

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 that 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 2021 (on pages 144.)

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 extra-budgetary funds, including unearmarked funds, were managed in 2021. 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 2021, the Board was composed of Mr. Morten Kjaerum (Denmark) (Chairperson); Ms. Azita Berar Awad (Iran); Ms. Valeriya Lutkovska (Ukraine);

Mr. Santiago Corcuera-Cabezut (Mexico) and Ms. Nozipho January-Bardill (South Africa).

As of 31 December, the Fund had received a total of US\$22,989,945 in contributions, which added to the balance from 2020, providing the increased predictability of resources for greater stability of the programmes the Board has been advocating for. In 2021, the total expenditure of the Fund amounted to US\$21,934,474. The balance between contributions and expenditures as of 31 December 2021 continued reflecting, as was the case in 2020, the late receipt of some large contributions, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on a number of planned activities and the need to secure an adequate level of reserves to ensure continuity of work into 2022. The increasing contributions from Member States to support technical cooperation, in particular to support the deployment of human rights advisers under the United Nations Sustainable Development Group Strategy is very much welcomed by the Board.

In 2021, the Fund provided resources for technical cooperation programmes designed to build strong human rights frameworks at the national level in 64 regions, countries and territories (from 53 in 2020), through 54 human rights



Board of Trustees participate at the Police Training in Chad in November 2021. © OHCHR

advisers and human rights mainstreaming projects in:

Argentina, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Republic of the Congo, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, the Republic of Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Mozambique, Myanmar (based in Bangkok), Nepal, Nigeria, the Republic of North Macedonia, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, Rwanda, Samoa, Serbia, Sierra Leone, South Caucasus (Georgia), Sri Lanka, Suriname, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Zambia and Zimbabwe; six human rights components of peace missions in Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Haiti, Libya, Somalia and Sudan (Darfur); and four country and stand-alone offices in Chad, Mauritania, Mexico and the State of Palestine.⁴

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. The increased funding has allowed allocations to expand support to, for example, the country offices in Chad, Niger and the opening of the newest country office in Burkina Faso as well as the work on inequalities.

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 a particular 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 continued to enhance 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, in particular to facilitate access for individuals and groups facing discrimination and exclusion, as well as delivering capacity-building initiatives to combat inequality and promote gender equality and empowerment and women's rights.

⁴ 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 2021

DONOR	US\$	EARMARKING
Denmark	4,496,547	VFTC
Finland	2,439,024	VFTC
India	200,000	VFTC
Luxembourg	450,450	VFTC
Philippines	50,000	VFTC
Spain	112,613	VFTC
Thailand	100,000	VFTC
United States of America	1,150,000	VFTC
(a) Total contributions earmarked to VFTC	8,998,635	
Australia	499,643	Activities in the Asia-Pacific region (allocated to Papua New Guinea, the Philippines and Timor-Leste)
	271,950	The Philippines (UN Joint Programme)
Canada	90,909	Sri Lanka
France	146,341	Chad
	73,171	Mauritania
	88,548	Bosnia
Germany	159,872	Burkina Faso
	44,998	Mexico (support to OHCHR's work on disappearances)
	236,128	OHCHR's work in the State of Palestine*
IOM	113,161	Haiti (response to the needs of vulnerable Haitian migrants and displaced persons)
	10,592	Mauritania
Italy	227,015	Afghanistan
Lithuania	22,523	Georgia
Malta	17,202	Libya
	359,626	Haiti
	719,252	OHCHR's work in the Sahel region (Chad)
Norway	119,875	OHCHR's work in the Sahel region (Niger)
	299,688	OHCHR's work in the Sahel region (Mauritania)
	503,476	OHCHR's work in the State of Palestine*

OIF	7,132	Chad (workshop to strengthen the capacities of NHRIs)
Republic of Korea	50,000	The Philippines (UN Joint Programme)
	500,000	Russian Federation (consolidating the Human Rights Master's Programme)
Russian Federation	50,000	Russian Federation (activities of the Federal and Regional Ombudspersons for human rights in the Russian Federation)
	40,000	Russian Federation (regional seminars on business and human rights)
Saudi Arabia	200,000	OHCHR's work in the State of Palestine*
UNDP	8,418,566	Deployment of human rights advisers
	267,500	Support to human rights advisers
UNFPA	51,531	Mexico (to implement the Extraordinary Forensic Identification Mechanism)
UNHCR - Mozambique	140,000	Mozambique (Human Rights mainstreaming and support to the Protection Cluster in Cabo Delgado)
	167,644	Kenya (Addressing violence against women by strengthening access to justice - Phase II)
UN Women	93,632	Kenya (Amplifying women's voices in the prevention of violence against women in elections in Bungoma and Vihiga Counties)
United Kingdom	1,335	OHCHR's work in the State of Palestine* (COVID-19 information available to persons with disabilities)
(b) Total contributions earmarked to specific projects	13,991,310	
Unearmarked funds allocated to VFTC		Unearmarked
(c) Total unearmarked funds	0	
Total (a) + (b) + (c)	22,989,945	
Expenditure	21,934,474	

* 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 2021, the Trust Fund received US\$1,950,794 in voluntary contributions. For more information, see pages 307-310 of the online report.

