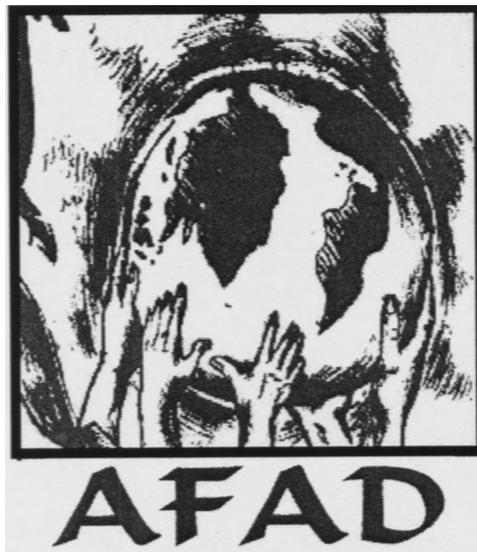


2003 Year-End Report



Asian Federation
Against
Involuntary Disappearances

1. THE PHENOMENON OF INVOLUNTARY DISAPPEARANCES IN ASIA

Note: The situation below is based on the reports submitted by the AFAD member-organizations during its Second Congress held on August 26-30, 2003 in Bangkok, Thailand.

In Asia, the phenomenon of involuntary disappearances has reached alarming proportions. Involuntary disappearances in Asia is an unresolved problem and in some countries, a continuing phenomenon. With less or even absence of support from the government, organizations of families of the disappeared do their work in the midst of many impediments.

A number of developments on the phenomenon of involuntary disappearances transpired in Asia, at least, in the countries where AFAD member-organizations are based. Yet, in general, while AFAD continues to project this regional phenomenon, no significant and concrete improvement has been achieved in as far as individual cases and general situations are concerned. So far, the following is the most recent information sent by AFAD member-organizations.

In China, an estimated number of 3,000-4000 persons disappeared during the bloody massacre that happened on June 4, 1989. Families of the victims fear to come out in the open and cannot even publicly mourn for their disappeared. A group of brave mothers formed the Tiananmen Mothers and gathered evidences to sue the government for its responsibility to the killings and disappearances that caused thousands of lives. Fourteen years after the gruesome massacre, justice still remains elusive. Ding Zilin, the president of said the organization demanded the Supreme People's Procurate pressing for four unambiguous goals: to call for a thorough investigation on the June Fourth incident, to punish the guilty, to vindicate the wronged and to provide compensation for the victims and their family members.

In the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir, involuntary disappearance has become a regular phenomenon, with at least 2,000 reported cases for the period 1991-1993. Added to this is the ingrained practice of most police personnel to cremate the bodies of the victims, thus depriving the families of the opportunity to ever see their loved ones again. More often, human rights defenders, in their struggle to end this problem, are themselves victimized.

This is further exacerbated by the effort of Indian authorities to ignore this violation. On July 18, 2001, for example, the Association of Disappeared Persons (APDP) in Kashmir had a short ceremony formally laying down the foundation for an intended monument dedicated to the *desaparecidos* of the Kashmir valley. A few hours after the ceremony, Indian police took the foundation stone along with its brick base and accused the organizers of trespassing in government land.

In a more recent development, poor and hungry families of the disappeared in Jammu and Kashmir continued being hungry by staging a hunger strike on April 17-24, 2003 so that the Indian government, through its Chief Minister Mufti Mohammed Syed would finally admit the 3,744 cases that occurred from 2000 up to the present. Such admission is in contrast to his earlier pronouncement stating that there are only 60 persons who disappeared and the rest had crossed the line of actual control.

In Indonesia, while enforced disappearances have been an almost daily occurrence during Suharto's "New Order" regime, only a few cases have so far been documented, many of them belonging to the Student Protest Movement. While new cases continue to happen without let-up, proper documentation would still have to be done on the *PKI* supporters and sympathizers who were deliberately liquidated in 1965 and dissident ethnic minorities from Aceh, Irian Jaya and the former province of East Timor. Even with the assumption of former President Abduhhraman Wahid to power, violence continued. During the administration of President Megawati, two of the most recent cases was the disappearance of *KontraS* activists in Aceh disappeared in March this year not to mention many other cases going on in the country's militarized areas. Adding insult to injury, the office of the Commission For the Disappeared and Victims of Violence or *KontraS* was raided twice. The first incident happened last year and perpetrated by some 300 armed men believed to be in collusion with the military. The second incident occurred on May 26, 2003 on the occasion of the International Week of the Disappeared and perpetrated by some 150 elements of the Youth of the Veterans in cahoots with the police. The resolution of past cases is far from sight and the stop to the on-going violence is difficult to imagine.

