

**JOINT NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS STATEMENT ON
THE HUMAN RIGHTS DIALOGUE PROCESS
June 2004**

- We support human rights dialogue as a means for advancing human rights internationally.
- We regard human rights dialogue as only one of the avenues for advancing human rights. Other approaches, such as international monitoring through United Nations bodies, are equally if not more effective.
- We urge Australia to ensure its commitment to the human rights dialogue process does not result in the preclusion of the option of pursuing UN resolutions on human rights or the use of other mechanisms.
- We are concerned that human rights dialogue may become an end in itself. Human rights dialogue is the means to an end; it should be results oriented to ensure real progress in the observation of international human rights standards.
- We believe that transparency and accountability are generally desirable in human rights matters and both are necessary in the human rights dialogue process.
- We recommend that the human rights dialogue process be more accountable to parliamentary agencies, such as the Human Rights Sub-Committee of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade.
- We believe that civil society, including non-government organisations (NGOs), has a positive role to play in the human rights dialogue process. The involvement of independent NGOs would bring greater transparency and credibility to the process and lead to more effective outcomes.
- We see a need for clear reporting on human rights dialogues, with particular attention to the outcomes. All interested parties should have access to such reports.
- We recommend the establishment of clear and measurable benchmarks for all human rights dialogues to ensure the most effective outcomes.
- We believe that the human rights dialogue process should specifically address the rights of women, children and minorities.