



2003 ANNUAL REPORT

HURIDOCS, Villa Montfleury, 48 chemin du Grand-Montfleury, 1290 Versoix, Switzerland

Tel: 41.22.755-5252 / Fax: 41.22.755-5260

e-mail: info@huridocs.org / website: <http://www.huridocs.org>

I. INTRODUCTION

HURIDOCS is a global network of groups and individuals concerned with improving methods of human rights monitoring, documentation and information handling.

In 2003, HURIDOCS aimed to make its services more effective by giving more attention to its programme planning, monitoring and evaluation capability. The main groupings of activities that HURIDOCS carried out in 2003 were:

1. strategic planning and establishment of a monitoring and evaluation system
2. continued implementation of programme activities

The continued implementation of programme activities, especially in terms of training, was done given that HURIDOCS has continued to receive requests for training and support from different organisations from all over the world, and that numerous activities have already been lined up since the past years.

II. STRATEGIC PLANNING

HURIDOCS carried out a strategic planning process that lasted several months during 2003. The aim was to produce a three-year plan to guide the network from 2004 to 2006.

The planning process was mainly carried out by the HURIDOCS Continuation Committee with the aid of the Secretariat. In May 2003, the Continuation Committee met and approved the general methodology of the planning process. An external consultant, Ms. Hanne Lund Madsen, was engaged to help.

The Secretariat collected relevant information such as analyses of the current global situation and the prospects for human rights. Other members of the network were involved in the process, such as selected members of the HURIDOCS International Advisory Committee who were asked to provide regional assessments. Fellow international NGOs in Geneva were also consulted, namely, *Association for the Prevention of Torture*, *International Commission of Jurists*, *International Council on Human Rights Policy*, *International Service for Human Rights* and *Organisation Mondiale contre la Torture*.

After the collection of relevant information, the Continuation Committee again met in November 2003 to formulate the three-year strategic plan. The result is the document *HURIDOCS Strategic Plan for 2004 to 2006*.

The strategic plan has defined the mission and objectives of HURIDOCS, as well as identified some indicators of performance in regard of the objectives. Hence, the strategic plan has laid down the basis for the establishment of a monitoring and evaluation system, on which HURIDOCS will work further in 2004.

III. PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES

A. TRAINING PROGRAMME

1. Training in Ghana

From February to March 2003, the *Legon Centre for International Affairs* of the University of Ghana carried out the *Programme on Peacebuilding and Good Governance for African Civilian Personnel* which aimed to train personnel who could be readily deployed where needed as part of post-conflict arrangements. Manuel Guzman, HURIDOCS Executive Director, was one of the resource persons, speaking on the subject of human rights fact-finding, on 4 and 5 February 2004.

2. Training course in Nigeria

As part of the plan following the trainers' training course for Anglophone Africa held in Uganda in 2000, a training course was held in Nigeria in March 2003. The course was organised by the *Legal Research and Resource Development Centre* (LRRDC) based in Lagos, Nigeria. Bankole Olubamise of LRRDC, who had been a participant in the Uganda course, made use of what he learned in organising the Nigeria course. He was assisted by the HURIDOCS Secretariat through provision of software, manuals and training materials, as well as necessary advice for running the course.

The course focused on human rights information work, including running a human rights library, and involved eleven participants from Nigeria and the Gambia.

3. National training course in Georgia

This course was conducted from 1 to 6 June 2003 in collaboration with the *Human Rights Information and Documentation Center* (HRIDC), a NGO based in Tbilisi, Georgia. The course was held in Likani, Georgia and involved 15 participants, most of whom were from Tbilisi, but there were as well some from the regions such as Rustavi and Telavi.

The aim of the course was to create a qualified group of practitioners in human rights information handling and documentation. The topics that were covered were documentation of human rights violations and the administration of documentation centres. The programme included training on the use of WinEvsys, the HURIDOCS-developed software used for monitoring human rights violations. James Lawson, HURIDOCS board member, and Ion Iacos, staff of the *International Council for Rehabilitation of Torture Victims*, were the resource persons.

The discussions were related to and taken in the context of the work of the participants. They were asked to share their experiences in defending human rights. They also exchanged problems faced during their daily work.

The participants all agreed that the course was a success and warmly thanked HRIDC and HURIDOCS for organizing it. The following recommendations were adopted to ensure a follow-up to the session:

- The participants carry out follow-up by giving training within their own organisations

- as well as for other groups in the country;
- The participants will remain in contact through a mailing list;
- The programme should be enlarged to cover the Caucasus regions and the participants should try to arrange the trainings for local as well as for regional NGOs;
- The participants agreed to add local indexes and other local terms to the WinEvsys
- The participants expressed the desire to translate WinEvsys into Georgian to make it more usable for Georgian NGOs.

