



United Nations  
Human Rights

OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS





# Management

UN Human Rights staff in the State of Palestine<sup>\*</sup> during a monitoring mission in Kafr Malik, West Bank, site of weekly demonstrations against new settlement outposts.  
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<sup>\*</sup> All references to the State of Palestine should be understood in compliance with General Assembly resolution 67/19.

This chapter provides an overview of the efforts of UN Human Rights to ensure its decision-making, planning, management and evaluation processes operate at the highest possible standard. It includes highlights of results achieved under the 10 UN Human Rights Organizational Effectiveness Action Plans (OEAPs).

## Accountability and governance framework

### Mandate

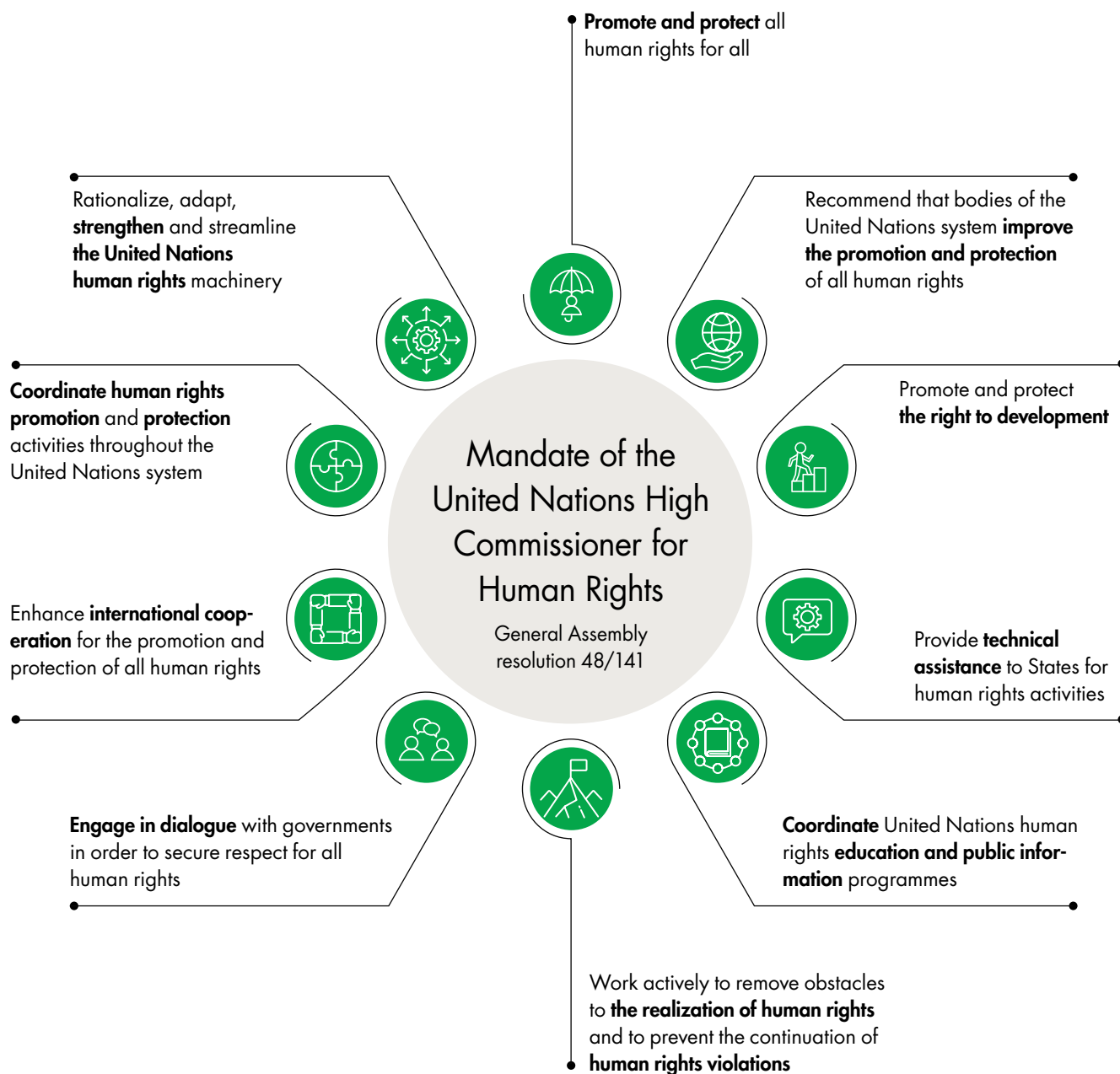
Mandated by General Assembly resolution 48/141, UN Human Rights is a department of the United Nations Secretariat. It does not have its own executive board, but it is directly accountable to the Secretary-General and the General Assembly.

The mandate of UN Human Rights is derived from multiple sources, including General Assembly resolution 48/141, the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and subsequent human rights instruments, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action of the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights and the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document.

UN Human Rights is mandated to prevent human rights violations, secure respect for all human rights, promote international cooperation to protect human rights, coordinate related activities throughout the United Nations and strengthen and streamline the UN system in the field of human rights. In addition to these

responsibilities, the Office leads efforts to integrate a human rights-based approach (HRBA) into all work that is carried out by UN entities.

The High Commissioner for Human Rights is the principal human rights official of the United Nations who is appointed by the General Assembly for a fixed term of four years, with the possibility of one renewal for a second term. UN Human Rights is led by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, with the support of the Deputy High Commissioner, Nada Al-Nashif, and the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, Ilze Brands Kehris, who heads the New York Office.



## Internal decision-making

Office-wide decision-making takes place through the Senior Management Team, which is chaired by the High Commissioner and the Programme and Budget Review Board, which is chaired by the Deputy High Commissioner. These two bodies meet regularly to make recommendations to the High Commissioner on policies, operating procedures and programme and resource allocations. The Policy Advisory Group and the extended Policy Advisory Group, chaired by the Deputy High Commissioner, provide additional forums for senior managers to exchange views and recommendations related to policy and management issues.

In 2020, the **Senior Management Team** (SMT) met on six occasions to make decisions on policy-related matters. The SMT endorsed the OHCHR Return to Workplace Plan; the workplan for the Working Group on Sustainable Environmental Management; the OHCHR Disability Rights Policy and Strategy and the OHCHR Risk Register. The SMT also discussed the review of the peacebuilding architecture; the OHCHR response to global protests; the Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights; the OHCHR response to COVID-19 and its messaging; the office-wide Surge Initiative work on economic, social and cultural rights (ESCRs), the

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and inequalities; the UN Prevention Strategy; and the International Decade for People of African Descent.

