

Foreword by the High Commissioner



The year 2011 was truly challenging for human rights around the world, and I believe my Office rose to the occasion, and more. At headquarters and in the field, with exceptional dedication and hard work, my staff endeavoured to meet the increasing demands for our advocacy and cooperation, as evidenced in this report on our accomplishments achieved during the course of the year.

Indeed, the global human rights movement went into high gear in 2011, exposing the disregard for human rights that impelled the forceful demands of people for social change and underscored the need to integrate human rights principles when charting effective responses to the global crises of our times. Aspirations for the enjoyment of human dignity continued to be thwarted in the face of financial turmoil and economic downturns, climate change,

energy and food crises, violent repression by autocratic Governments, ongoing conflict, resurgent racism and xenophobia and persistent poverty. My Office responded to these challenges with the full range of tools and resources available to us, as did the Human Rights Council, the special procedures and the treaty bodies that we support. Our shared mission in advancing freedom from fear and want has never been more relevant, or so stretched.

The Arab Spring triggered a heightened awareness among world leaders about the centrality of human rights in peace and security and development. Mobilizing the geographic and thematic expertise of my staff, I responded to the increasing calls for human rights input into the deliberations taking place in key intergovernmental fora. The Security Council and the General Assembly provided innovative and expanded opportunities for us to introduce human rights issues into their discussions. Meanwhile, we successfully delivered on new and urgent tasks stemming from the sustained activism of the Human Rights Council while engaging in crises situations and expanding its thematic frontiers. We have also advanced the human rights mainstreaming agenda with partners within and outside the UN system, at both the policymaking and operational levels.

In our effort to respond and reach out to the widest audience, especially the youthful generations who have brought so much energy and creativity to the human rights movement, we launched our presence on the social media scene, building up the message towards Human Rights Day on 10 December. On this day, I held a live conversation about human rights with millions of people around the world through Facebook and Twitter.

As I review our work in 2011, I am filled with a sense of pride. But this pride is tempered by realism as I look towards the future and consider the growing gap between the expectations of and mandates given to the Office and the limited resources available. This gap has been recognized by Member States, who gave us a slight increase from the UN regular budget, despite a Secretariat-wide reduction for the 2012-2013 biennium. Nevertheless, the human rights programme, as implemented by my Office, accounts for less than three per cent of the regular budget of the Secretariat.

In addition, voluntary contributions in 2011 stagnated at close to 2010 levels, while our needs continued to soar. Over the 2010-2011 biennium, OHCHR received US\$220 million in voluntary contributions while our total expenditure amounted to US\$253 million, resulting in a shortfall of US\$33 million. This gap was to some extent anticipated and offset with a surplus balance from previous years. This situation cannot be sustained, however, and we are seeking practical ways to get the most mileage out of our existing resources, while reaching out to traditional and non-traditional donors to convince them that investing in human rights is an investment in human, social and global progress.

Throughout the year, we revised and re-revised our extrabudgetary cost plans to meet pressing needs while implementing established workplans. Due to financial constraints, we could not meet the requests from some Governments for the opening of full-fledged OHCHR country offices and instead deployed human rights advisers to the United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs) in those countries. Moreover, requests from 10 UNCTs for the deployment of a human rights adviser remained unmet, pending contributions to the Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) launched in November to support the workplan of the United Nations Development Group Human Rights Mainstreaming Mechanism.

This report makes a compelling case for investing in the human rights work of the UN. I encourage you to explore both the printed section, which describes our work under our thematic priorities, management results and funding and expenditure; and the CD attached, which details our work by field presence and headquarter Division. Immediately after the foreword, you will find a brief summary of main achievements that we have helped to achieve in the course of 2011 and in annex I on page 184, you will see a summary table of results reported on for the 2010-2011 biennium.

In March 2012, I launched my programme for the next biennium: the OHCHR Management Plan (OMP). The OMP is an extension of the 2010-2011 Strategic Management Plan and sets out the various human rights needs we have identified and prioritized for the coming two years. The scope of the results framework remains the same, however it has been revised to take into account lessons learned during the previous biennium and expanded to include targets.

I appeal to all stakeholders to support our work, as far as possible, through unearmarked voluntary contributions. All contributions, even symbolic in amount, are greatly valued and strengthen the community of donors for the UN human rights programme. The challenges ahead of us are many. Yet building on our experience and with your unwavering support, I believe we will continue to meet them successfully and make further progress.



Navi Pillay
High Commissioner for Human Rights

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