The phenomenon of enforced disappearance in Pakistan is to be viewed in accordance with the political and cultural ethos of the country. Pakistan was created in 1947 through the voluntary withdrawal of British colonial rule. Its creation was not an outcome of a revolution, but by a historical convulsion. Army and civil bureaucracy blocked the path to democracy and rule of law. Time and again, its constitutional structure was unlawfully shattered, altered and abrogated to meet the requirements of incumbents to the chief executive office. Constitutional transformation was legalized by the judicial branch of state. The initial derailment from the constitutional path made Pakistan into a nearly failed state. A caucus of army, civil bureaucracy and judiciary usurped the rights of the people. The theory of social contract has been replaced by the theory of might is right. The state is not governed by the will of the people but by the might of garrison. As one consequence of such a situation, involuntary disappearances happened and still continue. So far, the Truth and Justice Commission has documented only 254 cases, but it is certain that there are more cases. Of these cases, twenty-two victims' families have been organized, so far.

In a very recent development in the Philippines, after almost a couple of decades of struggle of victims of human rights violations during the Marcos regime, the Supreme Court declared that the enormous wealth of the Marcoses kept in Swiss banks are ill-gotten. Therefore, such wealth has to be turned over to the Philippine government, which has the responsibility to allocate the money for compensation to some 10,000 victims of human rights violations during the Marcos regime. Among the victims of these various forms of human rights violations such as involuntary disappearances, political detention, torture, the

families of the disappeared will get the lion's share of the compensation that they very well deserve. While it is true that the long wait is not yet over, this development is a great political and moral victory of victims of human rights violations - a triumph of the good over evil.

However, much remains to be desired. The demise of the Marcos dictatorship and the subsequent restoration of democratic rule during the succeeding administrations have not yet brought justice to victims of involuntary disappearances and their families. More than 1,750 cases reported to and documented by the Families of Victims of Involuntary Disappearance (FIND) are still pending with no single perpetrator being punished. The fourteen cases being filed in court remain unsolved due to the absence of witnesses or their difficulty to testify due to fear of reprisal and harassment, not to mention the slow pace of local courts in handling human rights cases. A law penalizing enforced or disappearances has yet to see the light of day despite years of lobbying at the House of Senate and the House of Representatives.

In the southern part of Sri Lanka for example, there are about 60,000 cases of enforced disappearance, one of, if not the largest so far in the entire world. Of this number, only 16,742 cases have been established and verified while a mere 3,500 to 5,000 families and victims have been granted minimal compensation. While the three visits of the UNWGEID to the country were able to confirm this wanton transgression of human rights, the Sri Lankan government has yet to implement the Working Group's recommendations.

In Thailand, there are 293 cases of disappearances, which occurred during the brutal suppression of the May 1992 demonstration against Army General-turned-Prime Minister Suchinda Kraprayoon. Families continue to press the Thai government to disclose the more than 600-paged report about the massacre and reveal the whereabouts of the victims. Yet, despite such persevering efforts, the Thai government just opened some sketchy reports of what happened. While some of the families of the victims have received relief assistance, still, they are demanding for the return of at least, their loved ones' remains for proper cremation. The government, on the other hand, is giving the burden of finding the possible location of graves of missing persons to the families of the victims.

While the above data are worse enough, these data do not yet include thousands of other cases in many other Asian countries.

11. THE ORGANIZATIONAL SITUATION OF AFAD

The year 2003 was the last year of the implementation of AFAD's General Plan of Action. For which reason, the Second AFAD Congress had to be convened for the purpose of summing-up the work of the Federation during the last three years, coming up with a new plan of action and corresponding budget for the next three years, reviewing its Statutes and electing a new set of functional leaders.

From a federation of five organizations during its Founding Congress in May 200, AFAD has expanded to eight organizations from seven countries, namely: China, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand. It is more than a hundred percent increase from its core group members then composed only of three organizations, e.g. FIND-Philippines, APDP-Kashmir and OPFMD-Sri Lanka.

