

# Foreword by the High Commissioner

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In 2013, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) celebrates 20 years of existence. This is a moment for us to take stock of accomplishments and stake out a clear course for the future. I hope you will join us in celebrating this historic moment.

In 2012, we observed growing emphasis on human rights within the international discourse on peace and security and development. At the national level, progress was achieved through new laws and improved institutional frameworks in numerous countries. Throughout the world, a collective consciousness on human rights, in many ways spurred by the Arab Spring, continued to gain momentum.

But these positive developments were offset by a number of enduring challenges: violence and crises in many parts of the world; difficulties in incorporating human rights goals and methods into development efforts; and increasingly sharp financial constraints.

In the face of human rights crises, my Office speaks out regularly, to the Security Council and the media, in order to draw the international community's attention to the need to put an end to violations. For example, I recommended that the Security Council refer the case of Syria to the International Criminal Court.

Searching for lasting solutions to human rights challenges forms part of the human rights mechanisms' role. Our support in this regard continued, *inter alia*, through the report on treaty body strengthening; substantive input into the Rabat Plan of Action against incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence; servicing the second cycle of the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review; and supporting Council-mandated activities, including two new intergovernmental working groups and three new special procedures mandates.

At the same time, we are present in close to 60 countries where we provide technical assistance to implement recommendations issued by the human rights mechanisms; training on human rights principles for the judiciary and law enforcement agents; and advice to civil society to help rights-holders exercise their rights.

To prevent the outbreak of human rights crises and create solid institutional foundations, human rights principles must form an integral part of social and economic development. At OHCHR, we are deeply engaged in integrating human rights goals and methods into policies and operations throughout the United Nations system. Last year, we helped facilitate the Declaration on the Rule of Law at National and International Levels and coordinated cooperation on discrimination and gender equality among UN entities.

For human rights mainstreaming to become the norm however, a human rights perspective must be fully incorporated into the UN's plans for the future. As a result of advocacy efforts by my Office, the Rio+20 Conference outcome document made wide reference to the link between human rights and environmental protection. Similarly, the new Post-2015 Development Agenda looks set to include development, sustainability, equality and human rights as the fundamental principles of the post-2015 framework.

These moves are encouraging, but we face funding constraints that fail to match the urgency and scale of the world's human rights needs, or the requests for assistance that we receive. Regular budget allocations are not keeping pace with the additional work that is mandated by the Human Rights Council. In 2012, total voluntary contributions to my Office reached US\$111.1 million, an insufficient amount to cover our expenditure. For 2012-2013, we have already cut our budget by US\$26.5 million. Unless voluntary contributions increase to US\$135 million, we will face a funding shortfall yet again in 2013.

In parallel, OHCHR is making efforts to increase efficiency through the implementation of results-based management. Every department and field office in OHCHR now plans and reports on the basis of a common set of results, details of which can be found in this report.

Following the OHCHR Management Plan 2012-2013, we are currently in mid-biennium and the focus of the OHCHR Report 2012 is thus mainly on progress towards the expected accomplishments. Nevertheless, numerous results are already illustrated in this report, as well as the usual detailed information on managerial outputs, finance and expenditure.

It has been 20 years since the Vienna Declaration and Plan of Action created the post of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. Since then, the space for human rights has expanded greatly, but the means have not followed suit. Without additional resources, the great progress we have seen in human rights implementation may cease, and may even regress. I hope, then, that I can count on your support – financial, substantive and political – in making human rights a reality for all. Together, we have come a long way in 20 years; let us continue this important work together in the years ahead.



Navi Pillay  
High Commissioner for Human Rights

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