

Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions
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PRESS RELEASE

Global meeting of national human rights institutions concludes by adopting ambitious roadmap for activities in 2018, whilst expressing concern at global trend of shrinking democratic space

The Bureau of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) met from 1 to 3 November, to review developments and progress made since its last meeting in March 2017, and outline the way forward for the organization in 2018.

Hosted in San José, Costa Rica, by the Defensoria de los Habitantes, the meeting brought together representatives of national human rights institutions (NHRIs) from all regions around the world, involving also representatives from partners from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Vice President Ana Helena Chacón of the Republic of Costa Rica and Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs Alejandro Solano addressed the ceremony preceding the opening of the Bureau meeting.

Bureau members adopted the 2018 implementation plan setting out priorities for the year ahead on eight key thematic focus areas in relation to: conflict and post-conflict; shrinking democratic space and human rights defenders; business and human rights; combating gender-based discrimination; the rights of older persons; the rights of persons with disabilities; refugees, migrants and IDPs; and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Participants also reviewed alarming trends, in all regions of the world, of shrinking democratic space and reprisals, threats and other acts of intimidation against human rights defenders and NHRIs.

In a number of countries around the globe, NHRIs face threats and reprisals for their work to promote and protect fundamental rights and for holding governments to account for their international human rights obligations, in accordance with their legal human rights mandate.

The meeting reviewed cases of reprisals and examined the role of GANHRI and its regional networks, OHCHR, UNDP and others to support NHRIs under threat and to promote their independence.

"Reprisals against human rights defenders, including NHRIs, are unacceptable and must be addressed to protect the work of human rights defenders and the integrity and independence of NHRIs" said GANHRI Chairperson Prof Dr Beate Rudolf, during the meeting.

"As global alliance of NHRIs, our role is to mobilise support for members facing such threats, and to stress to governments the need for NHRIs to perform their duties with independence and impartiality, without interference."

Against this backdrop Bureau members decided to recommend that the theme of the 13th International Conference of the Global Alliance of NHRIs, to be held in late 2018 in Africa, be on the role of NHRIs in addressing shrinking democratic space and protecting human rights defenders.

On the occasion of the Bureau meeting, the Interamerican Institute for Human Rights hosted a public conference at which GANHRI Chairperson Prof Dr Beate Rudolf held a key note speech on the rights of women in the 21st century.

"I am delighted at the wonderful spirit of collaboration and contributions from Bureau members throughout this meeting, and deeply grateful for their commitment in contributing to a strong and effective network", said GANHRI Chairperson in closing the meeting.

Participants expressed deep appreciation to the Defensoria de los Habitantes of Costa Rica, in particular Ombudswoman and GANHRI Secretary Montserrat Solano Carboni and her staff, for the warmth of their hospitality.

The Bureau will meet again during the GANHRI Annual Meeting, to be held from 21 to 23 February 2018 in Geneva.

Online Press Briefing Details

What: **GANHRI Bureau Meeting**

When: **1-3 November 2017**

Where: **San José, Costa Rica**

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