakeholders, acting in collaborative partnership.”⁴

We as National Human Rights Institutions – or NHRI – and their global and regional networks stand ready to do our part in this collective endeavour. And we have

¹ OP 3.
² Preamble, para. 3.
³ Preamble, para 8.
⁴ Preamble, para. 2.
already begun to do so. Because the Agenda 2030 goes to the heart of our mandate. NHRIs were created to bring human rights home – to ensure that human rights become a reality for everyone in our respective countries. In line with our broad human rights mandates under the United Nations Paris Principles, we work across all three agendas, using our specific functions and powers as independent public bodies, and we thus fulfill our unique mandate.

First, NHRIs are mandated to work on all human rights – economic, social and cultural rights as well as civil and political rights. We are called upon to focus on discrimination and exclusion, and on the most vulnerable – to leave no one behind. We help that their voices are heard, by bringing together the State and civil society and other actors.

Second, NHRIs are mandated to promote and protect human rights in all areas of State action. For this reason, we advise our respective States in applying a human rights-based approach to development, we monitor progress and we hold the States to account.

Third, NHRIs help prevent conflicts, and they contribute to the re-establishment of peace. In situations of tensions or conflict, NHRIs monitor and investigate and engage the State to take human-rights centered responses. NHRIs can help build a culture of human rights – through human rights education, fostering dialogue, and monitoring the implementation of peace agreements.

Fulfilling the mandate of an NHRI is demanding, and it often comes at a high price: All over the world, NHRIs, their members and staff, face reprisals, threats and violence. As human rights defenders, they need the support of the international community.
Therefore, the Global Alliance of NHRIs, bringing together the regional networks from Africa, the Americas, Asia-Pacific and Europe, is highly grateful for the long-standing tripartite partnership it has with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and UNDP. Using our complementary mandates, collectively as partners at the global level, we have helped NHRIs in all regions to become stronger, by providing advice and capacity building, and through advocacy in-country and support within the UN system.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

Building on the achievements over the past years, GANHRI, OHCHR and UNDP are committed to bringing our partnership to a next level. We want to strengthen NHRIs through their global and regional networks, so that they can fulfill the growing demands of the international community. These demands are evidenced in the 2015 General Assembly Resolution on NHRIs, which calls for greater participation rights of NHRIs in all human-rights related UN mechanism and processes. They are evidenced in the 2016 HRC Resolution on NHRIs, which “welcomes the efforts made by the High Commissioner to strengthen UN system-wide coordination in support of NHRIs, including the tripartite partnership.”5 The importance of the work of strong, independent NHRIs is evidenced in the fact that an A-Status NHRI is an indicator under Goal 16 of the SDGs.

NHRIs have formed their global alliance to ensure human rights for everyone, everywhere. The strategic partnership of GANHRI, OHCHR and UNDP is a crucial component of this endeavour. Through it, we want to meet our responsibilities under the 2030 Agenda - to serve the peoples of the United Nations.

I thank you.

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5 A/HRC/RES/33/15, para. 15.