

# **REPORT**

**13<sup>th</sup> Annual Human Rights and Peoples' Diplomacy Training Program**

**in cooperation with**

**the Asian Regional Resource Centre for Human Rights Education (ARRC),  
Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (Forum Asia) and  
Thammasat University**

**Bangkok, Thailand**

**3-20 February, 2003**

## **Introduction**

DTP has held previous trainings in Bangkok in recent years, with familiar supportive partners, and with continuity of DTP staff since that time. All these factors were important in ensuring smooth arrangements and a successful outcome for the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Program.

## **Preliminary Arrangements**

56 applications were received for the training program, from which 32 were selected. All selected applicants were supplied with advice on seeking sponsorship, tailored individually as appropriate for each country.

DTP staff, notably Radhika and Georgina, put in an inordinate amount of effort as the training period approached to obtain individual sponsorship for many applicants who had not been successful with sponsors. This staff effort was responsible for the training being able to proceed with 20 participants. Full course fees were waived for only two participants. A 50% contribution to course fees was allowed for 2 participants.

## **Attendees**

The following countries were represented by 19 participants:

Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, India (Tamil Nadu), Cambodia, Burma (Thailand), Indonesia (Ambon, Northern Sumatra), Fiji, PNG (including Bougainville), Australia (Indigenous).

One of the two Cambodian students with sponsorship was unable to attend at the last minute due to diplomatic difficulties between Cambodia and Thailand which prevented him entering Thailand.

## **Partners**

Partnerships with ARRC, Forum Asia and Thammasat University were critical to the success of the program. In particular, DTP would like to thank Ms Theresa Limpin and Ms Ploy Chompoo of ARRC whose local knowledge and sophisticated logistical skills were much appreciated both before and during the Program and who contributed so much to the success of the Program. Forum Asia staff, Ms Ami Latona, and Ms Pairat also provided invaluable advice and information that made for a smoothly running program. Our thanks to Somchai Homlaor and Chalida of Forum Asia for their continuing support of DTP. Thanks also to Thammasat University Law Faculty and Professor Surapol Nitikraipot, Dean of the Faculty, whose support provides important security for the Program and our participants.

## **Venue**

The venue of the Institute of Rajabhat Chandrakasem, which was recommended by ARRC, was excellent for our purposes. For a moderate price, it provided shared

rooms of an adequate standard for participants, together with a training venue and breakout spaces, and a separate area for catered lunches. Staff were attentive and helpful, and basic conference facilities such as overhead projector, whiteboards, sound systems, and video were supplied. Phones were available and arrangements were easily made for use of a room for a participant party. A restaurant and a coffee bar at the facility were convenient. Breakfast, lunches, morning and afternoon tea were catered for and participants were funded to purchase their own evening meals from the many outlets near the Institute. Internet cafes were accessible for participants and staff within easy walking distance. ATMs, grocery stores, a post office and banks were also either on campus or close by. The siting of the Institute in Bangkok city was more satisfactory than being some distance away, as in 2001. It was convenient for overseas trainers wanting to conduct other business in Bangkok, and for local trainers whose valuable time was not spent in travel to the venue. As well, participants were able to shop, sightsee and find recreation without difficulty.

### **Opening Ceremony**

The official opening ceremony was held in a specially prepared room on the same level as the training room in the Institute. ARRC organised a welcome ritual, and opening addresses were given by Prof Surapol Nitikraipot, Dean of the Faculty of Law at Thammasat and Deputy Prof. Toen Tongkaew, President of the Institute of Rajabhat Chandrakasem. The keynote speech was delivered by Mr. Asda Jayanama, former Ambassador of Thailand to the UN in New York. The commitment of all speakers to human rights was notable and their support of the Program was much appreciated.

### **Trainers and Program**

The generous contribution of our trainers, who give of their time free of charge, continues to be one of the heart-warming aspects of the Program. Our usual international trainers, who have supported the DTP for many years, often from its outset, were again able to attend. Dr Clarence Dias, Dr Sarah Pritchard, Dr Ravi Nair, Prof Vitit Muntabhorn and Mr. Jose Campino provided their wonderful input on international law, the UN, its Human Rights Conventions and mechanisms. Mr Phillip Chung again gave training in effective use of the internet and generously provided an update of his DTP Internet Training Manual. Ms Debbie Stothard provided a day of media training.

