

Funds administered by UN Human Rights

Voluntary contributions in support of UN Human Rights are channelled and managed through nine trust funds and three special funds. The special funds are not trust funds as defined by the UN Financial Regulations and Rules.

Additional financial information related to these funds can be found in the extrabudgetary income and expenditure report for 2020 (p. 149).

UNITED NATIONS TRUST FUND FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

In 1993, the United Nations Trust Fund for the Support of the Activities of the High Commissioner for Human Rights was established by the Secretary-General to supplement regular budgetary resources as a general funding pool. It is the largest fund administered by UN Human Rights, through which 78.7 per cent of all extrabudgetary funds, including unearmarked funds, were managed in 2020. Detailed information on the implemented activities and the voluntary contributions managed through the Trust Fund is shared in this report.

UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTARY FUND FOR TECHNICAL COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The United Nations Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights (VFTC) was established by the Secretary-General in 1987. It is the second largest fund administered by UN Human Rights. It provides financial support for technical cooperation aimed at building a strong human rights framework, including effective national and regional institutions, legal frameworks and infrastructures.

Since 1993, a Board of Trustees, which is appointed by the Secretary-General, has provided administrative and operational guidance. In recent years, its role has evolved to include the provision of advice on policy orientation, strategies on technical cooperation at a broader programme level and a global vision of the work of the Fund. In 2013, the Secretary-General entrusted the Board to also serve as a Board of Trustees for the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Financial and Technical Assistance for the Implementation of the Universal Periodic Review. In 2020, the Board was composed of Ms. Esi Sutherland-Addy, Chair (Ghana), Ms. Azita Berar Awad (Iran), Mr. Morten Kjaerum (Denmark), Ms.

Valeriya Lutkovska (Ukraine) and Mr. Santiago Corcuera-Cabezut (Mexico).

As of 31 December, the Fund had received a total of US\$23,266,101 in contributions compared to US\$17,208,002 in 2019. This was linked to increasing contributions from Member States to support technical cooperation, in particular to support the deployment of human rights advisers under the UNSDG Strategy that was launched in 2012. In 2020, the total expenditure of the Fund amounted to US\$15,943,243 compared to US\$15,498,086 in 2019. The actual level of expenditure was lower due to the late receipt of contributions, the impacts of COVID-19 on a number of planned activities and the need to secure an adequate level of funding to ensure the sustainability of efforts at the beginning of 2021.

In 2020, the Fund provided resources for technical cooperation programmes designed to build strong human rights frameworks at the national level in 53 regions, countries and territories through 42 human rights advisers and human rights mainstreaming projects in Argentina, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guyana, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia,

Maldives, Mongolia, Montenegro, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Republic of North Macedonia, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Serbia, South Caucasus region (Georgia), Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and Zimbabwe. In addition, the Fund supported activities in seven human rights components of peace missions in Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Libya, Somalia and Sudan (Darfur) and in four country and stand-alone offices in Chad, Mauritania, Mexico and the State of Palestine.¹⁰

The Fund enabled the expansion of in-country human rights expertise, in particular through the joint UNSDG framework for the deployment of human rights advisers, and by responding to increased demands for UN Human Rights to have an in-country presence. With the support of the Fund, UN Human Rights facilitated national efforts to incorporate international human rights standards into national laws, policies and practices, with an emphasis on the human rights dimensions of the global health crisis and providing support for policies and practices aimed at addressing inequalities. In addition, UN Human Rights stressed the importance of supporting the implementation of and follow-up to the recommendations issued by the international human rights mechanisms and the development of online mechanisms to supplement these efforts.

In light of the multiple impacts of the pandemic on the progress made in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), UN Human Rights enhanced its technical cooperation and advisory services to support the efforts of Member States to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Fund enabled the Office to provide ongoing support across all regions in the establishment and strengthening of national structures, institutions and capacities and to ensure their adherence to international human rights standards. Furthermore, UN Human Rights focused on supporting activities to strengthen the administration of justice. This included increasing access to justice, in particular for individuals and groups facing discrimination and exclusion, and delivering capacity-building initiatives to combat inequality and promote gender equality and women's rights.

¹⁰ All references to the State of Palestine should be understood in compliance with General Assembly resolution 67/19.

UN VOLUNTARY FUND FOR TECHNICAL COOPERATION

Voluntary contributions and expenditure in 2020

DONOR	US\$	EARMARKING
Denmark	5,724,343	VFTC
Finland	2,575,588	VFTC
Germany	341,297	VFTC
India	200,000	VFTC
United States of America	1,150,000	VFTC
(a) Total contributions earmarked to VFTC	9,991,228	
Australia	221,730	Activities in the Asia-Pacific region (Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste)
	188,395	Human Rights Adviser in the Philippines
Belgium	1,194,743	OHCHR's work in the State of Palestine*
Canada	454,545	Sri Lanka
Denmark	147,254	Somalia
	71,090	Chad
France	82,938	Mauritania
Germany	79,636	Sri Lanka
MacArthur Foundation	140,000	Mexico (implementation of the 2018 National Law on Disappearances through technical assistance to Mexican authorities)
	359,626	Haiti
	719,252	OHCHR's work in the Sahel region (Chad)
Norway	299,688	OHCHR's work in the Sahel region (Mauritania)
	119,875	OHCHR's work in the Sahel region (Niger)
	503,476	OHCHR's work in the State of Palestine*

	200,000	Belarus (implementation of the National Action Plan on Human Rights)
	120,000	Expert consultations on business and human rights
Russian Federation	450,000	Russian Federation (consolidating the Human Rights Master's Programme)
	20,000	Russian Federation (activities of the Federal and Regional Ombudspersons for Human Rights in the Russian Federation)
	100,000	VFTC (in particular for its work in Africa)
Saudi Arabia	200,000	OHCHR's work in the State of Palestine*
	6,054,915	Deployment of human rights advisers
UNDP	106,020	Georgia (National Human Rights Strategy and the new Action Plan)
UN Women	89,673	Kenya
United States of America	1,340,000	Chad, Haiti, Libya, Mexico
United Kingdom	12,016	OHCHR's work in the State of Palestine* (COVID-19 information made available to persons with disabilities)
(b) Total contributions earmarked to specific projects	13,274,873	
Unearmarked funds allocated to VFTC		Unearmarked
(c) Total unearmarked funds	0	
Total (a) + (b) + (c)	23,266,101	
Expenditure	15,943,243	

*Reference to the State of Palestine should be understood in compliance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 67/19.