In 2020, the **Programme and Budget Review Board** (PBRB) held 11 regular meetings and one extraordinary meeting, contributing to ongoing improvements in the internal governance of the office-wide programming, budget and finances. The PBRB proved its continuing relevance in the course of the pandemic and the regular budget cash-flow crisis, particularly in the context of the Mid-Year Review, which enabled the Office to adjust its programmes to the financial context. During the year, the PBRB reviewed approximately 45 fundraising and fund allocation proposals from headquarters and the field. The proposals were processed by the PBRB Secretariat as electronic reviews to optimize the use of the PBRB's meeting time and enable timely decisions between meetings.

Two **Policy Advisory Group** (PAG) meetings were held in 2020 to address: 1) policy issues relating to the COVID-19 response; and 2) the UN Human Rights Policy and Strategy on hate speech. The recommendations emanating from these meetings were taken up at the SMT level. The 2020 Leadership Dialogue on acknowledging dignity through civility

was held at the PAG level with all members of the Leadership Team, before being delivered to the rest of the Office.

Three **extended PAG** (ePAG) meetings with managers were organized to share and discuss various management issues, such as COVID-19 operational implications, IT systems, staff survey results, inclusion, mental health, the financial situation, the data strategy and annual work and cost plans of the Office. One ePAG meeting was dedicated to human resources processes.

The pandemic offered UN Human Rights unexpected opportunities to become more innovative and inclusive in its working modalities. In the generalized teleworking context, all governance body meetings switched to a virtual format. This led to a boost in participation, particularly among field colleagues. For instance, while previous ePAG meetings included 30-40 colleagues, the last ePAG meeting had 107 participants.



# Results-based management

## Monitoring

Comprehensive and substantive programmatic analyses were conducted in 2020 to inform senior management on how to make progress towards achieving the targets of the OHCHR Management Plan (OMP), including in the context of COVID-19 reprogramming. An initial stocktaking exercise looked at how the Office could and should respond to the COVID-19 crisis, which was followed by a thorough Mid-Year Review. Lessons learned were captured in the End-of-Year Reporting and integrated into the 2021 annual workplans.

Monitoring the performance of UN Human Rights against the targets set by the OMP takes place through the Performance Monitoring System (PMS), a tailor-made online tool that facilitates planning, monitoring and reporting on a common set of office-wide results, in line with the principles and standards of results-based management (RBM). In order to improve the operation of the PMS in 2020, the Office refined its existing modules and introduced new functionalities, particularly those relating to learning, through the integration of the Evaluation Module, in accordance with the 2019 recommendations of the independent evaluation of the implementation of RBM at UN Human Rights.

## Evaluation

In 2020, four evaluations were finalized on: the transitions of human rights components in peace operations; the El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras country programmes; the Cambodia country programme; and the Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Programme. Gender and disability issues were mainstreamed into the evaluations conducted in the Office.

During the reporting period, internal assessments were concluded for various programmes, including the Doha Centre, the Regional Office for Europe in Brussels, the Country Office in Liberia, the G5 Sahel project and the Gender Focal Points Network. An evaluation of the Indigenous and Minorities Fellowship Programmes was also conducted at the end of 2020 (see box on p. 84). Support was provided for the desk review process, the interviews of the stakeholders and the revision of the reports in relation to the evaluation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group Human Rights Mainstreaming (UNSDG-HRM) Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) (managed by the Trust Fund's Secretariat), the OIOS evaluation of the accountability system in the UN Secretariat, the OIOS biennial study of the evaluation function

and the Belgium voluntary core funding evaluation (managed by the Belgian development cooperation).

In 2020, UN Human Rights began implementing the recommendations emanating from the RBM evaluation. For instance, the preparation of the Office's Programming Manual was initiated and the RBM training package was revised.

## Assessing the results and impacts of the Indigenous and Minorities Fellowship Programmes

The Indigenous and Minorities Fellowship Programmes are designed to support indigenous and minority representatives by strengthening their knowledge about the UN system and the international human rights instruments and mechanisms. At the end of 2020, an independent consultant conducted an evaluation to assess the results and impacts achieved by the Programmes since 2014; the period of the last two OMPs.

The fundamental finding of this evaluation is that the Fellowship Programmes are filling an extremely important gap in global efforts to address human rights issues. The Programmes provide relevant training and access to the international human rights mechanisms for two of the most vulnerable segments of the global population, namely, indigenous peoples and minorities. These groups continue to be subject to some of the most severe and systematic human rights abuses in the world today. They are also among the most marginalized and impoverished sections of the global population, with overall extremely low levels of access to national and international decision-making processes and much lower than average access to institutions that facilitate such access.

The evaluation noted that the overwhelming majority of fellows who had completed the Programmes continue to work towards the promotion and protection of human rights in their communities after returning to their home countries. Their abilities to effectively undertake this work is greatly enhanced by their participation in the Programmes, which clearly develop their capacities and empower them to then build those capacities within their respective countries. The Programmes also help fellows to create extensive networks at the regional and global level that they can draw upon for support.

The evaluation concludes that there are no other programmes that provide the type and extent of training that these Fellowships offer to indigenous peoples and minorities and that they have the potential to make a substantial long-term contribution to advancing the enjoyment of human rights by these target groups.

## Risk management

As part of the overall risk management initiative of the UN Secretariat, and as part of a wider effort to improve the organizational governance and accountability framework, a UN Human Rights Risk Management Plan was developed in 2020, which included a UN Human Rights Risk Register. This was a timely exercise in light of the COVID-19 pandemic – a crisis that underscored the importance of being able to anticipate, assess and evaluate our risks as we initiate a corporate process to put in place the required controls and systems to avoid and mitigate those risks.

An office-wide risk assessment process was organized to identify potential risks, root causes, drivers, existing internal controls and additional risk response measures. Based on the results of this risk assessment, a two-day risk validation workshop was held with senior management, during which 16 primary risks were identified for the organization: four very high risks, four high risks and eight medium risks.

Information on these 16 risks, including their mitigation measures, was compiled in a Risk Register. The Register will be regularly reviewed in order to monitor changes in risk profiles and identify emerging risks. With the establishment of the Risk Register, UN Human Rights complied with the requirement of the UN Secretariat, implemented the recommendations issued by the MOPAN evaluation and heeded calls from Member States to establish a risk management plan. Most importantly, this will enable UN Human Rights to better anticipate and mitigate new risks and challenges and therefore be more effective in fulfilling its mandate.

