



CONS 584

Mr Don Leeson  
Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission  
Temple Court  
39 North Street  
Belfast BT1 1NA

30 January 2006

Dear Don

### Strategic Plan 2006-2009

NICVA welcomes the opportunity to comment on the draft strategic plan. As part of the commission's role in monitoring and reviewing compliance of law and practice with the Human Rights Act and applicable international human rights standards, we note that the commission is developing an impact assessment framework to help public authorities with their policy development and planning processes. Following the review of human rights education by the University of Ulster we also note that the commission is considering a strategy for delivering training and education, including outreach with local partnerships to engage with the community. The Commission also states that part of its work involves commenting on government reports and engaging with the voluntary and community sector in the treaty monitoring process and that it aims to provide a conduit for information on the impact of legislation, policy and practices for those most directly affected. Furthermore, we note the wide investigations remit ranging from monitoring anti-terrorism law and policing to hate crime and support for minority and vulnerable communities such as older people, LGBT, Travellers, challenging racism and providing support to migrants; we also note that the commission will assess its particular role on these issues in relation to other agencies and organisations and assess how best to make a contribution.

NICVA endorses the objective to promote the Human Rights Act, we welcome the objective to develop resources and support for organisations working in the area of human rights and we appreciate the need to work with public authorities and other organisations which are active in the field, but we would welcome more information about the commission's plans to engage with the voluntary and community sector and the minority and vulnerable communities. We understand from practice in GB that the Human Rights Act can be used to improve legislation and policy, hold public authorities to account and improve standards of public service and we would be interested in more widespread promotion of this approach. NICVA plans to run

several pilot courses on human rights this year with the aim of giving vulnerable people and their representatives the language to get attention and demand better life chances.

We endorse the decision to monitor the jurisprudence of the Human Rights Act and the European Court of Human Rights and we recommend that this work is made widely available as a useful resource for the sector.

NICVA supports the aim of a roundtable with political parties and civic society to reach a consensus on a Bill of Rights. We note the joint work on the Charter of Rights with the Irish Commission and would welcome the commission's view on how this will 'fit' with the proposed Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland.

We would also be grateful for more information about timeframes and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Anne Moore  
Public Affairs Officer