UNITED NATIONS TRUST FUND FOR A HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN CAMBODIA

In 1992, the United Nations Trust Fund for a Human Rights Education Programme in Cambodia was established by the Secretary-General. The original aim of the Trust Fund was to contribute to the development and implementation of a human rights education programme that would promote the understanding of and respect for human rights in Cambodia. Since then, it has been used to implement all of the activities of the Office in Cambodia. In 2020, the Trust Fund received US\$738,979 in voluntary contributions. For more information, see pp. 345-350 of the online report.

UN TRUST FUND FOR A HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN CAMBODIA

Voluntary contributions and expenditure in 2020

Donor	US\$
Australia ¹	73,910
Japan	45,000
Sweden	520,069
United States of America	100,000
Total	738,979
Expenditure	1,237,808

¹ Allocated from a contribution earmarked for activities in the Asia-Pacific region.

UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTARY FUND FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW MECHANISM

The United Nations Voluntary Fund for Participation in the Universal Periodic Review Mechanism was established by the Secretary-General in 2008, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 6/17. The Voluntary Fund facilitates the participation of developing States, particularly Least Developed Countries (LDCs), in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process. Under its terms of reference, the Voluntary Fund enables funding for a delegate to present the national report from her/his country and participate in the interactive dialogue at the Working Group session when the delegate's country is being considered. The delegate also attends the HRC's plenary session when the UPR outcome is adopted.

As of 31 December, the Fund had not received any pledges compared to US\$147,167 in pledges and contributions in 2019. In 2020, the total expenditure of the Fund amounted to US\$190,174 compared to US\$309,562 in 2019.

Through the Voluntary Fund, UN Human Rights facilitated the participation of government representatives from 10 States under review in the thirty-fifth session of the UPR Working Group and in the forty-third session of the HRC, which adopted the UPR outcomes of 14 States reviewed in the thirty-fourth session of the UPR Working Group in November 2019.

In March, in the context of COVID-19, UN Human Rights consulted with the Office of the HRC President and decided to postpone the thirty-sixth session of the UPR Working Group, which was originally scheduled to take place from May until November, to enable States and

other stakeholders to constructively and safely engage in the UPR process.

Given the worsening COVID-19 situation, all travel arrangements were cancelled that were made under the Voluntary Fund for Participation in the UPR (to attend the adoptions of the UPR outcomes at the forty-fourth and forty-fifth HRC sessions and the thirty-sixth Working Group session). In November, Swiss authorities decreased the maximum number of in-person meeting participants from 50 to five. For the thirty-sixth UPR Working Group session, scheduled in November, UN Human Rights adopted an innovative approach and used the Fund to facilitate the remote participation of States under review and of other Member States, resulting in approximately 650 video statements and 350 live videoconference calls.

UN VOLUNTARY FUND FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE UPR

Voluntary contributions and expenditure in 2020

Donor	US\$
/	0
Total	0
Expenditure	190,174

UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTARY FUND FOR FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW

The United Nations Voluntary Fund for Financial and Technical Assistance for the Implementation of the Universal Periodic Review was established in 2008, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 6/17. This financial mechanism was created to provide a source of financial and technical assistance to help countries implement the recommendations emanating from the UPR, with the consent of and in consultation with the countries concerned. Since its establishment, the UPR has completed two cycles and the human rights record of every Member State has been reviewed at least twice. The focus of the third cycle, which began in May 2017, is the implementation of the accepted recommendations.

As of 31 December, the Fund had received a total of US\$346,597 in pledges and contributions compared to US\$417,362 in 2019. In 2020, the total expenditure of the Fund amounted to US\$512,511 compared to US\$585,112 in 2019.

In 2013, the Secretary-General requested the Board of Trustees of the Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights (see pp. 128-129) to also serve as a Board of Trustees for the Voluntary Fund for Financial and Technical Assistance for the Implementation of the UPR.

In 2020, the Fund approved financial and technical assistance for activities in the Bahamas, Bangladesh, Belize, Bhutan, Brazil, Cambodia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Jamaica, Kenya, Madagascar,

Malaysia, Mauritania, Mongolia, Nigeria, Peru, Republic of Moldova, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uruguay and Yemen. In 2020, the strategic focus was on assisting States in the implementation of key UPR recommendations, the establishment and/or strengthening of National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow-up (NMRFs), the creation of recommendation implementation plans and databases and supporting UNCTs and parliamentary capacities for implementation.

COVID-19 affected the implementation of a number of projects in the field. As a result, UN Human Rights informed Member States that it would consider adjustments upon request and as necessary, in accordance with new national priorities in the context of the pandemic. This flexible approach was discussed and agreed upon by the members of the Board of Trustees, the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Deputy High Commissioner during online meetings that were held in May and November and co-organized with the Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights.

