

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE HIGH LEVEL PANEL ON AN ASEAN HUMAN RIGHTS BODY

Background

1. At the 13th ASEAN Summit in Singapore, ASEAN Leaders signed the ASEAN Charter on 20 November 2007.
2. In accordance with Article 14 of the ASEAN Charter, the ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting shall determine the Terms of Reference of the ASEAN human rights body.
3. At the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat in Singapore on 20 February 2008, the ASEAN Foreign Ministers agreed to establish a High Level Panel (HLP) on drafting the Terms of Reference of the ASEAN human rights body, which should commence its work right after the 41st ASEAN Ministerial Meeting.

Role and Functions

4. The High Level Panel shall draft the Terms of Reference of the ASEAN human rights body in conformity with the purposes and principles of the ASEAN Charter relating to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.
5. The High Level Panel shall address the mandate, membership and functions of the ASEAN human rights body, as well as its relationship with other relevant human rights bodies in ASEAN.
6. The High Level Panel shall undertake consultations with the appropriate stakeholders in ASEAN.
7. The High Level Panel shall submit the first draft Terms of Reference of an ASEAN human rights body to the ASEAN Foreign Ministers at the 14th ASEAN Summit in December 2008 for guidance and direction. Subject to the guidance of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers, the High Level Panel shall work expeditiously for the finalisation of the draft Terms of

Reference with the aim to present it to the ASEAN Foreign Ministers in 2009.

Membership

8. The High Level Panel shall be composed of one representative from each ASEAN Member State.
9. When the High Level Panel representative of a Member State is unable to attend a High Level Panel meeting, the representative shall designate one of his or her team members as the substitute representative to attend the meeting.
10. The Chairmanship of the High Level Panel shall be aligned with the Chairmanship of ASEAN.

Reporting Mechanism

11. The High Level Panel shall report to the ASEAN Foreign Ministers at regular intervals.

Meeting Schedule

12. The High Level Panel shall commence its meetings in July 2008. It shall meet regularly or whenever deemed necessary.

ASEAN Secretariat Support

13. The ASEAN Secretariat shall provide secretariat support to the High Level Panel.

.