The increase in membership is an added strength to the Federation considering that a louder voice of families of the disappeared could be heard both in the national and international levels. However, this also meant additional resources, which have not been adequately beefed up corresponding to the demands of the work. Moreover, there is also no corresponding increase in the number of people in the AFAD Secretariat, which continues to remain very skeletal until the present.

Quantitatively, the membership has increased resulting in a louder voice – loud enough to be heard. Qualitatively, the collective work of the Federation’s members vis-à-vis the individual demands of their work in the national level needs a lot of improvement. A balance between the work of individual members in their respective countries and the demands of regional and international work has to be achieved if AFAD is to be true to its very reason for existence.

The AFAD Council regularly convenes itself both during its annual meeting as well as during its special meetings done every time members see each other in joint activities held in Asia. Such regularity of meetings has enabled the Federation to be updated on both the external and internal situation of its members. But considering the fact that member-organizations are based in different countries, regularity of communication has to be firmed up. The capacity of each member-organization to communicate to the Secretariat and to each other varies from one organization to another. But in general, communication by email, which is the cheapest and fastest means of communication, still needs a lot of improvement.

AFAD still has to prove itself to be a federation collectively led by the general membership, through the Council. However, in between meetings, the burden of the leadership, coupled with the demands for service and coordination, lies in the Secretary-General. The need for the rest of the AFAD officers and Council members to function as a leading body not only during meetings but also in between meetings still need to be improved. The Secretary-General needs a lot of support from the officers and members of the Council. Overburdened by office work, she also needs support from additional skilled people within the office, who are not necessarily working as regular basis, but on a contractual basis.

Moreover, AFAD has to seriously look into the long-term needs of the federation – the continuity of its work vis-à-vis the need for second liners. As the struggle against involuntary disappearances is long-drawn, it is but imperative for the Federation to seriously consider this matter.

The foundation of the work of the Federation has to be strengthened. It has already accomplished much in a short period - considering that it is only five and a half years in existence. All these accomplishments have to be raised to a higher level and this can only be realized if the Federation is ready not only in responding to its immediate needs, but to the long term need for sustainability of efforts for the attainment of its long term direction of combating impunity and achieving justice.

111. ACTIVITIES

On Leadership and Administration

1. AFAD Council Meetings

- 1.1 Special Council Meeting – January 28-31, 2003, Manila, Philippines – AFAD conducted a Special Council Meeting in Manila, Philippines in January 2003 immediately after holding the AFAD Leadership Training funded by the *EED*. The agenda of the meeting included the preparations for AFAD's participation to the 59th session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and ironing out internal problems vis-à-vis its member-organization in Sri Lanka. It was a very important meeting considering that both agenda needed to be thoroughly discussed in a meeting and which is not possible to be decided upon through communications by email.

To note, special council meetings are always done whenever AFAD Council members have the opportunity to meet.

- 1.2 Regular Council Meeting –April 2003, Geneva, Switzerland – AFAD held its Council meeting in Geneva, Switzerland on the occasion of the 59th session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. As in any other regular Council meeting, the agenda of the meeting included regular planning for the year and approval of the budget for 2003. Because the Second AFAD Congress was then drawing to a close, the Council included as a major agenda the preparations for the AFAD Congress. The meeting lasted for three days considering that it also included reporting of each member organization and that the internal problem of its member-organization in Sri Lanka which affected the Federation also consumed a lot of time.

2. Leadership Training, February 23-28, 2003, Manila, Philippines - Through the generous support of *EED*, AFAD was able to conduct a three-

pronged activity – the public forum, which was the opening event of the public forum, the leadership training (which is the main event) and the special Council meeting.

It is important to note that the leadership training was participated in by all AFAD members and was able to achieve the following objectives:

1. the projection of the phenomenon of involuntary disappearances to the general public, which was attended by some three hundred people from the different sectors of society, including members of the diplomatic community and the media.
 2. the strengthening of AFAD's relations with the National Commission on Human Rights in the Philippines;
 3. the identification of existing potentials and the upgrading of skills to leaders and second-liners of the Federation;
 4. the identification of grey areas of the national organizations and the Federation and the strengthening of cooperation among member-organizations, between the members and the Regional Secretariat and among members of the AFAD Council;
 5. the identification of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats at all levels, e.g. self, national organizations, Regional Federation and come up with an initial summing-up of the AFAD performance was used as one of the bases of the Three-Year General Plan of Action approved by the 2nd AFAD Congress to be held in Bangkok;
 6. the attainment of a certain degree of camaraderie among AFAD Council members, leaders and second liners;
 7. the attainment of important organizational decisions.
3. **Secretariat Planning** – The AFAD Secretariat conducted its own plan for 2004 based on the draft AFAD Council plan for 2003. The plan was reviewed after the AFAD Council finalized its plan for the year 2004. The secretariat, in view of its role as the center for service and coordination, made its plan in accordance with the said role. It assessed the implementation of its plan at the middle of the year and made some adjustments of its plan for the second half of the year.
4. **External Audit** – AFAD's external audit was done at the beginning of the year. It was finished at the beginning of February and submitted to HIVOS in February. The external audit included the all the funds that AFAD received in 2002, but did not yet include the then newly received funds from *EED* because aside from the fact that it was received only in November, it was also because requested for a separate audit. HIVOS however, later pointed out that the *EED* funds should have also been included in the audit considering the fact that the contract between HIVOS and AFAD states that the audit should

include all the funds that AFAD received. This matter however, was clarified after the AFAD Secretary – General gave further information re. the funds that AFAD received from *EED*.

5. **Staff Development Activities** - Staff development activities were conducted by the AFAD Secretariat in the course of the year. These included team-building, writers' training for the publication assistant and other activities vis-à-vis relating with the media. The AFAD Secretariat members, knowing the regional scope of its work, made sure that it attended some activities of FIND in order to be rooted in the struggles of the families of the disappeared in its base country.
6. **Regular Planning and Assessment-** Planning and assessment are part of AFAD's regular administrative work. Hence, there are done in both levels – the Council and the Secretariat. The one year plan was done at the beginning of the year and the assessment was done by the Council in August – on the occasion of Second Congress. A three-year plan was also conducted during the AFAD Congress, the results of which serve as basis of the work of AFAD in the next three years.
7. **Second AFAD Congress, August 26-30, 2003, Bangkok, Thailand** – The Second Congress of AFAD was successfully conducted and had achieved the following objectives:
 - a. The organizing of a public forum in order to inform the public about the regional and international phenomenon of involuntary disappearances;
 - b. The presentation of the issue of disappearances in the countries represented by AFAD.
 - c. The review of the socio-political, economic and cultural situation of Asia, with focus on human rights and involuntary disappearances.
 - d. The revision and ratification of AFAD Statutes (AFAD Constitution and by-laws)
 - e. The formulation of a three-year General Plan of Action;
 - f. The election of a new set of AFAD Council members and officers;
 - g. The learning of lessons from Latin America, Africa and Europe;
 - h. The visit of families of the disappeared during the International Week of the Disappeared.

All the AFAD members were present. Representatives from FEDEFAM and Linking Solidarity were also present during the occasion.

(Note: A complete proceedings of the AFAD Congress were distributed to the Congress delegates and to partners of AFAD.)

The AFAD Congress was made possible through the indispensable support of Non-Violence International and the Relatives Committee of the May 1992 Heroes.

8. **Fund-raising -** Considering that the Secretary-General was overburdened with other tasks, additional resources raised during the year, aside from the funds from HIVOS and *EED* were not much. AFAD was able to receive a grant from The Royal Netherlands Embassy for the creation of its website and the purchase of a new office computer. This amount has helped a lot in terms of the promotion of the Federation and acquisition of a new computer that has, to a large measure, facilitated the work of the secretariat.

At the end of the year, however, the Secretary General submitted new proposals to the following:

United Nations Voluntary Funds for Victims of Torture – for the realization of the Sharing of Experiences of Families of the Disappeared from seven Asian countries with the participation of representatives of families of the disappeared from Latin America and Africa.

Royal Netherlands Embassy - for the realization of the Video Production Program of AFAD, which aims to depict the phenomenon of involuntary disappearances in Asia and the work of AFAD.

OAK Foundation – to augment the funds being committed by HIVOS to AFAD for the comprehensive implementation of its work.

Embassy of Finland – to augment the funds that HIVOS gave for the gender sensitivity conference and for the commemoration of the International Week of the Disappeared in the Philippines.

SIDA – for the comprehensive implementation of the work of AFAD considering that the funds from HIVOS are limited.

