

II A SUMMARY OF OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

We offer the following recommendations for government policy-makers, multilateral organizations, and NGOs aiming to enhance human security while building democracy within the complex cultural diversity of Asian societies.

Rethinking human cultural identities and democratization

Policies should reflect the situational, fluid, overlapping, and multi-layered nature of *all* human identities and the fact that they are formed, contested, maintained, and transformed within a political process in which states, including outside governments, play a part.

The concept of a 'vulnerable community' claiming to be culturally distinct should be used in conjunction with those of 'minority' and 'aboriginal people'.

Policy-makers need to deepen their understanding of democracy well beyond the conventional procedural focus on free, multiparty elections, universal suffrage, and representative assemblies, and the liberal focus on individual civil and political rights, to encompass group rights and recognition and an ideal of public participation in policy processes and other mechanisms to hold economic institutions accountable to social needs.

Promoting democratization

Outside governments and multilateral institutions should not promote procedural democracy and liberal rights without first considering whether they will contribute conflict between groups claiming to be culturally distinct and taking appropriate steps to prevent such conflicts.

On the other hand, policy-makers should be sceptical about claims by authoritarian governments that procedural democracy should be delayed indefinitely in order to avoid communal conflict.

Outside states should meaningfully support moderate ethno-nationalist and other leaders, conditional upon their addressing demands for cultural recognition and socio-economic justice for minority, aboriginal, and other vulnerable groups while building inclusive identities and tolerance.

Outside states should avoid attributing blame exclusively to one side, as communal conflicts are fuelled by the sense of grievance, real or imagined, of both minorities and majorities.

Policy-makers should be alert to the dangers for inter-group tolerance associated with different stages of the transition and consolidation of procedural democracy.