UN VOLUNTARY FUND FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UPR

Voluntary contributions and expenditure in 2020

Donor	US\$
France	128,807
India	100,000
Kazakhstan	10,000
Pakistan	5,000
Republic of Korea	50,000
Romania	47,790
Singapore	5,000
Total	346,597
Expenditure	512,511

VOLUNTARY TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TRUST FUND TO SUPPORT THE PARTICIPATION OF LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES AND SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES IN THE WORK OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

The Voluntary Technical Assistance Trust Fund to Support the Participation of Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the work of the Human Rights Council was established under HRC resolution 19/26 in 2012. The Trust Fund became operational in 2014. The objective of the Trust Fund is to enhance the institutional and human rights capacities of LDCs and SIDS through targeted training courses and travel assistance for delegates attending regular sessions of the HRC and the fellowship programmes.

In 2020, the Trust Fund received US\$377,988 in voluntary contributions compared to US\$648,991 in 2019. A total of 15 countries, including three new donors, contributed to the Trust Fund (there were only three in 2015). The Bahamas became the first beneficiary country and the first country from Latin America and the Caribbean to contribute to the Trust Fund. At the end of 2020, the Trust Fund reached the symbolic threshold of 30 donors that had contributed since it was established.

Since it became operational in 2014, the Trust Fund has supported the participation of 153 delegates and fellows, including 95 women and one visually impaired delegate, from 71 of the 72 eligible LDCs/SIDS, including all countries that were members of the HRC. Through the Trust Fund, 95 per cent of the beneficiaries, most of whom were responsible for following HRC activities in their

respective countries, participated in a regular Council session for the first time.

In 2016, as mandated by HRC resolution 19/26, the Trust Fund launched the first online training tool on the HRC and its mechanisms for government officials from LDCs and SIDS who work in the field of human rights. This interactive, fully accessible and gender-aware course is free of charge and available in English and French and in an “offline mode” on USB drives. To date, approximately 600 individuals have enrolled in the course.

In 2020, the Trust Fund provided support to 10 delegates (six women, four men) from 10 LDCs/SIDS, who travelled to Geneva to attend part of the forty-third session of the HRC. Two of the delegates were from Africa (Angola and Burkina Faso), five were from Asia and the Pacific (Bangladesh, Cambodia, Maldives, Marshall Islands and Solomon Islands) and three were from Latin America and the Caribbean (Barbados, Guyana and Haiti). Three of the delegates came from States that were members of the HRC in 2020 (Angola, Burkina Faso and Marshall Islands). Eighty per cent of all delegates worked for their respective Ministry of Foreign Affairs and all of them were attending a Council session for the first time. Each delegate participated in a three-day induction course, which was organized with support from the Trust Fund, and fully participated in the discussions. They delivered a total of 36 statements (34 were in their national capacities and two were joint statements). They also took part in nine briefings and side events that were organized by the Trust Fund and met with the Council President and the Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights. For the first time, a side event was organized by the European Union delegation in

Geneva with the assistance of the Trust Fund. Unfortunately, four events were cancelled following the decision to suspend the forty-third session of the HRC due to COVID-19. All steps were taken to ensure the safe return of the delegates to their countries.

Due to the pandemic and the related travel restrictions, the capacity-building activities delivered by the Trust Fund had to be adjusted and held online. The Fund organized its first virtual induction course to assist the delegates from small States before, during and after all three regular Council sessions. The HRC Help Desk for Small States offered virtual consultations and responded to 102 requests for information through various means of communication. In particular, the Trust Fund conducted briefings for small States representatives who were based in Geneva and New York (including the Permanent Representatives in New York from countries of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM)) and it assisted two focal points for small States appointed by the HRC President (Fiji and Singapore). During the reporting period, Benin and Solomon Islands closed their Permanent Missions in Geneva.

The Trust Fund continued to follow up with Caribbean Member States on the action points of the Georgetown Declaration Towards 2022 – the outcome document of the LDCs/SIDS workshop held in 2018 in the Caribbean region. As of the end of 2020, approximately 70 per cent of the action points had been implemented. Similarly, the Trust Fund followed up on the implementation of provisions included in the Nadi Declaration Towards 2020 – the outcome document adopted at a workshop held in 2019, in Fiji, to enhance the participation in the HRC of LDCs/SIDS from the Pacific

region. Two other workshops that are planned for the African and Asian regions will take place virtually in 2021.

VOLUNTARY FUND FOR PARTICIPATION OF LDCs AND SIDS IN THE WORK OF THE HRC

Voluntary contributions and expenditure in 2020

Donor	US\$
Australia	18,477
Austria	11,947
Bahamas	2,000
Canada	78,555
China	20,000
France	11,848
Germany	17,065
Italy	23,895
Luxembourg	33,210
Netherlands	55,991
Pakistan	5,000
Republic of Korea	50,000
Russian Federation	30,000
Singapore	10,000
Switzerland	10,000
Total	377,988
Expenditure	255,569

A former LDCs/SIDS fellow engaging his country in the process of ratifying CAT

In 2019, Sheldon Henry was one of six government officials selected to participate in the Fellowship Programme of the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund in Geneva. This gave him a unique opportunity to interact with the international human rights mechanisms, including the HRC, as his country, Saint Kitts and Nevis, does not have diplomatic representation in Switzerland. As a result, Mr. Henry decided to take full advantage of his three-month stay. He participated in capacity-building activities and held meetings with key institutions and stakeholders, developing a strong network and looking for opportunities for his country to continue promoting and protecting human rights. Mr. Henry met with representatives of the Convention against Torture Initiative (CTI), a global initiative that supports States to ratify and implement the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT). “It was after hearing them speak about the purpose of the Convention that I got inspired. As the lead human rights officer for my country, I worked on developing a proposal for my Government to accede to the Convention,” said Mr. Henry.