UN TRUST FUND FOR A HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN CAMBODIA

Voluntary contributions and expenditure in 2021

Donor	US\$
Australia*	71,378
Germany	225,225
Japan	18,181
Republic of Korea	50,000
Sweden	1,535,010
UNDP	25,000
UNFPA	26,000
Total	1,950,794
Expenditure	1,572,733

* 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 (HRC) 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 during which 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 received a total of US\$103,706 in pledges and contributions compared to US\$0 in 2020 and US\$147,167 in 2019. In 2021, the total expenditure of the Fund amounted to US\$230,276, compared to US\$190,047 in 2020 and US\$309,562 in 2019.

Despite the continuing pandemic and associated restrictions in 2021, the UPR continued to see a 100 per cent participation rate by States under review, either in person or virtually, including with the participation of more women delegates from LDC/SIDS. The adjustments that enabled the Council to work in a hybrid mode benefited LDC and SIDS, which had the opportunity to attend their respective UPR reviews virtually or in person. As travel restrictions eased, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and the United Republic of Tanzania were able to receive travel grants and attend in person

reviews at the thirty-ninth session, in Geneva, in November.

The terms of reference of the Fund also allow the financing of briefings prior to the sessions of the Working Group on the UPR to assist countries in the preparatory process. In October 2021, together with the International Organization of La Francophonie (OIF), OHCHR organized a workshop on strengthening the role of parliamentarians from OIF Member States in the UPR process. A total of 18 parliamentarians travelled to Geneva and participated in the workshop in-person, while four attended virtually.

UN VOLUNTARY FUND FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE UPR

Voluntary contributions and expenditure in 2021

Donor	US\$
OIF	53,706
Saudi Arabia	50,000
Total	103,706
Expenditure	230,276

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 and further strengthened by resolution 16/21 in 2011. This financial mechanism was created to provide a source of financial and technical assistance to help countries, in particular, Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), to implement the recommendations emanating from the UPR, with the consent of and in consultation with the countries concerned.

As established in its terms of reference, the Fund provides support to a wide range of activities, including: the co-funding of programmes and projects aimed at implementing the UPR outcomes; the development of national capacity and expertise for the implementation of the UPR outcomes; the integration of UPR outcomes into United Nations common country programming documents, and coordination of United Nations, multi-lateral and bilateral action in support of the UPR outcomes; and the exchange of information and sharing of best practices, including through the organization of regional and subregional meetings, seminars, consultations and other interactions. Policy guidance on the operationalization of the Fund is provided by the Board of Trustees of the Voluntary Fund, composed of the members of the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights.

As of 31 December, the Fund had received a total of US\$212,195 in pledges and contributions compared to US\$346,597 in 2020. In 2021, the total expenditure of the Fund amounted to US\$559,197 compared to US\$512,511 in 2020.

In 2021, the Fund approved financial and technical assistance for projects in 23 countries in Africa, the Americas, Asia Pacific, Europe and Central Asia and the Middle East. Project implementation continued to be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to a delayed implementation of some of them.

UN VOLUNTARY FUND FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UPR

Voluntary contributions and expenditure in 2021

Donor	US\$
France	12,195
India	100,000
Kazakhstan	15,000
Philippines	25,000
Republic of Korea	50,000
Singapore	10,000
Total	212,195
Expenditure	559,197

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 (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the work of the Human Rights Council was established under HRC resolution 19/26 in 2012. The Fund became operational in 2014. The objective of the 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 Council sessions of the HRC and the fellowship programmes. The Fund also provides training sessions for government officials in accordance with the HRC mandate under resolution 19/26.

Throughout the pandemic, the Trust Fund participated in multiple webinars organized by a variety of stakeholders (Member States, NGOs/think tanks, IGOs) to ensure that LDCs/SIDS continue to receive adequate support and that No One is Left Behind. The Trust Fund also increased its presence on social media platforms, in particular on Twitter. Regular updates on HRC discussions have been sent to former and selected delegates of the Trust Fund.

In February 2021, the Trust Fund Secretariat organized two virtual induction courses in anticipation of the forty-sixth session of the HRC. A total of 71 government officials (38 women, 33 men) from 26 LDCs/SIDS (14 in Africa, eight in Asia-Pacific, four in the Caribbean) participated in the three-hour

induction sessions. The majority of participants (68 per cent) were based in capitals, 21 per cent in Geneva and 11 per cent in North America and Europe. Representatives of six countries without a permanent mission in Geneva also attended. Two sessions were held to accommodate different time zones. The courses were conducted via the Kudo platform, with simultaneous interpretation in English and French. According to the polls conducted at the end of the sessions, 90 per cent of the participants indicated that the course had met or exceeded their expectations.

