



20 February 2014

The Hon Julie Bishop MP
Minister for Foreign Affairs
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

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Dear Minister

Submission: Performance Benchmarks for Australian Aid

On behalf of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (APF) I wish to submit the following information in relation to the Australian Government's consultation paper on 'Performance Benchmarks for Australian Aid.

The APF is an international organisation comprised of currently twenty one (21) member national human rights institutions (NHRIs) from the Asia Pacific region. The current APF members are the:

- **Afghanistan** Independent Human Rights Commission
- **Australian** Human Rights Commission
- National Human Rights Commission of **Bangladesh**
- National Human Rights Commission of **India**
- **Indonesian** National Commission on Human Rights
- **Jordan** National Centre for Human Rights
- Human Rights Commission of **Malaysia**
- Human Rights Commission of the **Maldives**
- National Human Rights Commission of **Mongolia**
- **Myanmar** National Human Rights Commission
- National Human Rights Commission of **Nepal**
- **New Zealand** Human Rights Commission
- National Human Rights Commission of **Oman**
- **Palestinian** Independent Commission for Human Rights
- **Philippines** Commission on Human Rights
- National Human Rights Committee of **Qatar**
- National Human Rights Commission of **Korea**
- Ombudsman of **Samoa**
- Human Rights Commission of **Sri Lanka**
- National Human Rights Commission of **Thailand**, and
- **Timor Leste** Office of the Provedor for Human Rights and Justice.

For further information on the role and functions of the APF see <http://www.asiapacificforum.net/>.

Performance Benchmarks

The APF would support the development of performance benchmarks at (i) a whole-of-aid program level (ii) a program level (iii) a partner government/implementing organisation level and (iv) a project level.

Human rights performance benchmarks have been incorporated into the operation of government and international aid agencies since the 1990's. The APF would therefore propose the inclusion of respect for, and protection of, human rights in the development of Australian aid benchmarks at all levels. Further benchmarks in pursuit of poverty reduction and redressing economic and social inequality could usefully focus on marginalised and disadvantaged groups such as women, people with a disability, the elderly, indigenous peoples, sexual minorities etc and cross-cutting human rights norms or principles, *such as non-discrimination and equality, participation, accountability, the rule of law and good governance*. For instance, securing the right to health requires non-discriminatory practices by providers of health services, access to information on the main health problems, access to remedy and due process in the event of malpractice or ill-treatment by health-care personnel, and participation in political decisions relating to the right to health.

The APF's direct experience in the development of performance benchmarks relates to those at the (i) implementing organisation level and (ii) project level.

In response to recommendations made in an extensive independent review of APF operations commissioned by the APF's joint donors (including the Australian Government) in 2009, the APF developed a rigorous human rights performance management and reporting framework. This framework consists of quantitative and qualitative indicators of outputs and outcomes to evaluate the APF's progress in achieving its strategic objectives. The performance management and reporting framework also enables an assessment of the relationship of indicators to performance benchmarks and the direction of trends over time in meeting the APF's strategic objectives. The indicators have been subject to biannual external review in 2010, 2012 and 2014 to improve their relevance and accuracy.

The APF's financial and human resource management processes are also aligned to this framework and the Global Reporting Initiative NGO Reporting Guidelines and Sector Supplement. The APF has reported publicly against this framework in an integrated annual report since 2010. Feedback on the framework from stakeholders has been very positive and continues to inform ongoing improvements. The APF is currently commencing performance evaluation using the framework as part of its 2015 strategic planning process. The strategic planning process, which follows a sector best practice results based management approach, will deliver a revised performance measurement and reporting framework for use in measuring the implementation of the APF's 2015 – 2020 Strategic Plan.

A copy of the APF's Annual Report for the period 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2013 is attached to this submission. Earlier APF Annual Reports can be obtained from <http://www.asiapacificforum.net/about/governance>.

Budget Consequences

In terms of the linkage between the allocation of funds and the meeting of performance benchmarks, the APF's direct experience is at the (i) implementing organisation level and (ii) project level.

The APF internally allocates its budget each year in line with meeting performance benchmarks. The APF's performance management and reporting framework would therefore enable the APF to respond to the Government's information and reporting needs in line with the various options outlined in the consultation paper that link the allocation of funds to program/project performance. The APF would be able to draw on empirical, observable information to validate our strategic objectives and our effectiveness.

Improving Implementing Partner Performance

The APF welcomes all proposals that could improve our performance as an implementing partner organisation. The APF would therefore be happy to assist and provide input into a possible review of the existing Multilateral Assessment process.

I hope the above information is of assistance. Please feel free to contact me if you require any further details concerning the APF's performance benchmarks and reporting framework.

Yours sincerely,



Kieren Fitzpatrick

Director

Asia Pacific Forum