Once back in his country, Sheldon Henry made presentations to advocate for the signature of CAT with senior government officials and key stakeholders. In September, Saint Kitts and Nevis acceded to the Convention. “I am grateful for the support of the Trust Fund and UN Human Rights because it has given me and my country an opportunity to grow and advance our human rights policies and agenda,” added Mr. Henry, who has applied the capacities he acquired in Geneva to coordinate the writing of his country’s report for the third UPR cycle.



Sheldon Henry at the graduation reception for fellows of the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund, hosted by the Permanent Representative of Poland, with the Permanent Representatives of the Bahamas and Trinidad and Tobago and UN Human Rights staff. © OHCHR

UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTARY FUND FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples was established by General Assembly resolution 40/131, in 1985, to provide indigenous peoples with the opportunity to raise issues faced by their communities in the mechanisms, meetings and processes of the United Nations.

The Fund provides support to the representatives of indigenous peoples to enable their participation in the sessions of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII), the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP), the sessions of the Human Rights Council, including its Universal Periodic Review, and the human rights treaty bodies. With the expansion of the Fund's mandate in 2019, it now enables indigenous peoples to participate in the Forum on Business and Human Rights (FBHR) and meetings of the Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC).

Over the past 35 years, the Fund has supported the participation of over 2,500 representatives of indigenous peoples from all regions of the world. Through the support of the Fund, the participation of indigenous peoples at the United Nations during the last three decades has led to considerable developments in international human rights standards, including the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) and the creation of key UN mechanisms that are dedicated to indigenous issues, such as the PFII, the EMRIP and the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples.

The Fund is administered by UN Human Rights, on behalf of the Secretary-General, and is advised by a five-member

Board of Trustees. In December, the Secretary-General appointed four new Board members for the period 1 January 2021 – 31 December 2023, namely, Ms. Tukumminnguaq Nykjær Olsen (Greenland/Denmark), Mr. Dev Kumar Sunuwar (Nepal), Ms. Marjolaine Étienne (Canada) and Mr. Pablo Miss (Belize). It also extended the term of Mr. Diel Mochire Mwenge (Democratic Republic of the Congo) for another three years.

The Board of Trustees participated in the regular coordination meetings of all indigenous-related UN mechanisms, including the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, the PFII and the EMRIP. In turn, these UN mechanisms disseminate information on the activities of the Fund to their respective networks. Moreover, the Special Rapporteur established an important practice of holding meetings with the beneficiaries of the Fund in parallel to the sessions of the PFII and the EMRIP.

In 2020, the Fund received a total of US\$543,572 in voluntary contributions compared to US\$470,763 in 2019. The total expenditure of the Fund amounted to US\$102,202 in 2020 compared to US\$759,114 in 2019.

In 2020, the Fund allocated 165 travel grants to enable indigenous representatives to participate in the sessions of the PFII in New York (46) and the EMRIP (40), the HRC, the UPR and the human rights treaty bodies (30) in Geneva. Additionally, seven indigenous representatives were supported by the Fund to attend a General Assembly consultative process/interactive hearing session, 21 representatives received grants to attend the FBHR and 21 representatives received grants to attend FCCC meetings. Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, however, only four out of the 165 allocated grants

were disbursed to support three indigenous representatives from Tuvalu and one from the Cook Islands to attend a session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child in the Pacific region, in Samoa.

UN VOLUNTARY FUND FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Voluntary contributions and expenditure in 2020

Donor	US\$
Australia	18,477
Estonia	46,784
Finland	65,502
Germany	34,130
Holy See	2,000
Mexico	14,118
Norway	359,626
Peru	2,936
Total	543,572
Expenditure	102,202

Adjusting the Indigenous and Minorities Fellowship Programme to adapt to COVID-19

Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions in 2020, UN Human Rights was unable to host its in-person Indigenous and Minorities Fellowship Programme in Geneva. Instead, the Office selected 34 of its outstanding former fellows to work as “senior fellows” in 27 locations, namely, UN Human Rights regional or country offices (19), UNCTs (six) and UN peacekeeping operations (two).

Of these fellows, 20 belong to indigenous communities and 14 to minority communities from 29 countries (Bangladesh, Brazil, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Guatemala, Indonesia, Iraq, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Nepal, New Zealand, Paraguay, Republic of Moldova, Thailand, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America, Yemen and Zimbabwe).

For the deployed senior fellows, this was an opportunity to enhance the experiences and capacities they had gained through the UN human rights system and to engage in advocacy efforts to increase awareness about the human rights impacts of COVID-19 on indigenous peoples and minorities. At the same time, UN Human Rights and the respective UN hosting entities benefited from the expertise, knowledge and experience of the senior fellows in relation to work on the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples. Two of the senior fellows are Jenny Amparo Chicaiza Lechón, from Ecuador, and Mirca Morera, from the United Kingdom.

In 2005, Jenny Amparo Chicaiza Lechón, a Kichwa Kayambi woman from

Imbabura, Ecuador, created the Wambra Páramo Youth Network with friends and colleagues. Together, they work on environmental and socio-territorial issues in the Kayambi territory and on questions related to ancestral knowledge and the impact of mother tongue teaching on learning outcomes. In 2019, she was selected to take part in the Indigenous Fellowship Programme and she served as Vice-President of the Indigenous Caucus at the twelfth session of the EMRIP. In her country, she applied her acquired knowledge to train more than 200 indigenous persons at the local and national level, in addition to 80 indigenous leaders in the context of COVID-19. In 2020, she was deployed as a senior fellow to Ecuador’s UNCT, where she continued using national and international human rights norms and mechanisms to enhance the rights of indigenous peoples in the context of the pandemic. She provided inputs to the COVID-19 report of the Special Rapporteur, participated virtually in the thirteenth session of the EMRIP and contributed to preparatory meetings for the 2021 session of the PFII.