In March 2021, the Council decided to convene a high-level panel discussion during the high-level segment of its forty-ninth session (A/HRC/DEC/46/115). It requested that OHCHR, through the Trust Fund, secure the participation in the session of Member States without a permanent mission in Geneva, to facilitate the universal participation of all Member States. It also requested OHCHR to prepare a summary report on the panel discussion to be submitted to the Human Rights Council at its fiftieth session. The Decision was co-sponsored by 160 Member States, making it the most sponsored HRC resolution/decision in its history.

The Fund developed an e-learning course on the HRC and its mechanisms in 2016 to complement the in-person induction courses. As of 31 December 2021, a total of 6,368 persons including 2,498 women had completed the e-learning course. Of those who completed the training, 1,784 were from LDCs/SIDS. Completion has sharply increased in the years since it was first introduced: from 92 in 2016 to 4,083 in 2021.

In 2021, the Trust Fund received US\$469,083 in voluntary contributions

compared to US\$377,988 in 2020. Twelve countries contributed to the Trust Fund in 2021. Only three contributed in 2015.

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

Voluntary contributions and expenditure in 2021

Donor	US\$
Australia	3,569
France	73,171
Germany	23,256
India	50,000
Italy	24,213
Luxembourg	23,209
Netherlands	55,991
Poland	24,967
Portugal	68,254
Singapore	5,000
Switzerland	10,000
United Kingdom	107,455
Total	469,083
Expenditure	449,032

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 UN mechanisms, meetings and processes.

The Fund provides support to indigenous peoples' representatives to participate 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 (HRC), including its Universal Periodic Review (UPR), and the human rights treaty bodies. With the recent expansion of the Fund's mandate in 2019, it now enables indigenous peoples' participation in the Forum on Business and Human Rights (FBHR) and meetings of the Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC).

In addition, the Fund also acts as a mechanism to assist in building the expertise of indigenous representatives. It aims to build the capacities of indigenous peoples to ensure their meaningful and effective participation in UN meetings and processes.

During 2021, due to COVID-19 and related restrictions, the Fund was unable to provide support to indigenous peoples' representatives to enable their travel and participation in UN meetings. Given this background, attention was focused instead on capacity-building efforts by offering several online trainings and awareness-raising activities in collaboration with partner UN agencies and entities, civil society organizations and independent UN experts.

In 2021, four online trainings were conducted in English, French, Spanish and Russian, in preparation to the fourteenth Session of the UN EMRIP in July 2021, with the participation of over 400 indigenous representatives from Asia and the Pacific, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Arctic and the Russian Federation. Three side events were organized on the situation of indigenous children in Asia and the Pacific, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean, and two internal consultations were undertaken with the Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing and the Special Rapporteur on the rights to water and sanitation. Moreover, on 9 August 2021, a celebration on the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, was hosted by OHCHR Regional Office in Central Africa.

In 2021, the Fund received a total of US\$ 51,091 in voluntary contributions compared to US\$ 543,572 in 2020. The total expenditure of the Fund amounted to US\$ 255,716 in 2021 compared to US\$ 102,150 in 2020.

UN VOLUNTARY FUND FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Voluntary contributions and expenditure in 2021

Donor	US\$
Australia	3,569
Estonia	22,523
Philippines	25,000
Total	51,091
Expenditure	255,716

Adjusting the Indigenous and Minorities Fellowship Programme to adapt to COVID-19: The stories of three participants



Alice Matthew, Senior Indigenous Fellow. © OHCHR

I am Alice, and I belong to the indigenous Dusun Tagahas from Sabah, Malaysian Borneo. I participated in the Indigenous Fellowship Programme in 2018 and was then recruited as Senior Indigenous Fellow in 2021-2022. I was among the three senior indigenous and minority fellows hosted at the OHCHR Regional Office for Southeast Asia.

During my Senior Fellowship, I was assigned to work with the Climate Change team. My tasks included the identification of inputs from the indigenous peoples' perspectives on key human rights issues (business and human rights, land and environment, climate change, land rights, Forest, parks and community forest laws and the impact on indigenous peoples, and key human rights issues in the region linked to COVID-19), monitoring and documenting trends and highlighting good practices.

One of my takeaways from this fellowship is the strategic role that fellows can play in building bridges and reliable connections between OHCHR and the affected communities at the grassroots level that may not have access to the UN and international human rights mechanisms. My year with the Climate Change Team strengthened the work relationship, raised visibility of indigenous peoples in the UN system and opened up opportunities to build more alliances. In a way, my experience also highlighted the need to amplify diversity and include more indigenous peoples within the system.



Mikhael Benjamin, former Minority Fellow. © OHCHR

Mikhael is a national of Iraq from the Assyrian-Christian community, who are an ethno-religious minority and indigenous peoples in the country. He has devoted his life to advocating for the rights of his community. He was selected to participate in the Minority Fellowship Programme in 2010.