French embassy – ticket for AFAD’s participation to the January 2004 session of the United Nations open-ended working group for a draft legally-binding normative instrument for the protection of all persons from enforced or involuntary disappearances. (Note: The proposal was approved at the beginning of 2004 just before the trip to Geneva).

NOTE: Most of the above-proposals still await decisions by the prospective donors/partners.

9. **Reporting to funding agencies** - AFAD submits regular reports to its partners – summarized mid-year report and year-end reports as well as

financial reports. Reports on major specific activities, e.g. Leadership Training, AFAD Congress, etc. were submitted to AFAD's partners from time to time for them to be updated of the Federation's developments. Partners are also

COMPONENTS OF WORK:

International Solidarity

1. **Participation in the Conference of Human Rights Organizations Sponsored by Linking Solidarity in February 2003 in Pretoria, South Africa** - AFAD, through its Secretary-General, participated in the conference on enforced or involuntary disappearances sponsored by Linking Solidarity. It is part of the series of conferences held in Africa for the purpose of establishing a network against involuntary disappearances in the continent. The AFAD Secretary-General gave a speech of the phenomenon of enforced or involuntary disappearances in Asia and the process of forming the federation. Moreover, she actively took part in the planning process by sharing the AFAD experience.

This was the second of the series of conferences. The first was held in Cotonou, Benin, West Africa.

2. **Participation in the Conference of Human Rights Organizations Sponsored by Linking Solidarity in June 2003 Arusha, Tanzania, East Africa** – the third and the last of the series of conferences in Africa completed the whole process of laying the foundation for the formation of the African Network Against Disappearances. For the third time, AFAD, through its Secretary-General, participated in the said conference. The conference was principally a workshop type wherein a more thorough discussion on the eventual formation of an African federation against disappearances was done. Indeed, the conference resulted in the formation of *RADIF*, the African Network Against Disappearances.

It is important to note that AFAD's participation in these series of conferences was appreciated by the African human rights organizations involved in the whole process. They of course, also appreciated the participation of *FEDEFAM* through Mr. Patricio Rice.

3. **Visit to Jakarta and Molo, Indonesia in June 2003-** In an effort to also monitor the work of the newly formed Association of Families of the Disappeared in Indonesia (*IKOHI*), which was then applying for membership to AFAD, the AFAD Secretary-General visited the families of the disappeared both in Jakarta and in Molo, Indonesia.

During this occasion, the Secretary-General attended the conference held in Jakarta attended by victims of the Tanjung Priok massacre which discussed about the plan to file

the case in court. Furthermore, she also went to Molo, Indonesia, together with representatives from *IKOHI* and *KontraS* in order to personally participate in one of their rehabilitation activities funded by *EED*.

One of the objectives of the visit was also to prepare for the Second Congress of AFAD, which then was soon to be convened in August 2003.

4. **Visit to the families of the disappeared in Bangkok, Thailand during the International Day of the Disappeared** – To culminate the Second AFAD Congress and to commemorate the International Week of the Disappeared, the Congress delegates visited a couple of houses of the families of the victims of the disappeared in Thailand. The visit was a concrete act of solidarity by the whole AFAD Congress to the Relatives Committee of the May 1992 Heroes and a way to meaningfully commemorate the International Day of the Disappeared.

The visits were very moving in the sense that families of the disappeared in Kashmir, for example, who did not speak the language of the Thai families of the disappeared, embraced each other as a gesture of solidarity.

5. **Visit to Kashmir, India in October 2003**– More than five years after AFAD was founded, the Federation made a breakthrough by visiting Kashmir through its Secretary-General. The area had never been visited prior to this because of the severe security situation in the area. But the AFAD Council deemed it fit that Kashmir be visited in order that AFAD can see the actual situation and to bolster the morale of the families of the victims. Munir, the AFAD Chairperson and the AFAD Secretary-General were supposed to go to Kashmir together, but due to inevitable circumstances, only the Secretary-General was able to go.

The visit to Kashmir enabled the Secretary-General to personally see the situation of the families of the disappeared in Kashmir in the context of its socio-economic and political situation in the area, monitor the implementation of its scholarship program sponsored by *EED* and to personally present the work of AFAD to the families of the victims.