Mirca Morera was born and raised in Tottenham, London, in an area close to the Latin Village, where community and police relations have been historically tense. Ms. Morera remains strongly engaged in fighting discrimination faced by the Latin American community and works to enhance equality in the UK. More specifically, she submitted inputs to international human rights mechanisms to highlight social deprivations faced by this fast-growing minority ethnic group. In 2019, she participated in the



Jenny Amparo Chicaiza Lechón (left) and Mirca Morera (right), 2020 senior fellows of the Indigenous and Minorities Fellowship Programme. © OHCHR

UN Minorities Fellowship Programme, which enabled her to build her capacities and knowledge on minority rights and forge a cross-regional collaboration with another fellow from New York. This knowledge and partnership became crucial in 2020 when she used art to raise awareness about and to advocate for minority rights as minority communities in the UK and the United States of America were disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. In response to this crisis, Ms. Morera convened two meetings with the Mayor of London and secured 500,000 British Pounds to provide financial support to those most affected by the pandemic. In 2020, Ms. Morera was selected to act as a senior minority fellow covering Europe.

Under the banner of enhancing equality and countering discrimination, including on COVID-19-related issues, the redesigned Fellowship Programme provided an opportunity to enhance the complementarity between actions undertaken in the field and at headquarters. The Programme supported awareness-raising, advocacy, monitoring and reporting efforts to address the impacts of the pandemic on minority and indigenous peoples’ communities.

UNITED NATIONS HUMANITARIAN FUNDS

UN Human Rights provides joint secretariat support to two grant-making funds, namely, the Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery and the Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture. Together, they are known as the UN Human Rights Humanitarian Funds. They were established by the General Assembly with the purpose of providing direct assistance and rehabilitation to individuals whose rights have been violated in the context of contemporary forms of slavery and torture, respectively. This assistance translates into yearly grants that are primarily awarded to civil society organizations that provide humanitarian, medical, psychological, social and legal assistance to victims. They are financed through voluntary contributions and are formally administered by the Secretary-General, who acts on the advice of Boards of Trustees. In 2020, the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery received a total of US\$848,240 in contributions compared to US\$872,728 in 2019. In 2020, the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture received a total of US\$10,446,987 in contributions compared to US\$9,225,449 in 2019.

United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery

The United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery was established by General Assembly resolution 46/122, in 1991, with a mandate to provide direct assistance to victims of contemporary forms of slavery. It awards annual grants to civil society organizations, including rehabilitation centres, trade unions, shelters for victims and legal redress programmes. Contemporary forms of slavery are regularly brought to light and include serfdom, forced labour, bonded labour, traditional slavery, trafficking in persons and in human organs, sexual slavery, the worst forms of child labour, early and forced marriage, inherited widows, the sale of wives and other forms of slavery.

In 2020, the Trust Fund prioritized projects that support victims of contemporary slavery in supply chains and the achievement of SDG Target 8.7. The Fund's Board of Trustees met remotely from 23 to 27 November and approved 37 annual grants to be awarded in 30 countries, with an average grant size of US\$20,000. In 2021, the awarded projects will provide assistance to approximately 17,000 survivors of slavery.

UN VOLUNTARY TRUST FUND ON CONTEMPORARY FORMS OF SLAVERY

Voluntary contributions and expenditure in 2020

Donor	US\$
Andorra	17,921
Australia	110,865
Germany	477,897
Holy See	2,500
India	50,000
Luxembourg	17,606
Republic of Korea	40,000
Saudi Arabia	75,000
Spain	23,753
United Kingdom	32,698
Total	848,240
Expenditure	753,026

Reintegrating children into school and providing a protective environment with support from the Slavery Trust Fund



Association Medica Zenica empowering victims of child trafficking and contemporary slavery.
© Medica Zenica

Two sisters, 11 and 12 years old, were admitted to Medica Zenica's safe house. They had been sold by their father to their aunt for 500 Euros, were forced to beg on the street and were physically harmed if they refused. The girls had never attended school and were illiterate. As victims of trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation, they needed to recover from ongoing abuse. Medica Zenica helped them to acquire basic skills and complete four grades of primary education.

Medica Zenica has been providing comprehensive assistance, including shelter, to women and child victims of contemporary forms of slavery and trafficking since 1999, when trafficking in human beings emerged as a new phenomenon after the end of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 2020, the organization received its first grant from the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, which facilitated the provision of assistance to 12 women and children who were survivors of trafficking, forced begging and sexual slavery. By operating an SOS helpline and offering shelter, legal counselling and support, occupational therapies and economic empowerment through vocational training, Medica Zenica provided direct support to victims who frequently came from vulnerable families and marginalized groups, including Roma communities.

After a successful recovery process, the two sisters were sheltered in a family-oriented organization that will provide them with long-term care and protection. And the girls were finally able to join their peers in a regular school.

United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture

The United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, established by General Assembly resolution 36/151, in 1981, is mandated to provide direct assistance to victims of torture and their families. The Fund awards annual and emergency grants to CSOs, including to support rehabilitation centres, grassroots organizations and legal aid programmes.

The Fund's Board of Trustees met remotely from 7 to 11 October and recommended that 178 annual grants be awarded to 79 countries, with an average grant size of US\$41,371. The awarded grants will support approximately 47,000 victims of torture. A total of 172 projects will enable the delivery of direct assistance to victims of torture and their families (for a total of US\$7,184,000) and six projects will help to strengthen the capacities of organizations that deliver such services (for a total of US\$180,000).