After the programme, Mikhael undertook various projects on minority rights, implemented across the country and abroad. He participated in several sessions of the Council and Forum on Minority Issues, as co-founder of the Alliance of Iraqi Minorities (AIM). Today, AIM is a large network of 23 NGOs working for Iraqi minorities throughout Iraq.

In 2014, Mikhael's advocated against land grabbing in Assyrian areas and with his organization submitted a report to the UN committee which monitors Iraq's compliance with the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. As a result, the Committee in its concluding observations recommended that the Government put an end to the illegal expropriation of Assyrian lands. Mikhael's organization has also successfully advocated for the adoption in Kurdistan of a law for the protection of minority rights and is working with both Kurdistan and central governments to develop a school curriculum, inclusive of minorities.

As a former Minority Fellow, Mikhael was selected in 2020 to participate in the OHCHR Senior Minorities Fellowship Programme. He was deployed in Erbil with the Human Rights Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). Mikhael supported UNAMI's focus on minority groups, through monitoring, raising awareness about international human rights standards, and outreach to civil society actors. He also contributed to research, analysis and reporting

on a number of draft laws concerning minority rights to be discussed at the Iraqi Parliament.

Mikhael stresses that the turning point in his career of activism was participating in the Minority Fellowship Programme in Geneva in 2010, which has shaped his subsequent advocacy work and ten years later led to his deployment as Senior Minority Fellow in Erbil.



Isa Adamu, former Senior indigenous Fellow. © OHCHR

I am Isa Adamu, an Mbororo pastoralist and one of the indigenous peoples in Cameroon. I grew up looking after our livestock and cattle rearing is our main traditional livelihood. My parents did not have the opportunity to go to school and I was among the first to do so in my community. I used to walk several kilometres to go to school. Seeing the impact of marginalization and exclusion in my community at an early age motivated me to study and I am now one of the few Mbororo lawyers in my community.

I founded the Mbororo Student Association while at the Faculty of Law at the University of Yaoundé and subsequently worked with MBOSCUDA (The Mbororo Social and Cultural Association), the largest indigenous organization in Cameroon. In 2015, I was selected to participate in the OHCHR Indigenous Fellowship Programme. In 2020-2021, I was recruited as Senior Fellow and had the opportunity to participate in an on-the-job training at the OHCHR Regional Office for Central Africa.

My fellowship was very timely as it took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, and I could help indigenous peoples and minorities who were the most impacted. I organized community and field visits to Baka indigenous communities and Mbororo pastoralists. Awareness-raising on COVID-19 was my key task. I undertook an organizational mapping of indigenous organizations and researched on government led initiatives to raise awareness about the pandemic. As a result, a database of indigenous communities and their organizations is now available, which the Regional Office is using to coordinate, share information and monitor the situation of indigenous peoples in the region.

During my fellowship, I also advocated with government ministries to consider indigenous peoples in their annual planning. As a result, a National Development Participatory Programme has been developed, in which the role and activities to be carried by indigenous peoples are outlined.

Being coached by human rights experts as mentors from OHCHR has been greatly empowering. I recently enrolled into a Ph.D. Programme where I will conduct research on strengthening the management of natural resources by indigenous Mbororo pastoralists in Cameroon through conflict resolution, with the objective of finding a common ground at the community level to solve these conflicts. The OHCHR Indigenous Fellowship Programme is a life changing initiative. At the community level, it's transformative!

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 2021, the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery received a total of US\$ 1,510,218 in contributions, compared to US\$ 848,240 in 2020. In 2021, the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture received a total of US\$ 10,564,313 in contributions, compared to US\$ 10,446,987 in 2020.

UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTARY TRUST FUND ON CONTEMPORARY FORMS OF SLAVERY

The UN Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery was established by General Assembly resolution 46/122, in 1991, with the mandate of providing 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 brought to light on a regular basis, including 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.

The UN Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery grew from US\$614,115 in contributions in 2018 to reach the milestone of more than US\$ 1.5 million in contributions for the first time in its history in 2021, the year of its thirtieth anniversary.

In total, the UN Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery awarded 37 direct assistance grants, in 30 countries in all of the world's regions, to assist more than 17,000 survivors of slavery. During its twenty-sixth session (22-26 November), the Slavery Fund's Board of Trustees recommended 43 annual grants for civil society organizations to assist over 29,000 slavery survivors in 33 countries in 2022.

On 2 December, on International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, the Fund released a communications toolkit on a Trello Board that hosts audiovisual materials in English, French and Spanish.

UN VOLUNTARY TRUST FUND ON CONTEMPORARY FORMS OF SLAVERY

Voluntary contributions and expenditure in 2021

Donor	US\$
Andorra	22,523
Australia	135,617
Germany	518,620
Greece	11,723
Luxembourg	17,442
Portugal	11,604
Qatar	40,000
Republic of Korea	50,000
Saudi Arabia	85,000
Spain	22,523
United Kingdom	595,166
Total	1,510,218
Expenditure	846,797

UN Fund and NGOs: Fighting contemporary forms of slavery for 30 years

“In 2012, I was rescued,” said Marinaldo Soares, a survivor of forced labour from Brazil. “Friends of mine who were also working in slavery-like conditions reported the abuse and, thanks to them, we were rescued and received assistance. My rights were recognized and through my experience I learned how to protect the rights of others.”