While working on its organization-wide Risk Management Plan, UN Human Rights provided inputs to the UN Secretariat Risk Register on the Secretary-General's Strategic Focus Areas and Critical Risks regarding the risk analysis related to priority 3 (the continued protection of human rights), which is one of the Secretary-General's six priorities.

Furthermore, UN Human Rights prepared an Organizational Governance Improvement Framework to review potential decisions and actions in relation to the roles of senior leadership, accountability, direction, resources and performance, ethical governance culture and stakeholder engagement, risks and internal control, counter-fraud and corruption, independent audits and inspections and appropriate information and support.

## Human rights risk management in the context of COVID-19

The pandemic triggered and exacerbated various human rights challenges, including:

- Threats to multilateralism as countries imposed unprecedented executive measures.
- Challenges for multilateral cooperation.
- Exposure to the damaging impacts of inequalities in every society, with significant risks to the enjoyment of economic and social rights, such as health, adequate housing, livelihoods, education, food and water.
- Incidents of racism and xenophobia that exacerbated inequalities.
- Immense risks to vulnerable persons/groups and their right to life as well as adverse impacts on women and girls, including in relation to their access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), and protection from domestic and other forms of gender-based violence (GBV).
- Risks to the full enjoyment of civil and political rights, such as measures restricting freedom of expression, arrests for COVID-19-related social media posts and new forms of surveillance and data collection.

UN Human Rights worked with a broad range of UN partners to address these concerns and issues, including WHO, DCO, UN Women, IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF, ILO, UN Habitat, UN Water, UNODC and others. The Office supported the inclusion of human rights standards and principles in their guidance and actions and contributed to resolving challenging human rights issues that proliferated during the pandemic, for example through the provision of an indicators framework to help monitor the human rights impacts of COVID-19 in various sectors and by supporting Resident Coordinators (RCs) and UN Country Teams (UNCTs) in their work on National Response Plans. UN Human Rights staff also participated in and sometimes led Protection Clusters and gender networks.



## Organizational development

### Organizational effectiveness results

UN Human Rights defined nine interrelated Organizational Effectiveness Action Plans under the OMP 2018-2021. At the end of 2020, it adopted a new OEAP on Sustainable Environmental Management (SEM) (see figure below). In addition, a

working group was established, in 2020, to put in place a new set of institutional arrangements to foster an inclusive culture and respectful workplace. This will result in the adoption of a new OEAP on Inclusion in 2021, replacing the OEAP

on Diversity and Gender, with a focus on addressing racial discrimination and promoting intersectional approaches in order to achieve gender equality and respect for diversity.

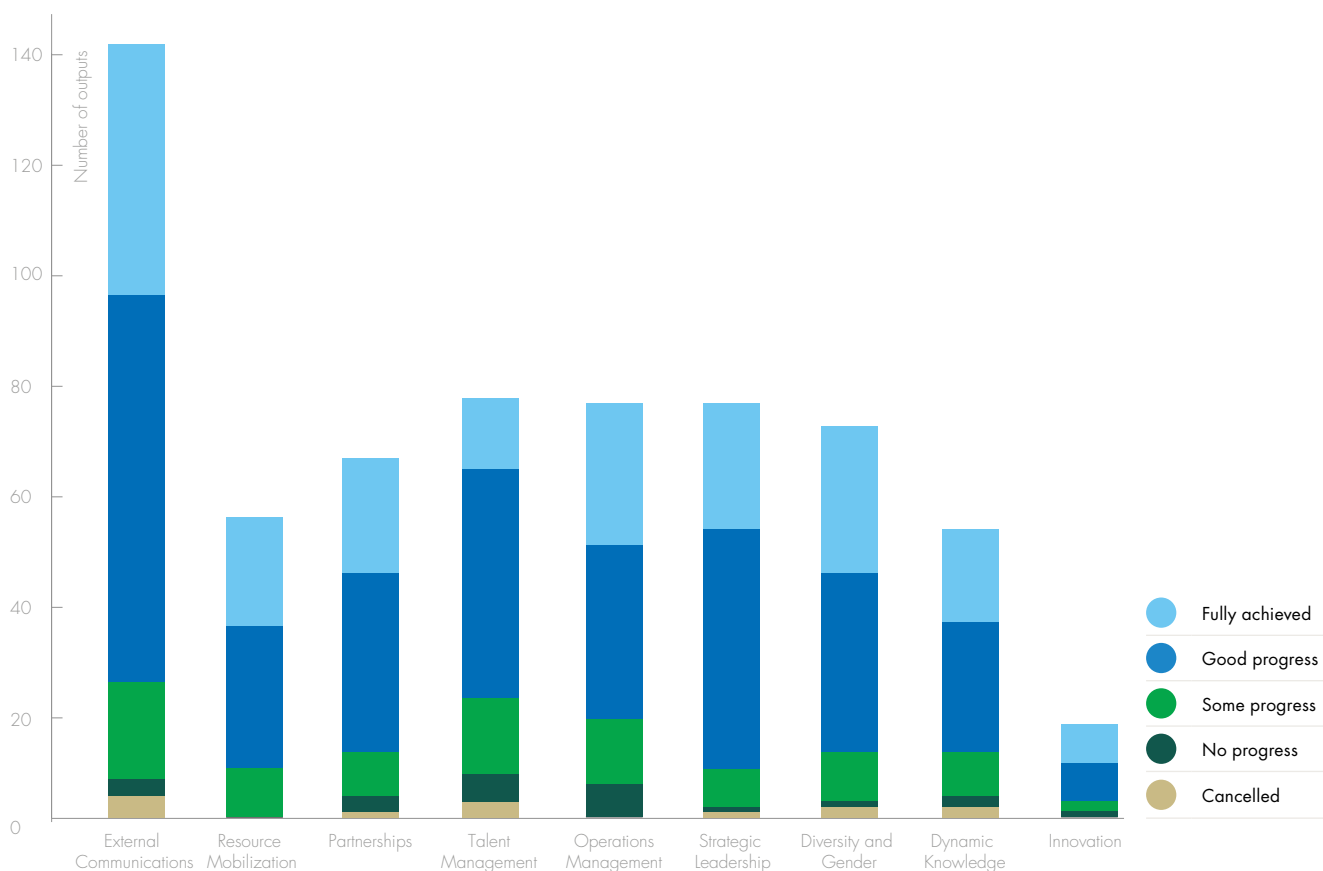
#### Organizational Effectiveness Action Plans (OEAPs)



Organizational effectiveness results are the changes that UN Human Rights commits to achieving in order to improve its programme delivery and operational relevance and efficiency. The results were defined at the output level in the 2020 annual workplans. Approximately 92 per cent of programming entities reported on organizational effectiveness results at the end of the year, demonstrating a high level of office-wide engagement, both in the field and at headquarters.