6. **Participation in the FEDEFAM Congress held in November 2003 in Guatemala City**– The AFAD Secretary-General participated in the 17th Congress of *FEDEFAM* and delivered a speech (with recent slides of the families of the disappeared from seven Asian countries) in Spanish on the phenomenon of involuntary disappearances in Asia and the work of AFAD. AFAD's presence in this Congress manifested its continuing solidarity to the families of the disappeared in Latin America. It was also an opportunity for AFAD to project its situation and its work through its participation in the press conference.

AFAD was also able to participate in the internal meeting of *FEDEFAM*, which includes initial discussion of its strategic plan wherein AFAD could see possible areas of coordination, especially in the aspect of lobbying. Concretely, AFAD requested *FEDEFAM* to support them in their lobbying efforts for the achievement of its own consultative status in the near future.

7. **Rehabilitation for the families of the disappeared** - A new endeavor of the Federation is direct assistance for the families of the disappeared. AFAD member-organizations from Kashmir, India, Indonesia, Pakistan and the Philippines have been benefited from this new endeavor through the generous support of *EED*.

The following rehabilitation activities were conducted by AFAD member-organizations in 2003:

- a. Scholarship program for 60 children of the disappeared whose relatives are members of the Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons in Kashmir, India;
- b. Rehabilitation activities (therapy sessions) for the elderly members of the Families of Victims of Involuntary Disappearance (FIND) - Philippines;
- c. Therapy sessions for the families of the disappeared in Indonesia;
- d. Livelihood projects for the families of the disappeared in Pakistan;

Based on the reports of the above-mentioned organizations, the program has been very much appreciated by the families of the disappeared and has helped a lot in terms of empowering the families and eliciting their participation to the work of their respective organizations and of AFAD.

International Lobby

1. **Participation in the First Session of the Open Ended Working Group for the Elaboration of a Draft Legally – Binding Normative Instrument For The Protection of All Persons from Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances held in January 2003 in Geneva, Switzerland**- AFAD, through its Secretary-General and another member of the AFAD Secretariat who is a lawyer and a daughter of the disappeared participated in the first session of the open-ended working group for a draft treaty protecting persons from enforced or involuntary disappearances. Through the two delegates, AFAD was able to intervene on important provisions of the draft, e.g. definition, protection against impunity, prevention, etc. Participating under the name of *FEDEFAM*, which has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council, AFAD also coordinated with *FEDEFAM* on important provisions of the text.
2. **Participation in the 59th session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights held in April 2003 in Geneva, Switzerland**-As its annual major international lobbying endeavor, AFAD participated in the 59th session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights held in Geneva, Switzerland. Lobbying activities conducted during the occasion included the following:

2.1 meetings with the governments of Indonesia, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand were made for the purpose of presenting the situation of disappearances in Asia and

lobbying for the governments' support on the draft treaty protecting persons from enforced disappearances;

2.2 oral interventions done by two of AFAD's member organizations, FIND and *KontraS* and *IKOHI* (in the name of NOVIB which shared to the latter its consultative status).

2.3 parallel activity on disappearances in cooperation with FEDEFAM, which shared AFAD its consultative status.

2.4 meeting with the Chairperson and Secretary-General of the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances.

AFAD's presence at the United Nations is very important as this gives a voice to the families of the disappeared in Asia and this gives a message especially to the governments of Asia that the phenomenon of enforced or involuntary disappearances is an Asian reality.

To note, a comprehensive report on the activities above-cited in paragraphs a and b is published in the September 2003 issue of *The Voice*.

3. **Participation in the Informal Session of the Open Ended Working Group for the Elaboration of a Draft Legally-Binding Normative Instrument for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances held in September 2003 in Geneva, Switzerland-** AFAD, through its Secretary-General, participated in the informal session of the open-ended working group for the draft treaty protecting persons from enforced or involuntary disappearances. This was done immediately after the AFAD Congress, which culminated on August 30. This session of the open-ended working group for the draft treaty on disappearances was held on the first week of September.

As in the previous session of the same body held in January, the AFAD Secretary-General also intervened on important provisions of the draft.