“We are still fighting against slavery. We don’t want people to experience what we did.”

Soares was rescued by the Mobile Inspection Working Group thanks to a complaint received by the Carmen Bascarán Centre for the Defence of Life and Human Rights, based in the State of Maranhão, Brazil. The Centre assists efforts towards eradicating forced labour and assisting victims of human trafficking and slavery, with the support of the UN Slavery Fund. The Centre’s approach focuses on labour rights and community outreach, aiming to prevent vulnerable individuals from falling victim to exploitative practices.

Four years after he was rescued, Soares went on to win the 2016 National Human Rights Award in Brazil, in the ‘Combating Slavery’ category.

“To prevent people from being pushed into slavery, we need to inform them about their rights and ensure these rights are protected,” Soares said. “We need to invest in vulnerable communities for their development - people still fall prey to slavery because they are hungry and have nothing in their community. We also need to improve public policies for survivors.”

Soares recounted his story during an online webinar organized by UN Human Rights

and the University of Nottingham, to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the UN Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery.

Grassroots organizations advocating for change

During the webinar, several grantees of the Fund were invited to describe the role they play in supporting survivors, and to share good practices that better protect victims and prevent slavery.

Different and Equal is an Albanian-based NGO that provides shelter and comprehensive reintegration assistance to victims of trafficking. Mariana Meshi, Executive Director, said that although her country has legal and policy instruments for the protection of victims of trafficking, her organization advocates for a specific and more comprehensive anti-slavery law.

“Fragmentation of legislation with provisions scattered in different acts makes it very difficult to implement an effective policy for the protection of victims of trafficking,” she said.

In Singapore, the Humanitarian Organization for Migration Economics (HOME) runs a shelter for migrant domestic workers and provides them with humanitarian and legal assistance. Jaya Anil Kumar, Research and Advocacy Manager at HOME, explained that domestic migrant workers are excluded from the Employment Act, the primary labour legislation in Singapore, and their work permits are tied to their employers.

“Work permit conditions stipulate that employers ‘shall control and supervise’



Thirtieth anniversary banner © OHCHR

their foreign employees. The Singapore Government further imposes financial burdens on employers to ensure they undertake this obligation,” Kumar said.

People on the move facing increasing challenges

Often, governments provide only temporary solutions for the displaced that do not sufficiently take their needs into account, thus increasing the risk of them being drawn into slavery, said Tomoya Obokata, UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, who presented a report on the nexus between displacement and contemporary slavery to the Human Rights Council in September. Access to the formal job market is one critical issue surrounding this, he added.

“States should grant access to decent work in law and practice to displaced persons,” Obokata said. “In this way, they could also contribute to the local economy and become self-reliant and less vulnerable to contemporary forms of slavery.”

UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTARY FUND FOR THE VICTIMS OF TORTURE

The UN 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 civil society organizations, including to support rehabilitation centres, grassroots organizations and legal aid programmes.

The Torture Fund grew from US\$ 9,375,555 in contributions in 2018 to US\$10,564,313 in 2021, the year of its fortieth anniversary. Grants increased from 173 in 2018, to 177 in 2021. In total, the UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture awarded 171 annual direct assistance grants, six capacity-building grants and seven emergency grants, in 79 countries in all regions of the world, to assist more than 47,000 survivors of torture and their family members. During its fifty-fourth session (4-8 October), which took place virtually, the Torture Fund's Board of Trustees recommended 181 annual direct assistance grants and 7 capacity-building grants for civil society organizations to assist over 46,000 torture survivors in 92 countries in 2022.

A Group of Friends for the Torture Fund, comprised of 16 Member States, was established in 2019, and the Slavery Fund is advancing on a similar initiative. Coordination was strengthened with other UN anti-torture and anti-slavery mechanisms, notably through joint public statements and participation in international commemorative events on 26 June and 2 December, which increased the cohesion of UN efforts to combat these practices. Eminent experts and survivors have joined the respective Board of Trustees, thereby reinforcing the victim-centred approach. They have also contributed to increasing the Fund's visibility, notably during the joint anniversary campaigns, including activities and audiovisual and social media assets to highlight the stories of survivors who are assisted by the Funds on their path to recovery and redress.