4. Training for Iranian human rights workers

On 8 April 2003, eight persons from the *Organisation for Defending Victims of Violence* (ODVV) based in Iran spent a whole day at the HURIDOCS Secretariat and received an overview of HURIDOCS' activities and tools. Everybody agreed to carry the process further by working to hold a training course in Iran for a longer period and with wider participation. The training focus will be on the tools for documentation of human rights violations and on the use of the Internet.

5. Training for the Swiss and German sections of the Society for Threatened Peoples

From 14 to 17 July 2003, Hanspeter Bigler and Eva Schmassmann from the Swiss section and Sarah Reinke from the German section of the *Society for Threatened Peoples* spent four days in Geneva at the HURIDOCS office for a training on the HURIDOCS tools for monitoring human rights violations. A Chechen human rights activist who was in Geneva at that time joined the group for one day. The group also got important inputs from the activist's own work in Chechnya.

Shortly after, the Swiss section of the *Society for Threatened Peoples* already started using the HURIDOCS WinEvsys program for daily entry of data about violations in Chechnya.

6. Training for activists in the indigenous peoples' network

Over the past several years, a number of non-governmental organisations representing indigenous peoples have been meeting during the sessions of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP) and the Intersessional Working Group on a Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. These NGOs have come together to form the Documentary Network of Indigenous People (DNIP)

During the meeting of DNIP in Geneva last September 2003, the HURIDOCS Secretariat provided an overview of the various tools that can be adapted for use in monitoring the rights of indigenous peoples. DNIP agreed to hold a more focused training activity in 2004, and possibly even beyond, for its members.

7. Training course in Haiti

As part of the plan following the training course held in the previous year, a training course was held in Haiti in August 2003. The course was supported by the *UN Development Programme* and involved the teaching of tools for documenting human rights violations. The main resource person was Jean Baptiste Azolin of *Haiti Solidarité International* who had taken part in the Francophone trainers' training course held in Senegal in December 2002. The HURIDOCS Secretariat gave support to the course by

providing software, manuals and training materials, as well the necessary advice with respect to the topics that were covered.

The course was attended by 16 participants representing six Haitian NGOs.

8. Internship from Malawi

The HURIDOCS Secretariat received as intern from 29 September to 10 October Brian Chadza, documentalist of the *Office of the Ombudsman of Malawi*. Brian received extensive training on the use of the bibliographic standard formats and the WinISIS software. He was given the assignment to produce an indexing list and classification scheme. He also received inputs on useful Internet sites and on the basics of website development.

9. HURIDOCS Training Manual

HURIDOCS has continued to develop its training manual which contains 26 training modules, especially in the area of improving, updating, and producing new training aids such as video clips, slides, transparencies, illustrations, etc. Translation into Spanish has been started.

B. TOOLS, STANDARDS AND TECHNIQUES DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

1. HuriSearch

HuriSearch is the search engine being developed by HURIDOCS meant to improve searching for human rights information on the Web. A Norwegian computer company called FAST has been engaged for its development. A pilot version was launched in the last week of April. As the pilot version was being tested, further development was undertaken. This led to the public launching of HuriSearch in July, made through announcement on mailing lists and Web sites of HURIDOCS and other organisations.

Since its launching, more than 900 additional sites which carry human rights information produced by NGOS were identified and were gradually being included for indexing. As of the end of the year, HuriSearch has been enabled to allow searching in 58 languages.

2. Assessment of the needs of Special Rapporteurs and treaty-monitoring bodies

In September 2003, Manuel Guzman, HURIDOCS Executive Director, met with key staff of the *Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights* who provide administrative assistance to Special Rapporteurs and treaty-monitoring bodies. The aim of the meeting was to get to know the problems faced by the staff in regard of communications they receive from human rights NGOs. The meeting was very positive and an agreement was reached for further collaboration that will lead to improvement of the functioning of the UN bodies in question.

3. WinEvsys Development

WinEvsys is the Access-run software developed by HURIDOCS that can be used in building a database on human rights violations. In 2003, the HURIDOCS Secretariat continued to coordinate with programmer Ricardo Cifuentes regarding its further

development. Also, the WinEvsys Design Team consisting of Ricardo Cifuentes, Judith Dueck, Romilly Gregory, James Lawson and Manuel Guzman met in August 2003 to discuss future directions for the software.