In the following pages, we summarize progress made in the implementation of the 10 OEAPs and highlight key achievements from headquarters and the field during the year. More details and examples can be found on pp. 502-511 of the online report.

### Progress reported under each OEAP in 2020



## Strategic Leadership and Direction

### **UN Human Rights leadership bodies are making timely, evidence-based strategic decisions in line with results-based management principles.**

Despite the significant challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the regular budget cash-flow crisis, steady progress was made in achieving established results, in particular with regard to people-centred, inclusive and inspirational leadership and internal communication and accountability frameworks. Concerted efforts were made to provide clear leadership and operational direction to guarantee a safe working environment for staff. Regular all staff messages and general guidance kept staff members abreast of the evolving situation and individual concerns were addressed in a timely manner. Programmatic guidance was issued to mainstream the COVID-19 response into existing priority areas and work streams. Through ongoing analyses of programme implementation and heightened attention to lessons learned, UN Human Rights made necessary adjustments in a timely manner to ensure that human rights remained at the heart of the UN response to the pandemic. COVID-19 also prompted UN Human Rights to accelerate its work on mitigating risks, resulting in the finalization of the OHCHR Risk Register. UN Human Rights' policymaking, programming and evaluation functions continued to be supported through a rapid adjustment to virtual working methods.

### **HIGHLIGHTS OF RESULTS IN 2020**

- Guidance was provided to staff on operational matters through the UN Human Rights COVID-19 Crisis Response Team.
- Support was provided to managers through the LeadingNet community of practice, which was established to facilitate the collaboration of UN Human Rights managers in all duty stations.
- The Leadership Dialogue on acknowledging dignity through civility was completed by 93 per cent of UN Human Rights staff.
- Internal information was shared through the Weekly Updates and Weekly News podcast.
- The continuous functioning of internal governance bodies through virtual meetings led to increased participation.
- A decision-tracking system was completed, aimed at tracking the implementation of all decisions made by the governance bodies.
- Programme analysis was undertaken to inform strategic and programmatic decision-making, including on COVID-19 reprogramming.
- Engagement with the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) was strengthened, with 65 Common Country Analysis (CCA) and Cooperation Framework processes supported to integrate human rights analysis and recommendations.
- The OHCHR Risk Register and Organizational Governance Improvement Framework were completed and the human rights section of the UN Risk Register was developed.
- Four evaluations and five internal assessments/strategic visioning exercises were completed.
- The preparation of the Programming Manual was initiated and almost completed and the RBM training package was revised.



## Placing human rights at the heart of UN response to the COVID-19 pandemic

From the outset of the crisis, the leadership of UN Human Rights was proactive in mobilizing the entire Office to shift its attention and adapt its interventions to ensure that human rights were situated at the heart of the UN system response. This was achieved through the establishment of an internal crisis response structure that fostered organizational effectiveness in the face of the crisis; the reprogramming and realignment of existing programmes; and system-wide contributions. The rapid creation of this internal infrastructure prepared the Office for an in-depth reprogramming exercise. Based on a comprehensive and substantive programmatic analysis, staff time and focus were redirected through a COVID-19 volunteer scheme to take full advantage of the Office's in-house thematic capacities. The voice of the High Commissioner was amplified to draw global attention to the human rights implications of the crisis and to the work of the special procedures and independent experts and bodies. The SMT discussed strategic issues and ensured an effective and coherent UN Human Rights response. Monitoring of human rights violations continued through the increased use of remote monitoring tools that ensured the security of sources, witnesses and victims. Through sustained high-level participation in the Principal-Level Crisis Management Team, UN Human Rights facilitated the full integration of human rights into the UN COVID-19 response, in particular the Secretary-General's socio-economic response and recovery efforts framework, to ensure that No One is Left Behind.

## Dynamic Knowledge

**UN Human Rights' knowledge base is used strategically to actively shape its programming, capacity, culture and structure.**

For UN Human Rights, dynamic knowledge is about connecting our human rights work with people, their experiences and knowledge to achieve a greater impact and outcome. In the context of COVID-19, this meant adopting new ways of working, sharing knowledge and practices on an ongoing basis, identifying and documenting promising practices and building institutional memory regarding the implementation of human rights-based responses to the pandemic. In 2020, priority was given to the development of new tools for ensuring the continued availability of support for and engagement with partners.

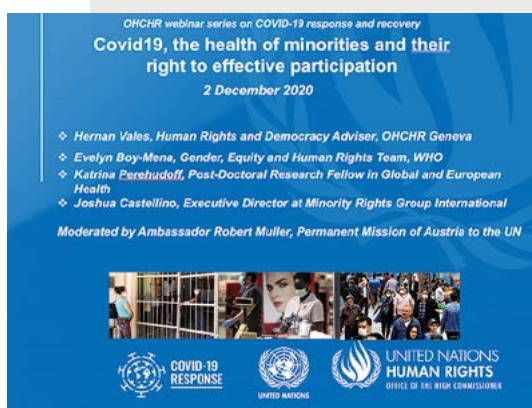
The Office developed and adopted new methodological guidance and a template to document promising practices of human rights-based responses to COVID-19, which were reported to Member States and others. As a result of UN Human Rights' capacity to quickly shift from in-person to online working methods, the Office was able to provide immediate, practical contributions to dealing with the crisis. Various technological platforms were used to host virtual consultations, discussion groups and exchanges on tailor-made responses, guidance documents, methodologies and tools and to facilitate the sharing of knowledge management and capacities.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF RESULTS IN 2020

- New human rights-centred tools, templates and methods were developed to enhance collaboration, document good practices and enable a swift response to the crisis. This led to the deployment of crowdsourcing (a form of collective intelligence) to collect examples of good practices of ESCR-based responses to COVID-19 and the design of the COVID-19 Tracker as a repository of good practices (see p. 23).
- A UN Human Rights e-learning strategy was developed and adopted on the basis of an office-wide study about staff learning practices and preferences, which was conducted in partnership with the University of Geneva.
- A global webinar series was organized on COVID-19 human rights-based responses. This enabled knowledge-sharing and discussions with partners on policy guidance and good practices.
- The second phase of a new onboarding process to welcome new staff in the organization, “Welcome Mat,” was initiated.