Local trainers based in Bangkok were of a high standard this year and thanks is due to ARRC and Forum Asia for this.

Mr. Tyler Giannini of Earth Rights International again provided excellent practical training linking environmental issues to human rights. Ms Nicola Bullard, from Focus on the Global South, was another local trainer who has previously worked with us in presenting the globalisation session. We were pleased to continue DTP's relationship with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights with the contribution of Mr. Nicholas Howen, the Commissioner's Regional Representative in Bangkok, providing a session on regional human rights arrangements. Ms Kirsten Young from UNHCR's Regional Office in Bangkok was a welcome new trainer who covered the refugee convention. Ms. Supatra Nacapew trainer for HIV/AIDS and

Human Rights was a very popular with dramatic exercises that reinforced her message and the solid legal human rights message that she conveyed. DTP Director, Ms Joan Staples covered running an effective advocacy campaign, and last, but not least, Ms Theresa Limpin of ARRC, added her practical session on effective communication strategies.

Significant international legal manoeuvring in the UN Security Council in New York in relation to a possible war in Iraq was taking place throughout the Program and was discussed regularly with participants to draw out the legal and strategic issues. Dr Pritchard kindly prepared a role play on this issue. However, by the third week it was felt that all participants knew the legal issues well and the role of the Security Council. It was decided to proceed with a UN Human Rights Commission scenario for the role play, as this was less well known and yet was the most likely forum that participants might actually attend. The actual role play went well.

See enclosed program schedule, trainer profiles and anonymous participant evaluations.

### **Field Trips**

The main field trip of the visit was to the **Human Rights Commission of Thailand**, where the Chairperson of the Commission, Prof Saneh Chamarik, supported by Commissioner Suthin Nophaket, kindly gave his time in addressing us. Staff of the Commission provided an introductory video and afternoon tea. Participants represented themselves and DTP well by asking probing and perceptive questions and the visit was helpful in reinforcing topics covered in the program and providing background on Thai human rights issues.

A recreational field trip was held to **the Grand Palace** on the first weekend. It was enjoyed by all as an opportunity to spend relaxed time together in a different environment and to learn about Thai culture.

Participants were provided with maps of Bangkok showing places they might want to visit and a copy of the Lonely Planet guide to the city to enable them to maximise their free time in exploring the city independently. Sunday of the first weekend, and the whole of the second weekend were kept free for this purpose.

### **Visitors.**

**Mr James Gomez of FNS** visited one evening to discuss the effects of September 11 on human rights in the region and to workshop how activists might respond to repressive changes by their governments. He kindly provided numerous publications from FNS relevant to participants, which were distributed later in the Program.

**Ms Lesley McCulloch, an Australian academic released two days previously from jail in Aceh, Indonesia,** visited one evening and spoke to participants about her experiences. Lesley was inspirational for participants and most impressive in the documentation of her experience. Her presentation was informative for all on the Aceh situation. It was fortuitous that Ravi Nair was present and able to link up with

Lesley to discuss how she might most effectively promote her information on the international human rights stage.

**Friends of Women**, an impressive Thai NGO working with women who have been trafficked or suffered domestic violence, visited on a couple of lunchtimes to sell handcrafts they had produced and to tell of their work. A number of participants and DTP staff visited their shop and enjoyed excellent Thai massages on a number of occasions.

### **Evening Sessions.**

DTP staff took many **videos** for showing in evening sessions and invited participants to present sessions if they wished.

The recent film, Rabbit Proof Fence from Australia, was enjoyed. **Participants presented sessions** on Children's rights Dalit struggles, Bougainville, peace work in Pakistan and on homosexual rights.

An enjoyable **party** was organised by participants one evening with music and dancing until the early hours. It was important in bonding the group and providing a safe environment to relax together socially.

### **Final Dinner and Presentation of Certificates.**

We were honoured to have Commissioner Jaran Ditapichai of the Thai Human Rights Commission attend and present student certificates. He endeared himself to participants with his unassuming manner and his genuine interest and knowledge of their issues. Representatives of Forum Asia and all the staff of ARRC were able to attend. A local restaurant provided the venue.