WinEvsys was further improved with the development of a "light" version. This is a version where the structure of the database is reduced to the most basic formats. It is seen as the most appropriate model for most human rights NGOs. In addition, if the user so decide, the new WinEvsys can be configured with the full set of formats. The new WinEvsys was also improved in terms of its outputs, such as in allowing searches with multiple conditions and producing various forms of reports and statistics.

4. Monitoring economic, social and cultural rights

HURIDOCS and the Science and Human Rights Programme of the *American Association for the Advancement of Science* (AAAS) have teamed up in a project to develop tools for monitoring economic, social and cultural rights. In 2003, more tools were produced under the project.

The *Thesaurus on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* was translated to French by Bert Verstappen and Pauline Desnuelles. Lay-out was started for its eventual inclusion in a CD-ROM.

The writing and editing of three rights-specific manuals – those on the right to health, right to food and right to work – were finished in 2003. The next step is to do the necessary lay-out for publishing. It is also planned to produce in 2004 a CD-ROM that will contain all the products developed under the HURIDOCS-AAAS project.

5. Popular manuals on human rights monitoring and documentation

The *Human Rights Monitoring and Documentation Series* consist of brief practical manuals aimed to help build the capacity of human rights organisations with regard to monitoring and documentation.

Seven volumes of the series came out in print during the summer of 2003. These are *What is Monitoring* (English, Spanish and Russian editions) and *What is Documentation* (English, French, Spanish and Russian editions). The lay-out of three other volumes was finished, and printing is planned for 2004. These are the English, French and Spanish editions of *How to Record Names of Persons*.

The Secretariat in the meantime continued work on other how-to manuals. Being written were *How to Index*, *What is Factfinding* and *What is Information Handling*.

6. XML for human rights

About fifteen individuals and organisations with knowledge of XML (extended mark-up language, a language used in preparation of web pages) and human rights have responded positively to the Call for Interest posted by HURIDOCS last year. HURIDOCS has named James Lawson, one of its board members, to head the group which will discuss ways to harness XML for human rights information work.

7. HuriTools

HURIDOCS has put together a number of documents and tools and produced CD-ROMs containing these. This collection is called HuriTools. An updated version, HuriTools 1.2, was released for distribution in 2003. Among the contents of HuriTools are:

- general materials: brochures, annual reports, latest newsletter issues, etc.
- books and manuals, including the Revised Events Standard Formats, Microthesauri, Bibliographic Standard Formats and some how-to manuals
- WinEvsys
- relevant articles and papers (e.g., a sample classification system)

C. INFORMATION AND OUTREACH PROGRAMME

1. IGOs

In 2003, HURIDOCS was granted Consultative Status by ECOSOC. This is its third such kind of status in relation to inter-governmental bodies. Earlier, it has been accorded Observer Status by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and Operational Relations Status by UNESCO.

2. HURIDOCS newsletter

The HURIDOCS Secretariat reviewed the HURIDOCS newsletter and undertook a substantial revision of its contents and style in 2002. The first issue with the new design came out in 2003.

The redesigned newsletter has started to become truly a newsletter for all the network members, carrying regular columns such as news within the network, current developments affecting human rights, updates on tools, reports on training, etc.

3. Website

Like its newsletter, the HURIDOCS website also underwent a major re-designing, to feature more news about the network, as well as provide more practical information, such as on tools that users can download. The design was improved to facilitate navigation among the pages.

4. Electronic mailing lists

HURIDOCS continued to maintain two public mailing lists, in order to allow sharing of information among participants in the network. The list [huridocs-gen-l](#) contains announcements of activities and other general messages. The list [huridocs-tech](#), hosted by the *Human Rights Education Associates* in the United States, contains messages about development in information technology and how they affect human rights, including issues like technical developments, freedom of expression and privacy. HURIDOCS also continued providing help to the network of NGOS dealing with the issue of health of indigenous peoples by maintaining the list [indi-health](#).

5. Information pack on HURIDOCS

HURIDOCS has produced an information pack that consists of an overview of HURIDOCS, description of its current projects, introduction to its tools, an account of its achievements, etc. This information pack has been used to aid in training, in fund-raising activities, in activities covered by the media, and in other events involving the promotion of HURIDOCS.

D. NETWORKING AND INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

1. Regional Networking

The 26th meeting of the *European Coordination Committee on Human Rights Documentation* (ECCHRD) was organised by the *European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia* (EUMC), Vienna, in collaboration with the *Netherlands Institute of Human Rights* (SIM) in Utrecht, acting as secretariat for the ECCHRD. The meeting was held at Hotel Ibis in Vienna on May 22 and 23, 2004. Thirty representatives of human rights documentation centres in Europe took part in the meeting. Among the topics discussed were: HuriSearch, developments in thematic documentation such as in regard of racism, the Martus human rights bulletin system, and access to electronic journals.