## A global webinar series on COVID-19 and human rights-based responses and recovery

Between March and December, UN Human Rights organized a series of 19 global webinars to facilitate internal discussions and knowledge-sharing opportunities on a variety of topics, including the rights to health, housing and food, the role of security forces and attacks against civic space in the context of COVID-19. More than 1,500 staff members from headquarters and the field participated in the discussions with experts and practitioners. The webinars offered an opportunity to reflect on policy, guidance and promising/good practices within the framework of the pandemic and to discuss the contributions of UN Human Rights to the COVID-19 response efforts of States, the UN and other partners. Colleagues from field presences around the world shared their experiences, priorities and needs. They identified and exchanged available and emerging guidance and resources to support the work of the Office across geographic and thematic areas. In addition, the webinars enabled staff to reflect on lessons learned from the past involvement of UN Human Rights in public health emergencies and other crises and to discuss possibilities for cross-fertilization. Similar efforts will continue in 2021 as part of the Office’s new modalities of working.



Global webinar organized by OHCHR and the Permanent Mission of Austria to the United Nations, with a focus on COVID-19, the health of minorities and their right to effective participation. Over 140 representatives of UN entities, Member States and CSOs participated in the discussion. © OHCHR



**Across UN Human Rights, innovation is encouraged, supported and its results are implemented accordingly.**

UN Human Rights is actively promoting innovation within the organization through an action plan and internal systems of incentives, which include the annual Innovation Challenge and Innovation Engine.

The Innovation Challenge provides staff members with a platform to propose innovative projects for improving the way we work. Successful projects receive seed funds for implementation. Over the past two years, the enthusiastic engagement of candidates and positive feedback from external experts reflected a growing interest in innovation at UN Human Rights. The Challenge also attracted interest from other UN entities that are now replicating and adapting the concept within their organizations.

During the first half of the current OMP cycle, a “Light Up! Innovation Engine” was established with the participation of approximately 25 colleagues from across UN Human Rights, including field presences. The Innovation Engine deployed crowdsourcing to collect examples of good practices of COVID-19 ESCR-based responses. The Innovation Engine also partnered with the University of Geneva to deliver and prepare several projects.

Following the second annual Innovation Challenge in 2019, four winning projects received seed funds. This enabled two projects to be successfully implemented

in 2020, namely, the “Ditch UNfair Internships” project and the “Technology as a Source for Good: Automatizing the Universal Human Rights Index.”

In November, the 2020 Innovation Challenge was launched under the theme of “Building Back Better.”

**HIGHLIGHTS OF RESULTS IN 2020**

- The “Light Up! Innovation Engine” partnered with the University of Geneva to deliver projects related to e-learning, gaming for rights, data visualization for human rights and the onboarding of new colleagues.
- The 2020-2021 Technology Education Strategy was developed to enable colleagues to increasingly use technology in human rights training and support impactful learning. A unified UN Human Rights learning management system was established using Moodle.
- A web-based module was developed and used to automatically tag and cluster Universal Periodic Review (UPR) recommendations and produce the reports of the UPR Working Groups in order to enable States under review to take a position on the recommendations.
- Several projects were developed with the University of Geneva and will be implemented in 2021, including tracking astroturfing campaigns, web scraping for indicator production, digitizing the gender accreditation programme and visioning sustainable environmental management and human rights.



## Ditch UNfair Internships

Most interns at UN Human Rights headquarters come from high-income countries as students from these countries are more likely to be able to afford the cost of living in Geneva for several months without a stipend. One of the four winning projects in the 2019 Innovation Challenge was a project aimed at changing that situation. The “Ditch UNfair Internships” proposal, which received the highest number of votes, proposed the extension of financial support to qualified students from the Global South to enable them to intern at the Office in Geneva. The project received US\$25,000 in seed funding that helped to create, for the first time, United Nations Volunteers (UNV) positions at headquarters for university students. This enabled the Office to offer financial support to university students while respecting the administrative rules of not remunerating interns.

Out of a total of 1,664 applicants from 137 countries, two law students were selected to take part in the 2020 pilot programme. One of the students is a child

rights advocate from Côte d’Ivoire and the other is a former national human rights institution (NHRI) intern from Nepal. They will join the Office in 2021 and receive a monthly living allowance of CHF1,700 for six and four months, respectively. They will also receive a settling-in grant of CHF1,100, health insurance and coverage of their travel costs to and from Geneva.

The pilot will become a full programme in 2021. This will allow at least five university students who are UNVs to work with UN Human Rights in Geneva each year and will serve as a concrete contribution to diversity, equality and Dignity@Work in the Office. This is the first time that such a programme has been implemented at the UN in Geneva. Other parts of the UN Secretariat have expressed interest in replicating this initiative.



Habib and Mona discovering Palais des Nations.  
© OHCHR

## Sustainable Environmental Management

**UN Human Rights is set on a path to global leadership in sustainable environmental management, catalysing efforts to build back better and strengthening partnerships and global standard-setting, especially with respect to the right to a healthy environment and climate change.**

In July, the Office established an internal Working Group on Sustainable Environmental Management in order to better integrate environmental sustainability into its existing workplans and build a new and ambitious sustainability policy as an important pillar in its own right. A new OEAP on SEM was developed and adopted at the end of 2020. It will support the institutionalization of good practices at UN Human Rights and draw upon learning from other entities to strengthen this work. The objective is to positively change the culture of the Office by mainstreaming SEM into its substantive and operational work and encouraging staff to apply this knowledge in their personal lives.

On the basis of a recommendation from the Working Group on Sustainable Environmental Management, new travel targets were introduced for 2021. The Office also began working to make its procurement more sustainable by taking into account the commitments of vendors to human rights and sustainability principles and practices. An internal survey was prepared with the intention of gathering good practices from staff across various entities and locations.

### **HIGHLIGHTS OF RESULTS IN 2020**

- A Working Group on Sustainable Environmental Management was created, with four sub-groups on the OEAP and Solutions; Good Practices; Vision; and Internal Communications.
- A new OEAP on SEM was adopted.
- A SEM Focal Points Network was created, with focal points in each UN Human Rights planning entity.