UN VOLUNTARY FUND FOR VICTIMS OF TORTURE

Voluntary contributions and expenditure in 2021

Donor	US\$
Andorra	11,628
Austria	17,836
Canada	47,657
Czech Republic	9,381
Denmark	802,955
France	121,951
Germany	521,975
India	50,000
Ireland	157,343
Italy	30,266
Liechtenstein	80,559
Luxembourg	17,442
Mexico	10,000
Norway	359,626
Portugal	5,974
Portugal	5,631
Qatar	30,000
Saudi Arabia	80,000
Switzerland	200,000
United States of America	8,000,000
private donors	4,091
Total	10,564,313
Expenditure	8,958,694

“A victim of torture is one too many,” says UN expert

“A victim of torture is one too many,” said Nils Melzer, UN Special Rapporteur on Torture at a special webinar held to mark the fortieth anniversary of the UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture (the Fund) and the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. “It’s a man-made disaster that we can end here and now if we so decide.”

As thousands of people around the world continue to be subjected to torture every day, the webinar discussed the urgency in fostering an open and secure civic space for victims in order for them to obtain accountability, reparation and rehabilitation. The panel was organized by the UN Human Rights Office, in coordination with the American University, Washington College of Law, Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law.

Thomas McCarthy, the first Secretary of the Fund, noted the Fund’s historic beginning. Before the Fund’s inception, he explained, the UN Trust Fund for Chile was created in the late 1970s to provide support to victims whose human rights had been violated by detention or imprisonment in that country. The General Assembly recognized that torture was occurring worldwide, so they expanded the mandate to have a global reach and established the Fund, he said.

Civil society organizations play a crucial role in protecting torture victims, even while working in constrained environments, explained Ilze Brands Kehris, the UN Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights. Many challenges include harassment and threats, criminalization of activities leading to arrests and lawsuits, and less access to funding. These

roadblocks continue to increase, especially online, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

One of the first grantees of the Fund in 1984, the Comité para la Defensa de la Salud, la Etica y los Derechos Humanos (CODESEDH) in Argentina, currently provides medical, psychological, legal and social services to 465 torture victims, said Dr. Norberto Liwski, President of CODESEDH. He stressed the importance of offering victims and their families comprehensive care to overcome post-traumatic stress.

“These areas must have interdisciplinary teams duly and rigorously trained in ethical values and sustained professional intervention from the perspective of human rights,” Liwski said.

While the Fund enables victims to recover from trauma, there are preventative monitoring measures found in the Optional Protocol to help prevent torture from taking place such as making unannounced visits to places where someone is under continuous supervision, control and not free to leave, according to Suzanne Jabbour, Chair of the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (SPT).

For those organizations in fear of reprisals, the UN Committee against Torture and other treaty bodies adopted guidelines in 2015 on the handling of allegations of reprisals against individuals and organizations cooperating with the treaty bodies.

“In the past years, we have observed cases of reprisals against organizations that provided information to the Committee, either during the reporting procedure, during the individual complaints



Activists during a rally marking the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture in Islamabad, Pakistan, on 26 June 2021. © EPA-EFE/ SOHAIL SHAHZAD

procedure or during the enquiry procedure,” said Claude Heller, Chair, of the Committee against Torture.

Civil society face many challenges in their work. The Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (HRFT) is an organization helping to rehabilitate victims where there is an increase in the systematic and widespread practices of torture. A grantee of the Fund since 2008, HRFT has aided 3,800 torture survivors at its five rehabilitation centres, according to Elçin Türkdoğan, HRFT Programmes Coordinator.

“The crackdown on civil society in Turkey has intensified since 2013,” Türkdoğan said. “In the current oppressive atmosphere in Turkey, torture survivors may refrain from applying for rehabilitation or may interrupt rehabilitation due to fear and security concerns.”

“These brave people who have survived torture have gone on to become activists in the anti-torture community, global leaders and human rights defenders and many were tortured as a reprisal for their commitment to human rights work,” Nathanson said. “Grantees bring a richness to the work globally and we will continue to support them.”

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 levels 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 to support training programmes for NPMs. In 2021, the Fund awarded grants amounting to US\$257,100 to support 17 torture prevention projects in 13 States parties to the Optional Protocol. In 2021, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the transition to a new mode of grant processing in the Secretariat, delays in the disbursement of grants occurred and adjustments were required for some of the ongoing projects, resulting in the extension of their implementation periods.

In 2021, the Fund received contributions and pledges of US\$ 434,761, which enabled the launch of the 2022 Call for Applications.

Since 2012, the Fund has supported 103 technical cooperation projects in 30 countries worldwide. These projects were instrumental in facilitating legislative and institutional changes in the 30 countries and supported the compliance of laws with international human rights standards on torture prevention and on the creation of NPMs. This resulted in revised 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 to monitor places of detention (through training, study visits, elaboration of internal rules and methodologies, production of manuals, interview protocols and guidelines) and to the enhanced visibility of NPMs (through improved annual reports, their translation into national languages, radio transmissions, brochures and posters). The projects also enabled the purchase of 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 CRPD, overall contributing to improved protection of vulnerable groups

(women, persons with disabilities, children and persons living with HIV/AIDS).

Given the focus of the Special Fund on the establishment and strengthening of the national preventive mechanisms, and in response to increasing demand from the field, OHCHR developed a practical guide entitled *Preventing torture: the role of national preventive mechanisms*, available in English, French, Russian and Spanish.⁵ The Arabic version of the guide and the training materials accompanying the guide are expected to be released in 2022.

