



**GUIDELINES: ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES  
OF THE APF CHAIRPERSON**

**DECEMBER 2013**

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## 1 BACKGROUND

### 1.1 APF Governance Structure

The **Forum Council** is the decision-making body of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (APF). Established by the APF Constitution, the Forum Council is comprised of one voting councillor nominated by each full member (A-status) member. It sets the APF's policies and priorities, decides membership applications and exercises all the powers set out in the constitution.

Every two years the Forum Council elects a **Chairperson** and **two Deputy Chairpersons** of the APF from within its membership.

In accordance with APF practice the position of Chairperson is accorded to the A-status national human rights institution that hosted the most recent APF biennial conference. The two positions of Deputy Chairs are accorded to those NHRIs that have hosted the most recent past biennial conference and that will host the future biennial conference. The Chairperson and Deputy Chairpersons must come from A-status institutions. If the status of the institution of the Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson is downgraded whilst in office, they correspondingly cease to hold APF office.

At the time of writing (December 2013), the Qatar National Human Rights Committee is the Chairperson as it hosted the APF biennial conference in 2013; the Thailand National Human Rights Commission is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Deputy Chair as it hosted the Conference in 2011 and the Mongolian Human Rights Commission, as the future host of the APF Conference in 2015 is the 1<sup>st</sup> Deputy Chair.

The Forum Council meets each year as part of the APF Annual Meeting and on other occasions as required. Meetings are run according to the APF Rules of Procedures for Forum Councillors' Meetings.

Forum Councillors can establish 'committees of councillors' to administer different aspects of the APF's operations. For example a **Management Committee** has been established to oversee the operations of the APF secretariat, details of which are provided in section 2.2 below.

The **APF Secretariat** is responsible for implementing the decisions of the Forum Council. The Director of the Secretariat reports to the Chairperson of the Forum Council on a regular basis.

In summary, the Forum Council is the ultimate decision-making body of the APF. The Chair and Deputy Chairs hold important representational roles and the APF secretariat implements the decisions of the Forum Council.

## **1.2 Chairperson - General Responsibilities**

The APF Chairperson has general obligations as a member of the Forum Council. These are set out in the APF statute, the APF members' guide, and in the law pursuant to which the APF is incorporated.

In assuming a leadership and representational role, the APF Chairperson is expected to promote compliance with these responsibilities and to lead by example.

These responsibilities include to:

- act in good faith in the best interests and reputation of the APF;
- exercise all powers for a proper purpose and in the best interests and reputation of the APF;
- exercise skill, care and diligence in their duties as Forum Councillors;
- give adequate consideration, and maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality and discretion, with regard to information provided to them as Forum Councillors;
- avoid a conflict of interest, or to disclose a conflict of interest, when one arises; and
- avoid the improper use of their position, or information that is obtained by virtue of being, a Forum Councillor.

Further information is provided in the APF Members Guide available at:

[http://www.asiapacificforum.net/about/governance/downloads/APF\\_Members\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.asiapacificforum.net/about/governance/downloads/APF_Members_Guide.pdf)

## **1.3 Chairperson – a Summary of Key Responsibilities**

In summary the APF Chairperson's role is as follows:

- to host an APF Biennial Conference;
- to chair meetings of the Forum Council;
- to authorise, on behalf of Forum Councillors, the annual financial report of the APF;
- to participate in the APF Management Committee;
- to represent the APF, and to report and monitor issues on its behalf, at the ICC Bureau as the APF's regional chairperson;
- to represent the APF, and to report and monitor issues on its behalf, at the ICC General Meeting;
- to represent the APF at international, regional and national human rights events (depending on availability).
- to seek advice from the APF secretariat, when required, on the undertaking of these responsibilities.

A fuller description of these activities is provided below.

## **2 CHAIRPERSON – A COMPREHENSIVE OVERVIEW**

### **2.1 APF Forum Council Meetings**

The APF Director, in consultation with the Chairperson and Forum Councillors, is responsible for the organisation and coordination of Forum Council meetings, and for the preparation of all relevant papers and reports.

The APF Chairperson formally chairs APF Forum Council Meetings, including the APF Annual General Meeting (usually held in the timeframe of September-November each year), the biannual Meeting that is usually held in conjunction with the ICC General Meeting in Geneva; and such other Forum Councillor meetings as required. This role is undertaken in a cooperative and consultative manner.

An important governance responsibility of the APF Chairperson is to sign the approval of the APF's Annual Financial Report. This report is considered by all Forum Councillors at each Annual General Meeting.

There are Rules of Procedure governing the conduct of Annual General Meetings and other meetings. Further information is provided in the APF Members Guide at:  
[http://www.asiapacificforum.net/about/governance/downloads/APF\\_Members\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.asiapacificforum.net/about/governance/downloads/APF_Members_Guide.pdf)

### **2.2 APF Management Committee**

The APF Chairperson is a member of the APF Management Committee, together with the two Deputy Chairs and the host institution of the APF secretariat (Australia).

The role of the Management Committee is to oversee the APF secretariat including the performance management of the secretariat's Director and to approve secretariat employment conditions and contracts.

The business of the Management Committee is conducted electronically, usually via email, and in-person meetings are rarely required.