Through its emergency grants procedure, the Fund supported 24 emergency projects in 2020 (for a total of US\$530,000) to enable them to respond to urgent humanitarian and human rights situations in 23 countries, including in the context of COVID-19. In addition, the Fund launched a special call for COVID-19 emergency projects in 2020. Within this framework, 17 grants were awarded to assist nearly 4,000 torture survivors that were particularly impacted by the pandemic (in Bangladesh, Brazil, Egypt, Ghana, Greece, India, Italy, Kenya, Lebanon, Mexico, Peru, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, South Africa, Ukraine, United Kingdom and United States of America).

UN VOLUNTARY TRUST FUND FOR VICTIMS OF TORTURE

Voluntary contributions and expenditure in 2020

Donor	US\$
Andorra	11,737
Austria	32,967
Canada ¹	66,480
Czech Republic	8,551
Denmark	735,619
France	71,090
Germany	538,164
Holy See	2,000
India	50,000
Ireland	161,290
Italy	29,869
Kuwait	10,000
Liechtenstein	25,826
Luxembourg	17,606
Mexico	10,000
Norway	359,626
Pakistan	5,000
Peru	1,086
Saudi Arabia	100,000
Switzerland	200,000
United States of America	8,000,000
Individual donors	10,075
Total	10,446,987
Expenditure	8,807,809

¹ Includes a contribution of CAD\$30,000 from the provincial Government of Québec.

Overcoming the impacts of torture in detention, COVID-19 and the Beirut blast

The 4 August explosion in Beirut and the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically worsened the situation of persons deprived of their liberty in Lebanon. Among them, victims of torture were particularly impacted, with the abrupt suspension of visits and withdrawal of rehabilitation services. The Association Justice et Miséricorde (AJEM), which provides medical, legal, psychological and social assistance services to 300 victims of torture each year, including in detention facilities and police stations, began to receive support from the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture in 2018. In 2020, it received an annual grant to assist 150 victims of torture, including 30 women. After the blast, AJEM was awarded an emergency grant to support an additional 260 beneficiaries in Beirut's two detention centres. This enabled the organization to address medical relapses, provide medical supplies, phone cards and legal assistance to detainees and to extend urgent social assistance to their families as needed.

"I was hopeless and my life had no value," recalls Mr. Chehade, a 28-year-old man who was subjected to torture during arrest and investigation. Transferred to one of Lebanon's biggest prisons, Mr. Chehade showed alarming

signs of depression and hopelessness when AJEM first came in contact with him in 2019. He had reportedly used drugs and had attempted suicide. AJEM provided assistance to Mr. Chehade and secured his transfer to another building where he received professional health care, psychological support and medical treatment. When Mr. Chehade was released in 2020, he was physically and emotionally healthier. He continued receiving counselling from AJEM's psychosocial team and he is now preparing to get married. He is grateful to AJEM for standing with him through this challenging and critical period of his life.



The staff of the Association Justice et Miséricorde in Lebanon. © OHCHR

SPECIAL FUND ESTABLISHED BY THE OPTIONAL PROTOCOL TO THE CONVENTION AGAINST TORTURE AND OTHER CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT

The Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OP-CAT) was adopted by the General Assembly in December 2002 and entered into force in June 2006. OP-CAT created a two-pillar system at the international and national level to prevent torture and other forms of ill-treatment in places where persons may be deprived of their liberty.

At the international level, it established the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (SPT), which has been in operation since February 2007. SPT is mandated to visit all places of detention in States Parties and provide assistance and advice to States Parties and National Preventive Mechanisms (NPMs).

At the national level, the Special Fund established by article 26 of OP-CAT helps to finance the implementation of recommendations issued by SPT after a visit to a State Party and supports training programmes for NPMs. In 2020, the Fund awarded grants amounting to US\$381,005 to support 14 torture prevention projects in 10 States Parties to the Optional Protocol. In 2020, the Fund received contributions and pledges of US\$490,251, which enabled the launch of the 2021 Call for Applications.

Since 2012, the Fund has supported 84 technical cooperation projects in 22 countries worldwide. These projects were responsible for facilitating legislative and institutional changes in the 22 countries and supported the

compliance of laws with international human rights standards on torture prevention and the creation of NPMs. This resulted in the amendment of codes of criminal procedure, prison acts and laws prohibiting abusive body searches for persons deprived of their liberty. The projects supported the establishment or strengthening of effective NPMs or other relevant institutions and contributed to the improved knowledge and capacity of NPM staff members to monitor places of detention (through trainings, study visits, the elaboration of internal rules and methodologies and the production of manuals, interview protocols and guidelines). The projects also resulted in the enhanced visibility of NPMs (through the improvement and translation of annual reports into national languages, radio broadcasts, brochures and posters). Funding from the Special Fund enabled projects to purchase technical equipment (such as cameras and equipment to measure the size and humidity of cells) and contributed to enhanced collaboration with other stakeholders (professional groups, prosecutors, the judiciary, the police, lawyers and CSOs).

In addition, the projects supported capacity-building activities in institutions equipped with psychiatric and health facilities and enhanced collaboration with national monitoring bodies established under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), thereby contributing to the improved protection of vulnerable persons and groups (women, persons with disabilities, children and persons with HIV/AIDS).

OP-CAT SPECIAL FUND

Voluntary contributions and expenditure in 2020

Donor	US\$
Czech Republic	8,551
Denmark	200,610
France	23,697
Germany	113,766
Norway	119,875
Spain	23,753
Total	490,251
Expenditure	280,271

CONTINGENCY FUND

The Contingency Fund is a flexible funding mechanism that was established in 2006 to carry out activities and implement the priorities and strategies of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, particularly in response to human rights and humanitarian emergencies. This was primarily achieved by the rapid deployment of human rights staff and the provision of necessary logistical support.

