

Dear Friends,

The members of the John F. Kennedy School of Government's Executive Session on Human Rights Commissions and Criminal Justice recently met in Atlanta, Georgia at the site of the first-ever joint annual conference of the International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies (IAOHRA) and the National Association of Human Rights Workers (NAHRW). In case you don't know about us, the Executive Session convenes human rights, civil rights and police leaders from across the United States at Harvard University in a series of discussions and experiments about how to expand the role of human rights commissions in addressing issues of discrimination in U.S. criminal justice systems. I invite you to visit our website, [www.hrccj.org](http://www.hrccj.org), where you can find more information about the project, read a recap of our meetings in Atlanta and download copies of our most recent publications:

\* A Historical Perspective on U.S. Human Rights Commissions (June 2007) provides an overview of the origins and development of U.S. human rights and human relations commissions, discusses characteristics typical of today's commissions and explores some of the challenges they face.

\* Lessons from National Human Rights Institutions Around the World for State and Local Human Rights Commissions in the United States (August 2007) considers ways in which U.S. human rights commissions might adapt approaches used by NHRIs to improve domestic efforts to promote and protect human rights.

\* Performance Measures for Human Rights Commissions (August 2007) discusses strategic issues around performance measurement and provides examples of different approaches several commissions have undertaken to measure performance.

Also available on the website is a transcript from the conference of a special lunchtime talk delivered by Congressman James E. Clyburn, who, before ascending to Majority Whip of the U.S. Congress, served for 17 years as Commissioner with the South Carolina Human Affairs Commission. In Atlanta, I was impressed to hear of many examples of criminal justice-related projects that commissions are involved with throughout the country. I hope to compile as many examples of these as possible; if you have information on projects you are working on, please feel free to call or email me. Best wishes, Marea Beeman Project Coordinator

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