Jonathan Kuttub, HURIDOCS Continuation Committee member, and Fred Fenniche, HURIDOCS International Advisory Council member, undertook a mission to Tunisia on behalf of HURIDOCS. They met with representatives of the *Arab Institute of Human Rights* to discuss the aim of strengthening the human rights movement in the Arab world. All parties agreed it was necessary to forge a very active partnership and to carry out closer consultation towards the conduct of activities in the region.

2. Thematic networking

The Secretariat continued to provide assistance to the torture documentation network by providing feedback to the *International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims* regarding its plan to set up a global torture victims information system.

3. Secretariat

Manuel Guzman, Bert Verstappen and Nejib Ghali continued to be the mainstay staff of HURIDOCS. Continuing to help the Secretariat as volunteer/contractual staff was Pauline Desnuelles who took charge of translation of several materials into French.

4. Continuation Committee

The Continuation Committee, HURIDOCS' policy-making body in between General Assemblies, met twice during the year. The first meeting was in May 2003, when the Committee reviewed the activities for the year, as well as launching HURIDOCS' strategic planning process. The second meeting was held in November 2003, when the Committee finalised the HURIDOCS Strategic Plan for 2004-2006, made detailed plans for the year 2004 and approved the budget among other things.

5. Resource Mobilisation

In the course of 2003, HURIDOCS received general grants for its programme from the

following donor agencies:

- a. *Norwegian Agency for Development Co-operation* (NORAD)
- b. *Royal Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs*
- c. *Swedish International Development Agency*

The *Department for International Development*, U.K. provided support for the project on monitoring economic, social and cultural rights.

The *International Development Research Centre, Canada* provided a grant which allowed Continuation Committee member Judith Dueck to attend HURIDOCS events within the year.

During 2003, several persons and organisations voluntarily contributed time and expertise to the work of HURIDOCS. HURIDOCS would like to thank all contributors, and in particular the following:

1. the members of the HURIDOCS Continuation Committee
2. the members of the HURIDOCS International Advisory Council
3. the regional networks and their Secretariats, namely:
 - a. the *Arab Human Rights Information Network* (AHRINET) and the *Arab Institute for Human Rights*
 - b. the *Asia-Pacific Committee for Training of Trainers* (ACTT) and the *Coalition against Trafficking in Women* (CATW)
 - c. the *European Human Rights Documentation Coordination Committee* and its Secretariat, the *Netherlands Institute of Human Rights*
 - d. the *Red de Informatica y Documentación en Derechos Humanos para America Latina y el Caribe* (RIDHUALC) and the *Asociación pro Derechos Humanos* (APRODEH)
 - e. the *Human Rights Information Network for Anglophone Africa* (HURINAA) and the *Foundation for Human Rights Initiative*
4. Paulines Desnuelles for serving as a volunteer in the HURIDOCS Secretariat in charge of translating documents into French
5. the *Harold and Selma Light Centre for Human Rights Advocacy* for translation of HURIDOCS materials into Russian
6. the WinEvsys Design Team members, among them Ricardo Cifuentes, Judith Dueck, Romilly Gregory and James Lawson
7. Manuel Guzman, Bert Verstappen, James Lawson, Ion Iacos, Bankole Olubamise and Jean Baptiste Azolin for serving as resource persons in different training activities within the year
8. the *U.N. Development Programme* in Haiti, for supporting the training course in Haiti
9. James Lawson for continuing to work on the HuriSearch search engine
10. *Comlink-Germany* for hosting various HURIDOCS mailing lists and the HURIDOCS Website
11. *Human Rights Education Associates* for hosting and co-ordinating the [huridocs-tech](#) mailing list

IV. CONCLUSION

The training activities showed the progress of HURIDOCS in developing trainers as can be seen in Nigeria and Haiti where trainees in previous years took the leading role in organising the courses and serving as resource persons. HURIDOCS also made considerable gains in tool

development, especially with the launching of HuriSearch. Feedback from users indicate that the HURIDOCS tools have been improved to meet exact needs of human rights organisations.

A major achievement of HURIDOCS within 2003 was the conduct of strategic planning, resulting in a plan for the next years that is very focused and concrete.

It can be noted that the financial income of HURIDOCS has been greatly reduced in comparison to previous years, and there were also delays in the receipt of funds. It was therefore commendable for HURIDOCS to implement a number of activities despite the financial difficulties and the fact that the network devoted much of its time and energy to its strategic planning.