OP-CAT SPECIAL FUND

Voluntary contributions and expenditure in 2021

Donor	US\$
Czech Republic	9,381
Denmark	200,610
France	60,976
Germany	118,064
Portugal	23,209
Spain	22,523
Total	434,761
Expenditure	325,302

⁵ The guide is available on the [OHCHR website](#).

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, the capacity of UN Human Rights to provide conceptual and operational support to unforeseen mandates or situations requiring rapid response has significantly increased.

In 2021, despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, OHCHR managed to utilise the Contingency Fund for emergency deployments. A total of 13 human rights officers (five women, eight men) were deployed to seven countries with deteriorating human rights situations, including during electoral periods.

In Niger, a surge capacity team was deployed to strengthen the capacity of the field offices to monitor and report on the human rights situation during the elections; in a similar context in Chad, the team deployed was also part of the overall UN approach to provide technical assistance to the Government and other actors in the organization of the elections, promoting a peaceful political climate that respects human rights.

The Office also deployed a surge capacity team to the OHCHR Technical mission in Bolivia to support the monitoring of the human rights situation during the electoral period. And, in view of the importance of maintaining OHCHR's presence in Belarus, and thus ensuring the continuity of the Office's engagement with the Government and other stakeholders, the Office deployed one human rights officer to Minsk; and to Haiti, following the earthquake of 14 August, a human rights officer was also deployed to provide support to Human Rights Section on the ground to ensure an adequate delivery on the country project and mandate. In Gambia, the surge capacity team was deployed to support the UNCT in the lead up to presidential elections. In Uganda, a surge capacity team was deployed to assist the Country Office with human rights monitoring and capacity-building activities during the general elections. As part of a deployment that began in 2020, a surge capacity team in Ethiopia documented violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law during the armed conflict in Tigray.

As of 31 December, the Fund had received a total of US\$485,319 in pledges and contributions to enable these deployments compared to US\$449,547 in 2020. In 2021, the total expenditure of the Fund amounted to US\$285,438 compared to US\$96,216 in 2020. As of 31 December, the remaining balance of US\$816,165 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 2021

Donor	US\$
France	134,146
Germany	112,613
Poland	12,483
Republic of Korea	50,000
Sweden	176,077
Total	485,319
Expenditure	285,438

Promoting credible and peaceful presidential elections in Chad



Surge capacity team for the OHCHR Chad Country Office in the context of the April 2021 presidential election. © OHCHR

In March 2021, I led a surge capacity team that was deployed to Chad between 23 March and 8 May 2021 to support OHCHR Chad Office to conduct a set of activities during the April 2021 presidential elections. These included monitoring and reporting on human rights issues, developing an early warning system to prevent and respond to human rights violations during the electoral period, and strengthening the office contribution to the UN system's efforts to support the Chadian authorities in conducting the 2021 elections.

Despite challenges related to the security situation including following the death of Chadian President Idriss Déby Itno, announced by the media on 20 April, restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic and the limited capacity of the Office, the surge team was integrated into the Chad Country Office and achieved most of its objectives. The team

documented serious human rights violations committed by Chadian Internal Security Forces (police, gendarmerie and security service) and the army, including violations of the rights to life and physical integrity, the right to peaceful assembly and the right to freedom of expression. Under the leadership of the Head of Office, I led the compilation and drafting of field daily reports in both English and French, produced using information from the five OHCHR teams that were deployed across the country and shared with OHCHR senior leadership, UNOCC in New York and the UNCT. A substantive internal report related to human rights violations during the electoral period including key recommendations to the Chadian authorities, the United Nations and other stakeholders in Chad was released on 28 May. The surge team also participated in the training of security forces in charge of ensuring security during the elections, upholding human rights during the electoral period and engaging CSOs and human rights defenders.

Good practices were observed in the context of this mission. These included a smooth integration of the surge team into the Chad Country Office, the preparation of meetings, targeted trainings for security forces, and coordination between various OHCHR entities including the Emergency Response Section, Africa Branch, the Country Office, and the United Nations Country Team in Chad. The delivery of capacity building activities including a training for the gendarmes and regular engagement with civil society organisation and regular contacts of the Head of Office

with key Ministers, especially of justice and of internal affairs were instrumental for the success of the mission. Further, a cell was set up in the capital to collect and analyze information on an ongoing basis. The mission team leader and the Head of Office monitored the quality of the inputs and ensured the production of three daily reports every day during the elections. They facilitated the drafting of the final report and provided advocacy tools for engagement with the Government.