4. **Diplomatic briefing to the local diplomatic community in Manila -** To complement the lobbying efforts in the international level, the AFAD Secretary-General and the Executive and Publication Assistant visited the following foreign embassies in Manila: The Royal Netherlands Embassy; the Embassy of Finland; the Embassy of Belgium, the Embassy of France, Embassy of Canada, the European Union. These were concrete efforts to present the phenomenon of enforced or involuntary disappearances in Asia and to present the work of AFAD.
5. **Support to the efforts of the Families of Victims of Involuntary Disappearance (FIND) for the approval of the anti-enforced or involuntary disappearance bill and for the release of funds from the House of Representatives for the families of the disappeared in the Philippines -** The AFAD Secretariat had been attending activities

related to the lobbying for the enactment of a Philippine law criminalizing disappearances. These activities were done both in the House of Congress and in the Philippine Commission on Human Rights. AFAD also supported FIND in its effort to lobby for the speedy release of funds from the House of representatives for the families of the disappeared in the Philippines.

International Campaign and Public Information

1. **Timely Production of *The Voice*, AFAD's official publication** - AFAD came up with its timely publication of two issues of *The Voice*. The issues came in April and September. The April 2003 issue was released in time for the 59th session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and the September 2003 issue was released in time for the Second Congress of AFAD and the open-ended working group for a draft legally-binding normative instrument for the protection of all persons from enforced or involuntary disappearances.
2. **Issuance of official statements on important occasions** – AFAD issued statements on important traditionally commemorated occasions as well as urgent actions on individual cases. It was however noted during the Secretariat assessment that there were cases wherein the Federation was not able to respond urgently. Although in matters related to member-organizations, e.g. the hunger strike of the families of the disappeared in Kashmir and the raid of the *KontraS/IKOHI* office, the AFAD Secretariat and AFAD members were able to respond immediately.
3. **Synchronized solidarity actions of the AFAD Secretariat and the AFAD member-organizations to support the hunger strike of the Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons in Kashmir, India** – As agreed by the Council during its meeting in April, AFAD member organizations in Hong Kong and Indonesia staged pickets in front of the Indian Consulate/Embassy in their respective capitals. The Organization of Parents and Family Members of the Disappeared in Sri Lanka later staged a picket in front of the Indian Embassy in Colombo during the International Week of the Disappeared. The AFAD Secretariat with the rest of the member-organizations wrote letters to Indian authorities demanding for a stop to the on-going phenomenon of enforced disappearances in Kashmir. Solidarity letters to the families of the victims were also written, which, to a large measure, had bolstered the morale of the families of the victims.
4. **Joint Commemoration of the International Week of the Disappeared (last week of May 2003)-** AFAD member-organizations conducted different forms of activities on the occasion of the International Week of the Disappeared. Activities came in forms of tree planting, public fora, press conferences, etc. AFAD also issued a central statement for this important occasion.

To note, on the first day of the commemoration of the event, the office of *KontraS /IKOHI* was raided, during which, most of the AFAD members were able to issue statements of condemnation and letters to the Indonesian authorities.

A detailed article on the commemoration of the International Week of the Disappeared was published in the September 2003 issue of *The Voice*.

5. **Creation of a Website/Commemoration of AFAD's 6th anniversary and the 14th anniversary of the Tiananmen Massacre, June 4, 2003, Manila, Philippines** – Through the financial support of The Royal Netherlands Embassy, AFAD was able to create its own website (<http://www.afad-online.org>) and was launched on the occasion of its 6th anniversary and the 14th anniversary of the Tiananmen massacre. The AFAD Secretariat took the initiative of convening a small event, attended by some 80 people from the members of FIND and members from the NGO community. A small program was prepared to celebrate AFAD's anniversary and a Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was then offered for the victims of the Tiananmen Massacre. On this occasion, AFAD received 30 messages of solidarity from organizations in different continents.
6. **Joint Commemoration of the International Day of the Disappeared** – To culminate the Second Congress of AFAD, the Congress delegates visited a couple of families of the disappeared in Thailand. An opening prayer for all the disappeared throughout the world was said during the last day of the Congress, just before the evaluation. After which, the delegates made these visits to these two families who were touched by the presence of families of the disappeared from different parts of Asia.

A congress poster with a background of the disappeared all over the world was also printed and distributed to AFAD members and other international network.

7. **Coordination with other Philippine-based human rights organizations**

Because AFAD is based in the Philippines, it has also to coordinate with other Philippine-based organizations. Thus, it attends meetings called for by other organizations such as Claimants 1081, Center for Legislative Development, FIND, etc.

It attends activities of these organizations and also invite the latter to attend AFAD's activities.

