

## **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**

DTP has a history of conducting Annual Training programs in Bangkok. Our continuing relationship with familiar, supportive partners, Forum Asia and ARRC, combined with our knowledge of local facilities and human resources available have ensured another successful outcome for the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Program.

56 applications were received for the program from which 32 participants from non-government organisations were selected and 20 successfully sourced funding.

10 countries were represented by the participants which included Australia (Indigenous), Burma (Thailand), Cambodia, Fiji, India (Tamil Nadu) Indonesia (Ambon, Northern Sumatra) Nepal, Pakistan, PNG (including Bougainville), Sri Lanka.

An even balance of male and female participants was generally achieved.

The training venue, the Institute of Rajabhat Chandrakasem provided excellent accommodation and training facilities for our purposes.

At the official opening ceremony, addresses were given by Prof. Surapol Nitikraipot, Dean, Faculty of Law, Thammasat University and Deputy Prof. Toen Tongkaew, President, 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.

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 Ms Debbie Stothard provided a day of media training.

Local trainers based in Bangkok were of a high standard. Mr. Tyler Giannini, Earth Rights International, again provided excellent practical training linking environmental issues to human rights. Ms Nicola Bullard, from Focus on the Global South, presented 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 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.

The main field trip, was a 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, giving background to Thai human rights issues.

Visitors to the program included Mr James Gomez of FNS who discussed the effects of September 11 on human rights in the region and to workshop how activists might respond to repressive changes by their governments. Ms Lesley McCulloch, an Australian academic released two days previously from jail in Aceh, Indonesia, spoke about her experiences. Lesley was inspirational for participants and informative for all on the Aceh situation.

Friends of Women, an impressive Thai NGO working with women who have been trafficked or suffered domestic violence, visited to sell handcrafts they had produced and to tell of their work.

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, genuine interest and knowledge of their issues.