The Fund, which is financed through voluntary contributions, aims to maintain a balance of approximately US\$1 million at all times. Cash advances are withdrawn from the Fund to enable the implementation of emergency response activities without administrative delays. When additional funding is received from other sources, the Fund is reimbursed. Since the inception of the Fund, there has been a significant increase in the capacity of UN Human Rights to provide conceptual and operational support to unforeseen mandates or situations requiring a rapid response.

In 2020, despite the impacts of COVID-19, the Contingency Fund facilitated the emergency deployment of 13 UN Human Rights staff (seven women, six men) in six countries with deteriorating human rights situations, including during electoral periods.

In Guinea, the surge capacity deployment ensured increased human rights monitoring during the legislative elections and the constitutional referendum. In Côte d'Ivoire, additional resources supported the Resident Coordinator with human rights monitoring and analysis in the period preceding the presidential elections. Similarly, in Niger and Uganda, human rights officers were deployed to strengthen the capacity of the field offices

to monitor and report on the human rights situation during the elections. In Kyrgyzstan, the deployment focused on strengthening the early warning and monitoring system of the UN Human Rights Regional Office for Central Asia to effectively respond to and mitigate risks of serious human rights violations following post-electoral violence. In Ethiopia, UN Human Rights responded to the conflict in the Tigray region by deploying human rights officers to monitor and report on the unfolding human rights and humanitarian situation. Furthermore, the Fund enabled the Office to enhance remote monitoring to report on the human rights situation of the population affected by the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh.

In 2020, the Fund received contributions of US\$449,547 compared to US\$297,505 in 2019. In 2020, the total expenditure of the Fund amounted to US\$96,216 compared to US\$405,606 in 2019. As of 31 December, the remaining balance of US\$540,204 was below the target of maintaining a reserve of US\$1 million at all times, thus undermining the capacity of UN Human Rights to implement rapid response deployments.

CONTINGENCY FUND

Voluntary contributions and expenditure in 2020

Donor	US\$
France	47,393
Republic of Korea	50,000
Sweden	352,154
Total	449,547
Expenditure	96,216

Monitoring the human rights situation during the electoral period in Niger



Dorothee Ndoh Ondobo, Human Rights Officer, with a group of supporters of political parties in Niamey. © OHCHR

Dorothee Ndoh Ondobo was deployed to Niger from November 2020 to January 2021, in the midst of an electoral period. As the country moved through local, regional and legislative elections and the first round of presidential elections, her role was to coordinate the activities of the surge capacity team in support of the recently established UN Human Rights Country Office. Through this work, she was able to contribute to the promotion of and respect for human rights during the electoral period.

During that period, Dorothee and her team provided technical assistance and training to 157 key national stakeholders (64 women, 93 men), including from the National Human Rights Commission,

civil society and the media, on human rights monitoring and reporting. She and her team also enhanced the knowledge of representatives of the security and defence forces on international human rights obligations in electoral contexts. In addition, the team assessed the human rights situation during that period by collecting information on incidents, analysing human rights issues and alerting on potential triggers of electoral violence.

“My experience in a few commissions of inquiry and surge capacity teams was an added value during my field visits to polling stations as well as remote monitoring. I conducted more than 200 interviews and focus groups with victims, witnesses and various stakeholders, including electoral

personnel, members of the National Electoral Independent Commission, Heads of polling stations, delegates of political parties, voters, community and religious leaders and internally displaced persons,” said Dorothee.

Her past experience in fostering human rights compliance in electoral contexts, in relation to the peace and security agenda with the Human Rights Division in MINUSMA, the UN Human Rights Regional Office for Central Africa and at headquarters in New York enabled her to support the UN early warning and prevention efforts in Niger. “Monitoring hate speech and incitement to violence by political and civil society actors was facilitated through social media, such as Facebook,” she added.

Security concerns, including possible terrorist attacks, coupled with COVID-19-related sanitary challenges, added to an already tense political situation. “On electoral days, I contributed to the establishment of an operational situation room to compile information collected by several human rights officers on the ground,” noted Dorothee. “I assisted the UN Human Rights Country Office in sharing preliminary findings on the human rights situation during the elections by providing briefings to the Resident Coordinator, representatives of ECOWAS and of the European Union.” This successful deployment also enhanced local capacities to provide regular early warning and prevention updates to these stakeholders, UNOWAS and the UNOCC.

SPECIAL FUND FOR THE PARTICIPATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE SOCIAL FORUM, THE FORUM ON MINORITY ISSUES AND THE FORUM ON BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The Special Fund for the Participation of Civil Society in the Social Forum, the Forum on Minority Issues and the Forum on Business and Human Rights was established by HRC decision 24/118, on 27 September 2013. The aim of the Fund is to facilitate the broadest possible participation of civil society representatives and other relevant stakeholders in the annual meetings of the three forums. In 2020, the Special Fund received US\$50,000 in new contributions.

From 19 to 20 November, the **UN Forum on Minority Issues** held its thirteenth session, virtually, on “Hate speech, social media and minorities.” Participants included approximately 400 representatives from States, international and regional organizations, civil society and other stakeholders. Invited expert panelists representing the world’s five regions shared their expertise and highlighted the pressing need to address the critical challenge of tackling hate speech, xenophobic rhetoric and incitement to hatred against minorities. The recommendations of the Forum were presented to the HRC in March 2021. The Forum was preceded by two regional forums on the same topic that were held in Asia-Pacific and Europe and were organized by the Special Rapporteur on minority issues.