### **Initial efforts to improve environmental sustainability across UN Human Rights**



Logo designed for the new OEAP on SEM. © OHCHR

To begin implementing its new OEAP on Sustainable Environmental Management and following the recommendations issued by the SEM Working Group, the Deputy High Commissioner set a target for all entities across the Office to reduce their 2019 level of travel by 50 per cent in 2021. Senior managers were individually contacted to make sure that their 2021 travel budgets would comply with this instruction and that significant cuts would be made to bring about this result.

The travel budget was used as an intermediate indicator to reduce travel due to the absence of carbon footprint data for planning purposes. As the travel budget does not always directly correlate with the carbon footprint, steps were taken to develop the Office's capacity to use carbon footprint data to promote further reductions beyond 2021. Baseline carbon emission data has been annually used for headquarters since 2010, however, this will need to be expanded to the field and included and disaggregated in the equations used by all planning units. Carbon emissions are calculated in accordance with UNEP protocol and include travel and facilities data, such as energy and water consumption. Preliminary discussions were held with the Swiss Government and CSOs regarding the potential for making headquarters buildings more sustainable.

## External Communications

### **UN Human Rights' human rights impact and messages are effectively communicated, helping to position it as a partner of choice for its key stakeholders.**

Through its OEAP on External Communications, UN Human Rights seeks to effectively communicate across all channels, with messages and a clear identity that are conveyed in a compelling way, to support the organization's efforts to expand its reach and meet its institutional objectives.

In 2020, one of the key challenges for UN Human Rights was finding a balance between communicating about the human rights dimensions of the COVID-19 crisis and working towards the achievement of the targets set in the OMP. The crisis created an extra demand for digital communication, which in turn provided the Office with an opportunity to capitalize on the investments made in this area in recent years and to tell the story of our response to the pandemic. During the peak of the crisis, the media showed a strong interest in the messages of UN Human Rights, especially those with a COVID-19 angle. The Office also leveraged several partnership opportunities to engage a larger audience in the promotion of the human rights agenda.

### **HIGHLIGHTS OF RESULTS IN 2020**

- Interest in UN Human Rights' social media channels increased, as illustrated by a combined number of 9.7m followers of the headquarters and field presence channels (compared to 7.6 m in 2019).
- A web transformation project was pursued, with a focus on content revision, governance, procurement and taxonomy.
- Campaigns were launched on standing up for migrants ([#StandUp4Migrants](#)) and COVID-19 international solidarity.
- Audiovisual storytelling was developed and 548 video stories were produced, including a record number of 138 video messages from the High Commissioner (compared to 476 video stories in 2019).
- Innovative partnerships were established to reach new audiences, such as with photographer Justin Wu, GIPHY (the world's largest GIF platform), Kahoot (the education platform) and the Wikimedia Foundation.
- Media outreach was sustained (38,922 articles were generated in 2020, the third highest number on record, after a record high of 61,015 in 2019 and 41,629 in 2018, marking a 62 per cent increase over the 2017 annual total).

### **Salesforce and UN Human Rights cooperate to promote human rights**

The collaboration initiated between UN Human Rights and Salesforce demonstrates how UN partnerships with tech companies can effectively promote human rights.

Salesforce is a cloud-based software company that is headquartered in San Francisco, California (United States of America). A trailhead is an online learning experience platform that helps its customers to hone their existing skills and gain new ones. It facilitates assessments that demonstrate the user's skills and assigns badges and points that illustrate their progress.

With the support of UN Human Rights, Salesforce developed a new trailhead that focuses on the UDHR. It seeks to make human rights knowledge more accessible by explaining the importance of the UDHR and showing how everyone, including individuals, businesses and States, can work together to protect human rights.

The trailhead is divided into three modules. Specifically, it explores why the UDHR is a milestone document, explains what human rights are and outlines the obligations of States in relation to human rights. It also gives an overview of the national and international systems that protect human rights.

A second trailhead, focusing on the business community's responsibility to respect human rights and the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), is under consideration for development in 2021.



## Partnerships

**UN Human Rights has broadened and diversified its institutional partnerships and maximized the mutually reinforcing human rights benefits of the exchange of expertise, reach and resources.**

Through the OEAP on Partnerships, UN Human Rights strives to strategically engage with a wide range of external actors and increase the number of its strategic reciprocal partnerships.

Although the pandemic created some practical challenges, there were also significant opportunities to develop new partnerships. The Office provided guidance to the entire UN system on how to integrate a human rights dimension into its COVID-19 response. In parallel, as a result of the MOPAN evaluation, UN Human Rights undertook commitments to strengthen its capacity to establish strategic collaborations, including the development of a long-term vision for its partnership ambition and the mapping of existing relationships. In addition, through various campaigns, in particular on the occasion of Human Rights Day, the Office engaged a wide range of non-traditional actors in the promotion of human rights, thereby contributing to the shift objective of “building a global constituency for human rights.”

### Joining forces against COVID-19

Spearheaded through its 92 field presences worldwide, UN Human Rights stepped up its cooperation with Member States, RCs and UNCTs, national human rights institutions and civil society to provide advice on human rights-based responses to COVID-19 and offer evidence and policy options to support recovery processes. The Office provided advice and messaging on various human rights dimensions of the crisis as well as detailed guidance notes on matters relating to civic space, detention, indigenous peoples, migrants, minorities, women, racial discrimination, LGBTI persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, business and human rights, access to vaccines and states of emergency.

A UN Human Rights COVID-19 strategy was adopted, which identified engagement with stakeholders as a key element. Much of UN Human Rights’ COVID-19 work was carried out in close collaboration with partners. For instance, through the Surge Initiative, a team of human rights and development experts worked closely with grassroots actors, NHRIs and disadvantaged groups to analyse the human rights impacts of economic and social policies and measures, particularly on those left furthest behind.

In cooperation with UNDP and DCO, UN Human Rights developed a Checklist for a Human Rights-Based Approach to Socio-Economic Country Responses to COVID-19. Furthermore, the Office led the development of indicators to assess and mitigate the impacts of the pandemic on human rights through a highly collaborative process involving a range of UN entities. As a member of the UNSDG Task Team on Leaving No One Behind, Human Rights and the Normative Agenda, the Office coordinated a human rights review of the COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response Plans (SERPs) of 109 UNCTs in October.