### **2.3 APF Correspondence**

The APF Director is responsible for the drafting of correspondence and reports. Depending on the issue, signature by the Chairperson may be required. Examples of such issues include formal statements by the APF to the United Nations human rights mechanisms and correspondence to governments on behalf of a member NHRI.

### **2.4 ICC Bureau**

The APF Chairperson assumes one of the four APF regional positions on the ICC Bureau. The Chairperson has a number of roles at the Bureau: to represent the APF in consultation with other APF Bureau members and the broader APF membership, to promote the consideration of issues and concerns raised by APF members, to report on APF activities, and to report on Bureau outcomes to members at APF meetings. As the regional chairperson, it is important

that the APF Chairperson attends these meetings and must advise the APF secretariat if s/he is unable to attend these meetings so that Forum Councillors are informed and suitable alternative arrangements are discussed.

Reports and papers for these meetings are prepared by the APF secretariat in consultation with the Chairperson and the Forum Councillors.

## **2.5 ICC General Meeting**

The APF Chairperson has a number of roles at the ICC General Meetings. These include presenting the APF regional report and to promote consideration of issues and concerns raised by APF members. As the regional chairperson, it is important that the APF Chairperson attends these meetings.

Reports and papers for these meetings are prepared by the APF secretariat in consultation with the Chairperson and the Forum Councillors.

## **2.6 Representation at International, Regional and National Human Rights Events**

The APF Chairperson is generally given the first option to represent the APF before the various United Nations bodies, or at regional and national human rights conferences and meetings, or other functions. Given the Chairperson's responsibilities outlined above, these roles are often undertaken and shared with the APF Deputy Chairpersons or other Forum Councillors.

In undertaking these responsibilities the APF Chairperson will consult with the Deputy Chairs, Forum Councillors and the APF secretariat director to ensure proper transparency, consultation and cooperation for the benefit of the APF's good reputation and standing in the international human rights community.

## **2.7 Public Statements and the Media**

The development of public statements and media engagement on behalf of the APF is coordinated by the secretariat in consultation with the Forum Councillors. Consultation ensures members have the opportunity to participate, and promotes transparency and cooperation in decision making. This process serves to maintain and protect the APF's reputation and standing in the international human rights community.

While any member can raise a matter for consideration by the Forum Council, in general it is the secretariat Director who notifies members when an issue or opportunity arises, and will seek members' views on whether to issue public statements. Any subsequent public statements are then prepared by the secretariat for final consideration and approval by the Forum Council.

In general, the Chairperson will be contacted by the secretariat and provided with the first option to make APF public statements although this will be dependent on the issue. In some cases, another member may have been responsible for pursuing a matter on behalf of the APF (for example, the Philippines and Korean members are the APF representatives on the

ICC's Business and Human Rights Working Group). It may also be the case that an issue is particularly relevant for one sub-region, and thus a member from that sub-region may or may not be the preferred spokesperson.

In undertaking these representational responsibilities, the APF Chairperson will consult with the Deputy Chairs, Forum Councillors and the APF secretariat.

## **2.8 Chairperson's Availability**

Where the Chairperson is unable to attend these meetings or undertake these roles, the Chairperson will contact the APF secretariat. The secretariat will then consult with the APF Deputy Chairpersons and Forum Councillors to organise alternate representation. Given the domestic responsibilities of the Deputy Chairpersons and Forum Councillors, at least two weeks advance notice should be given in order to allow for appropriate arrangements to be made.

## **2.9 APF Secretariat Contacts**

The two primary contacts at the secretariat in relation to policy, management and operations are:

1. Mr Kieren Fitzpatrick, Director:(E) [kierenfitzpatrick@asiapacificforum.net](mailto:kierenfitzpatrick@asiapacificforum.net); (T) +61 02 9284 9674.
2. Ms Pip Dargan, Deputy Director:(E) [pipdargan@asiapacificforum.net](mailto:pipdargan@asiapacificforum.net); (T) +61 02 9284 9644.

### 3 2014: TIMETABLE OF ACTIVITIES

	APF	ICC	OTHER
JANUARY			
FEBRUARY			<b>Human Rights Council.</b> Geneva (24/2-21/3)*
MARCH	<b>APF Bi-Annual Meeting.</b> Geneva. (12 <sup>th</sup> ).	<b>ICC Bureau Meeting (12<sup>th</sup> )</b> <b>ICC General Meeting (13-14<sup>th</sup> )</b> <b>ICC SCA (17<sup>th</sup> -21<sup>st</sup> )**</b> Geneva	<b>CSW.</b> New York (24/2-7/3)*
APRIL			
MAY			<b>Human Rights Council.</b> Geneva. 26/5-13/6)*
JUNE			
JULY			
AUGUST	<b>APF Annual General Meeting 2014 India.</b> (TBC).		<b>Human Rights Council</b> Geneva. (TBC)*
SEPTEMBER		<b>ICC Bureau Meeting</b> Location and date (TBC).	
OCTOBER			
NOVEMBER		<b>ICC SCA Meeting</b> Geneva. (TBC)	
DECEMBER			<b>Human Rights Day (10<sup>th</sup> )*</b>

\* There are opportunities for the APF to make statements at these meetings. As advised above, the role may be undertaken by the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson or any Forum Councillor.

\*\* It is noted that the Dr Al-Marri is currently the APF representative on the ICC Sub-Committee on Accreditation.