1V. MAJOR INVESTMENTS OF THE FEDERATION

In terms of asset acquisition, AFAD was able to purchase the following office equipment through the financial support of *EED* and of The Royal Netherlands Embassy:

- a. photocopying machine – funded by *EED*
- b. laser printer – funded by *EED*
- c. new office notebook – funded by *EED*
- d. tape recorder – funded by *EED*
- e. video camera – funded by *EED*
- f. scanner – funded by *EED*
- g. desk top computer – funded by The Royal Netherlands Embassy

The above-mentioned office equipment has facilitated the work of the AFAD Secretariat especially so because the secretariat, being skeletal, needs the technical facilities to do the work.

V. DEVELOPMENTS IN NETWORKING ACTIVITIES OF AFAD

AFAD sustains its cooperation with *FEDEFAM* and the newly established African Network Against Disappearances (*RADIF*). It also maintains its relations with the Fenix of Croatia, which is affiliated with the Union of Associations of Missing Defenders in the former Yugoslavia. This is in as far as the issue of enforced or involuntary disappearances is concerned.

Being based in the Philippines, AFAD also maintains good relations with other non-government organizations based in Manila. Moreover, it gives information through publication and visitations to foreign embassies based in Manila, most of which are European embassies.

More recently, AFAD works with Forum Asia and the Committee for the International Criminal Court as it co-sponsored with the said organizations the First Asian Victims' Forum on the International Criminal Court. It thus, gave AFAD a better projection in the national, regional and international levels.

In 2003 also, AFAD became an affiliate member of CONGO – NGOs in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. Although it does not have a consultative status of its own, AFAD was accepted as a member in the status of affiliate. The head of CONGO, Ms. Renate Bloem

V1. **ORGANIZATION'S RELATIONS WITH LOCAL AND OR NATIONAL AUTHORITIES AND OTHER DONORS**

AFAD's relations with local and or national authorities are sustained through its networking efforts, e.g. dissemination of information through the email, its new website and its bi-monthly magazine, *The Voice*; the initiatives of member-organizations to relate with the different governmental bodies. Relations with governmental bodies vary from country to country. The organizations, which relate regularly with governmental bodies *KontraS* and *IKOHI* of Indonesia, FIND-Philippines, OPFMD – Sri Lanka and the Relatives Committee of the May 1992 Heroes of Thailand. They relate for instance with the parliament, the Justice Department and the national commissions on human rights.

The organizations in China, India, Pakistan, for one reason or another, do not relate with government agencies in their respective countries for varying reasons which generally relate to security as well as the glaring animosity between them and their governments.

In the case of Kashmir, AFAD member-organizations wrote letters to the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations in Geneva and in New York and to the Indian embassies/consulates in their respective capitals. Also, as earlier mentioned, pickets were held in front of these embassies/consulate to support the hunger strike of the families of the disappeared in Kashmir.

The same is true with the Indonesian government. AFAD also sent letters to the Permanent Mission of Indonesia to the United Nations in Geneva after the office of *KontraS* was raided.

Moreover, in as far as the Philippine government is concerned, AFAD wrote letters to both Lower and the Upper Houses of Congress and to the Office of the President asking the Philippine authorities to expedite the enactment of a law criminalizing disappearances.

While AFAD did not receive any response from these authorities, from the meetings it had with the different delegations to the United Nations in Geneva, it is certain that because of such letters, AFAD is known to them. Having carried one strong voice in the Asian region, AFAD's voice was heard.

In terms of relationship with other donors, so far, HIVOS, *EED* and The Royal Netherlands embassy were the partners of the Federation for the year 2003. The additional funds received from other sources, aside from the funds that HIVOS committed, have to a large measure, contributed the implementation of the work of the federation vis-à-vis its increasing demands.

Efforts to forge partnership with other organizations, as earlier mentioned in this report, were done towards the last quarter of the year and it is hoped that such efforts will garner some fruits for the year 2004 and the succeeding years.

V11. **ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND FAILURES VIS-À-VIS TARGETS**

In terms of international solidarity, AFAD was able to make a dent in two levels – within Asia and with Africa and Latin America. In the Asian level, AFAD was able to continue to make its presence felt especially in countries where it conducted joint activities, e.g. in the Philippines and in Thailand.

V111. **IMPACT OF THE ACTIVITIES ON THE TARGET GROUP**

lx. **CONCLUSION AND EVALUATIONS FROM THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL EVALUATIONS**