### HIGHLIGHTS OF RESULTS IN 2020

- Tripartite efforts were undertaken with l’Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) to enhance the participation of Members of Parliaments in the UPR process.
- B-Tech Project was launched, signalling a new approach to engaging with the digital technology industry, and leading to the adoption of a series of short authoritative “foundational papers” that outline the relevance and practical implications of key UNGPs for accelerating the uptake of human rights in tech company business models.
- A joint regional UN Human Rights/ Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) mechanism for the protection of human rights defenders (HRDs) was enhanced in the Americas region, leading to an improved exchange of information between HRDs and strengthened capacity-building opportunities.
- Enhanced support was provided to the African Union on international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

## Diversity and Gender

**Respect for diversity, gender equality and inclusion is at the centre of the organizational culture of UN Human Rights and is fully supported by appropriate organizational arrangements.**

The OMP 2018-2021 includes a strong commitment towards promoting gender equality and respect for diversity. The plan has four gender-specific results and women are identified as one of three spotlight populations deserving particular attention in the results framework.

The OEAP on Diversity and Gender aims to ensure that respect for diversity, gender equality and inclusion is at the centre of the organizational culture of UN Human Rights. The OHCHR Gender Accreditation Programme, an innovative result of this work, was successfully piloted and rolled out in 2020. This initiative was showcased in the annual report of the Secretary-General on women, peace and security as a good practice to strengthen accountability by reinforcing monitoring frameworks.

In 2021, the OEAP will be converted into the OEAP on Inclusion: Race, Gender and Diversity. It will include additional indicators on race and revised indicators on gender and other forms of diversity.

### **HIGHLIGHTS OF RESULTS IN 2020**

- The OHCHR Gender Accreditation Programme was rolled out in the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (HRMMU) and the OHCHR Country Office in Colombia.
- The first fellow under the new Fellowship for LGBTI / Human Rights Defenders joined the Office.
- An introductory electronic course was launched on the human rights of LGBTI persons.
- UN Human Rights' first Disability Rights Strategy was developed.
- UN Human Rights is approaching gender parity for regular staff appointments at the professional and higher categories.
- A Working Group on Inclusion was established and tasked with drafting the revised OEAP on Inclusion.

## Rolling out the UN Human Rights Gender Accreditation Programme

In 2020, UN Human Rights rolled out its Gender Accreditation Programme in the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (HRMMU) and in its Country Office in Colombia. The impact of the implementation of the Programme is visible in participating and accredited offices, with an improvement of staff capacities to integrate gender and diversity into their work, an increase of activities and funds allocated to women's rights and gender and a deepened gender analysis in reports, planning and communication products.

The Programme was piloted in 2019 in Cambodia and in the State of Palestine.<sup>9</sup> In January, both countries received their accreditation. The implemented changes guided the gender work of the Office throughout the year.



The award ceremony, held in Geneva, in January, marked the successful end of the pilot stage of the Gender Accreditation Programme in Cambodia and in the State of Palestine. © OHCHR



Extract of infographics created by the Country Office in the State of Palestine to raise public awareness about women's rights and issues related to gender-based violence. © OHCHR

In the **State of Palestine**, OHCHR and the Palestinian Ministry of Women Affairs organized the country's most wide-reaching campaign to date to mark the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. Messages were communicated through social media, electronic LED screens and on television and radio. It contributed to raising public awareness about women's rights and gender equality, the availability of referral services and accountability mechanisms and the Government's obligations to end gender-based violence.



Awareness-raising material created by the Country Office in Cambodia on the impacts of COVID-19 on human rights, with a focus on domestic violence, discrimination and hate speech. © OHCHR

In **Cambodia**, the Office and UN Women developed a joint communication campaign on the impacts of COVID-19 on human rights, with a particular focus on domestic violence, discrimination and hate speech. Two radio spots on domestic violence were aired for three months in Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and Battambang, the three most populated cities of the country. On the occasion of Human Rights Day, under the global theme of "Placing human rights at the heart of the COVID-19 recovery," a "Right to Create" campaign was co-organized with the UNCT, the Delegation of the European Union, the Embassy of Sweden, artists and representatives of CSOs and vulnerable groups. An original music video was composed and written by young female artists, which centred on the music of Cambodia's first all-female drum troupe.

<sup>9</sup> All references to the State of Palestine should be understood in compliance with General Assembly resolution 67/19.



## Managing our Talent

**UN Human Rights is actively unleashing the full potential of its staff with focused talent and career management that is accessible to all.**

In 2020, the Office continued to invest in and realize the full potential of its staff alongside the challenges of COVID-19 alternate working arrangements and restrictions placed on the selections and appointments for regular budget posts.

Reviews examining and aligning conditions of employment advanced with the regularization of national staff in field offices. A comparative review of the roles and responsibilities of General Service staff was completed and steps were taken to begin the reclassification and realignment of identified posts.

Workforce planning activities benefited from increased transparency and greater granularity of information on geographical diversity and the representation of women in regular staff positions at Professional and higher categories at headquarters and in field locations.

Staff well-being and performance was enhanced through the promotion of new and existing strategies and measures aimed at supporting staff, such as the Dignity Contacts Network. The immediate introduction of dedicated psychological support strengthened mental health for staff from the outset of periods of confinement and alternate working arrangements.

Targeted support and access to learning opportunities was established for field-based staff through the promotion of the

### Bringing colleagues together during COVID-19 through virtual Coffee Briefings

During the pandemic, UN Human Rights Coffee Briefings continued to generate interest among staff members. Coffee Briefings were organized on diverse topics ranging from eradicating judicial gender stereotyping and dynamic knowledge to UN Human Rights' response to COVID-19 and the impacts of the pandemic on human rights around the world. The Coffee Briefings provided a platform for colleagues to exchange ideas, ask questions and interact, albeit only virtually.

Although there were statistically fewer Coffee Briefings during the year (15 in 2020 compared to 23 in 2019), 813 participants from both headquarters and the field participated in the sessions, compared to 703 in 2019. Coffee Briefings with internal and external speakers attracted record participation. All Coffee Briefings were recorded and the podcasts were made available on the UN Human Rights Intranet for colleagues who were unable to attend.

#### PEER LEARNING

**813**

staff members from HQ and the field participated in

**15**  
COFFEE  
BRIEFINGS 

new LinkedIn learning platform. Online peer learning formats facilitated remote working and provided a platform for colleagues to experience some level of normality through interactions and the exchange of ideas.

#### HIGHLIGHTS OF RESULTS IN 2020

- Regularization of national staff in field presences.
- Expanded Dignity Contacts Network to include coverage in the field.
- A new health and well-being action plan was implemented.
- LinkedIn and the Inspira e-Learning platforms were made accessible to UN Human Rights staff members, independent of their contract, thereby enabling all staff to take advantage of learning offerings worldwide.
- 813 staff members participated in 15 online thematic Coffee Briefings.
- 266 performance management online coaching sessions were held.