The ninth **Annual Forum on Business and Human Rights** took place from 16 to 18 November and focused on the theme “Preventing business-related human rights abuses: The key to a sustainable future for people and planet.” Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, UN Human Rights organized the Forum as a virtual event. It was guided and chaired by the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises, with the objective of promoting the implementation of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs). The High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, and the Chair of The Elders, Mary Robinson, opened the Forum, along with government representatives and Heads of UN entities. During 28 sessions, more than 200 speakers from all regions and stakeholder groups discussed issues related to climate change, inequality and racism, mandatory human rights due diligence, corruption, the role of human rights defenders (HRDs), new technologies and human rights, migrant workers and labour rights. The role of States and businesses in responding to COVID-19 and taking part in recovery efforts was also discussed. A total of 3,724 participants from 140 countries registered to attend the Forum (with representatives from the private sector (30 per cent), civil society (24 per cent), academia (13 per cent), international organizations (nine per cent), Member States (eight per cent) and national human rights institutions (NHRIs) (three per cent), among others). The virtual format of the Forum enabled new audiences to participate and the number of registered persons was the highest to date. The Forum was also broadcast via UNWebTV, where archived sessions can be viewed. The Forum reinforced the message that strengthening the prevention

of business-related human rights abuses, including by learning from both good and bad practices and addressing systemic gaps, can help to build a sustainable future for people and the planet. The discussions informed the Working Group's plan to mark its tenth anniversary in 2021, including by acknowledging its achievements in the implementation of the UNGPs, assessing gaps and challenges and developing a joint vision for implementation over the next decade.

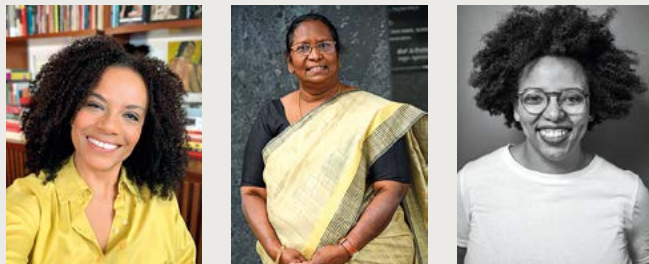
Each year, the **Social Forum**, which is convened by the HRC, provides a unique space for an open and interactive dialogue between civil society actors, representatives of Member States and intergovernmental organizations on a theme that is chosen by the Council. As a result of COVID-19 restrictions, the 2020 Social Forum was held as a hybrid in-presence and online event. The Special Fund was used to hire UNWebTV to broadcast the event and to archive the sessions in the six UN official languages. In this way, the Fund contributed to 1,209 views from 62 countries during the first day of the Forum, 973 views from 107 countries during the second day and 1,622 views of the archived videos in the following month.

SPECIAL FUND FOR THE PARTICIPATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE SOCIAL FORUM, THE FORUM ON MINORITY ISSUES AND THE FORUM ON BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Voluntary contributions and expenditure in 2020

Donor	US\$
Russian Federation	50,000
Total	50,000
Expenditure	136,077

The Social Forum: Amplifying the voices of women engaged in the fight against poverty and inequality



Flavia Oliveira (left) Ruth Manorama (centre) and Berhan Taye (right). © OHCHR

In 2020, the Social Forum convened thousands of participants to exchange experiences, learn from each other and engage with State representatives and key stakeholders on the topic of combating poverty and inequality. Among the dozens of speakers were Flavia Oliveira, an Afrodescendant journalist from Brazil, Ruth Manorama, a Dalit rights activist from India and Berhan Taye, a digital rights researcher and activist from Ethiopia.

Flavia Oliveira was raised by a single mother in a poor neighbourhood of Rio de Janeiro. She is now one of the best-known economic journalists in Brazil, where she consistently fights against discrimination, racism and patriarchy. “Only by better distributing political, legislative, judicial, economic and corporate power to better reflect the heterogeneity of societies can we achieve societies that are as just as we need, desire and deserve,” said Flavia at the Forum. She highlighted

how COVID-19 had disproportionately affected families of African descent living in favelas and precarious dwellings due to historical inequalities. She also underlined how the worldwide mass mobilization to promote racial equality had gained momentum after the killing of George Floyd, forcing change in racist economic, political and social practices.

Ruth Manorama, who has received international awards for her activism against the injustices of the caste system and systemic gender-based violence against Dalit women, noted in her speech, “Let us transform our pain into power!” Beyond statistics, she illustrated the perversity of inequalities by citing caste-based sexual assaults, the lack of access to education for Dalit girls and the practice of manual scavenging of toilets. Through her work, she gives a voice to those people who are discriminated against and helps them fight for their rights with governments and other stakeholders.

Berhan Taye comes from a region where millions are deprived of the benefits of the digital age due to lack of access to Internet infrastructure, Internet shutdowns and prohibitive access fees. Born and raised in Addis Ababa, she works for the organization Access Now, where she engages in advocacy work across Africa and provides policy advice for the #KeepItOn Coalition. At the Forum, she underlined that “unless the technology is rooted in social justice and equity framing, at its best, it will maintain the unequal status quo and continue to perpetuate inequality and, at its worst, discriminate and marginalize the most vulnerable.” Berhan added that inequalities online reflect and aggravate inequalities offline, undermining the enjoyment of rights by the most vulnerable groups and persons, including inhabitants of rural areas or indigenous peoples. She explained how clear it was to her that lack of access, shutdowns and punitive regulations deny billions of people the potential benefits of the digital age.

For Flavia, Ruth and Berhan, the Social Forum was a valuable opportunity for sharing human rights concerns with others, advocating for more equal and inclusive societies and building new partnerships to bridge digital divides and address structural racial and caste-based discrimination.