## Resource Mobilization

### **Investment in and support for UN Human Rights has expanded and donors are expressing confidence in the value delivered by these investments.**

Through the OEAP on Resource Mobilization, UN Human Rights invests in and supports the resource mobilization functions across the Office, resulting in increased donor confidence in the value delivered by these investments. As resource mobilization is about connecting and engaging with partners, the pandemic and the imposed restrictions created particular challenges for UN Human Rights to carry out its work under this OEAP. It nonetheless managed to successfully meet its extrabudgetary target. In fact, in 2020, a record was set as total voluntary contributions reached an all-time high of US\$224.3 million. Despite the COVID-19-related economic crisis, UN Human Rights continued to engage with donors and most of them maintained their support to the Office. In a number of cases, donors substantially increased that support.

Notwithstanding the healthy increase in voluntary contributions over the past five years, the ambitions and plans of UN Human Rights continue to be underfunded. Only 60 per cent of the financial requirements outlined in the Human Rights Annual Appeal for 2020 were covered. Consequently, an intensification of resource mobilization efforts is imperative to ensure that UN Human Rights is able to positively respond to the increasing number of requests that it receives for support. In addition, the Office needs to strengthen

its communication regarding the impact of those contributions. In 2020, UN Human Rights published a *Case for Support*, highlighting its unique selling points. This publication will be used for fundraising purposes, together with a set of compelling stories, country and thematic fact sheets as well as other communication materials that showcase the results of the work of UN Human Rights.

Resource mobilization capacity-building was initiated in 2020 to equip staff with tools and guidance to enable them to take full advantage of resource mobilization opportunities. Resource mobilization continues to operate with less staff capacity than required, which hinders its ability to explore untapped funding sources and diversify its donor base. Investing in staff capacity and competencies at the global, regional and country levels therefore remains critical to maximizing UN Human Rights' resource mobilization efforts. This will constitute a core element of an Office-wide strategy moving forward.

### **HIGHLIGHTS OF RESULTS IN 2020**

- UN Human Rights' 2020 extrabudgetary income increased by more than US\$45 million (25.3 per cent) compared to 2019.
- US\$16.1 million was received from UN pooled funds.
- 119 results-based fundraising proposals, including on specific spotlight populations (youth, women and persons with disabilities), and 167 reports were submitted to donors.
- US\$5.8 million was raised as a direct result of the COVID-19 compendium of nine targeted fundraising proposals.
- Five human rights stories, the Annual Report and the Annual Appeal were produced.
- The UN Human Rights *Case for Support* was produced and uploaded to the website.
- Dialogue with donor countries was enhanced through nine consultations and 13 briefings.
- The first phase of the development of the collaboration with Salesforce was fully implemented.

## Making the case for the added value of Emergency Response Teams (ERTs) in UN Human Rights regional offices

In 2020, UN Human Rights continued to strengthen its communication regarding the impact of its work through the development of an increased number of donor-driven materials. One example was the compendium of COVID-19-related proposals, which included specific content on the key role played by ERTs in the context of the pandemic.

Building on concrete outputs, the case was made for strengthening UN Human Rights regional offices by developing their capacity to identify, engage with and respond to emerging crises at country and regional levels and therefore help absorb the COVID-19 shock. The proposal was prepared with inputs from headquarters, Surge Initiative teams and regional offices and demonstrated that ERTs, complemented by operational capacity related to ESCRs, could contribute to socio-economic responses to the pandemic.

Through this proposal that highlighted the value-added of the Office, an additional US\$4.2 million was raised for ERTs, which will facilitate the establishment of new teams, in 2021, in the UN Human Rights Regional Offices for Central Africa, Central America and South America.

## Operations Management

**UN Human Rights managers are enabling the most efficient and responsible use of all available resources, supported by the effective deployment of relevant technologies.**

The UN Human Rights OEAP on Operations Management aims to facilitate and expedite the implementation of mandates through the effective and efficient use of financial, human and physical resources, aided by the use of pertinent IT tools.

Results to date demonstrate that the Office has undertaken significant efforts

to manage its operations in accordance with modern principles. For instance, the Office completed its first comprehensive Risk Assessment during the reporting period. Moreover, in response to the pandemic, UN Human Rights successfully streamlined its work and implemented distance working. This showed how flexible and responsive the Office can be in a crisis, in accordance with the principles of Business Continuity that it has promoted for several years. With a renewed focus on field presences to ensure their full compliance with relevant regulations, rules and instructions and to enhance accountability, the Field Administrative Manual was

updated. A meeting of field administrative staff was organized and a community of practice, called AdminNet, was created to enable colleagues from around the world to share their knowledge about administration. Human Resources worked diligently to ensure that the Office is more people-centred and culturally diverse and that human talent is nurtured. Relevant IT tools were purchased and updated, within budgetary limits, and the OICT rules on the use of non-standard software and hardware were implemented.

### **HIGHLIGHTS OF RESULTS IN 2020**

- The Field Administrative Manual was updated.
- A Human Resources Dashboard was created to consolidate and present relevant information for use by senior management.
- The UN Human Rights Intranet was updated with improved access for all staff globally.
- An AdminNet community of practice was established to enable UN Human Rights administrative staff from around the world to share issues and topics of interest.
- A LeadingNet community of practice was established to enable UN Human Rights managers in all duty stations to collaborate and support one another in relation to management issues and advice.
- An electronic correspondence application was developed and piloted.
- Business continuity was ensured throughout the COVID-19 period.
- UN Human Rights joined the COVID-19 Aviation Service to secure seats for staff on World Food Programme/United Nations Humanitarian Air Service flights in the absence of commercial flight availability.
- IT arrangements enabled all staff to work remotely, with uninterrupted access to virtual meeting platforms. Significant efforts were exerted to ensure that the Human Rights Council, treaty body and special procedures experts were able to function effectively, despite considerable logistical challenges.

## **Updating the UN Human Rights Field Administrative Manual**

In 2020, UN Human Rights revised and finalized the Field Administrative Manual. The updated Manual, which was launched in March 2021, will serve as a useful tool for UN Human Rights staff in the field. More specifically, it sets out the information that is relevant to carrying out administrative functions in field presences, thereby providing easily accessible and improved guidance for staff and ensuring enhanced accountability for managers, in accordance with recommendations made by internal and external auditors. The Manual illustrates the organization's emphasis on supporting field presences, which was highlighted as an important aspect in the Operations Management Action Plan.