This surge capacity mission showcased the important role that OHCHR can play in preventing violations and protecting human rights through monitoring and reporting in complex situations, in spite of limited human and logistical capacities. The collaboration between the surge team and staff of the Country Office led to strengthened monitoring, capacity-building and high-level engagement to respond to violations and prevent further abuses. The work of the surge team and the recommendation formulated in the final report laid the foundation for future work of the Country Office. Lessons learned from this experience will inform future engagement in the country and can be replicated in other settings. On a personal note, I am confident that the experience gained when leading this surge capacity mission to Chad in 2021, will assist me in my current position as Senior Human Rights Adviser to the UN Resident Coordinator and the UNCT in Sierra Leone as the country is preparing for the elections in 2023.

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 of 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 2021, the Special Fund didn't receive any contribution compared to US\$ 50,000 in 2020.

The 14th session of the **UN Forum on Minority Issues** took place on 2-3 December 2021, focusing on one of the world's greatest challenges: the growing number of violent conflicts, and how conflict prevention and the protection of the human rights of minorities could be addressed more effectively. In response to the COVID-19 restrictions, the Forum was held in a hybrid format for the first time. The hybrid modality and multilingual outreach campaign increased the opportunities of participation. Over 680 delegates attended from nearly 50 countries, which is the largest number of participants the Forum has welcomed over the past few years. This also enabled wider participation of minorities whose voices are rarely heard in international forums. Discussions held at the Forum complemented the outcome of four online regional forums hosted by the Special Rapporteur on minority issues in 2021. The Special Rapporteur will present the recommendations to the Human Rights Council in March 2022. These recommendations further contribute to the

SGD 16 and the UN Human Rights Office "shift" on helping prevent conflict, violence and insecurity.

The tenth **Annual Forum on Business and Human Rights** took place from 29 November to 1 December 2021, on the theme "The next decade of business and human rights: Increasing the pace and scale of action to implement the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights." Over 3,000 participants registered to participate in the Forum, which was once again, as with the ninth Forum, held virtually over three days. The Forum included 27 thematic, regionally focused and plenary sessions. Participants addressed some of today's most critical business and human rights questions, including the role of business in confronting climate and environmental harms and related global human rights impacts, as well as how business should help and could contribute to tackling racism and discrimination. Over 180 panellists, including representatives from States, businesses and business associations, civil society, NHRIs, unions, indigenous peoples, human rights defenders and academics, shared their experiences and perspectives, with a particular focus on how to improve implementation of the UN Guiding Principles in the next decade and beyond. A special session paid tribute to the late Professor John Ruggie, the architect of the Guiding Principles, who passed away in September 2021.

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 2021 Social Forum was held as a hybrid

in-presence and online event. Over 500 participants attended each day of the event through Zoom and in-person in Room XX of the Palais des Nations. The Special Fund was used to hire UN Web TV (media.un.org) to broadcast the event and to archive the sessions in the six UN official languages. In this way, the Fund contributed to ensuring the Social Forum reached further audiences, including approximately 200 views during the first day of the Forum, 150 views during the second day, and almost 800 views of the archived videos in the following months. The Special Fund also covered the costs of accessibility services (international sign language interpreters and English captioning), making this edition of the Social Forum more inclusive for persons with disabilities.

The Social Forum – Advocating for persons with disabilities



Jarrod Clyne, Human Rights Advisor for the International Disability Alliance. © OHCHR

The International Disability Alliance is an Alliance of 14 global and regional organisations of persons with disabilities, bringing together over 1,100 organisations of persons with disabilities and their families. We advocate at the United Nations for a more inclusive global environment for everyone. Ensuring accessibility is critical to our goal of making the UN processes inclusive to persons with disabilities. This applies both to physical accessibility and accessibility of information, without which millions of persons with disabilities around the world are deprived of the possibility of participating in and benefiting from the work of the UN. In that regard, we are grateful for the ongoing work of the Human Rights Council Task Force on Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities. We also understand that funding is a challenge, and it is

often not possible to have sign language interpretation and captioning.

Since the HRC Social Forum is by nature a uniquely open space for civil society and organisations of persons with disabilities, with a person-centred approach focusing on international solidarity, it is therefore critically important that all people can enjoy the rich dialogue that the Social Forum offers. Given the experience of exclusion of millions of persons with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic, it was particularly important that the 2021 Social Forum which focused on good practices and challenges in the COVID-19 pandemic, was inclusive of and accessible to person with disabilities. The International Disability Alliance is grateful to the Special Fund for the Participation of Civil Society in the Social Forum for making this possible.

During the 2021 Social Forum, the International Disability Alliance highlighted some particular challenges for persons with disabilities in relation to social and economic rights, the lack of access to digital platforms impacting on remote employment, education and health, and the role of organisations of persons with disabilities in the pandemic response. We also learned how other marginalized groups were also disproportionately affected – structural and systemic discrimination and profound inequality in social and political power

and participation had tragic results across the globe. Sharing good practices and lessons learned, combined with the strong spirit of international solidarity gave us hope for the future, that we can and will ‘build forward better.’

The International Disability Alliance hopes that one day all UN meetings will be accessible to persons with disabilities, and all UN reports will be accessible, including to persons with intellectual disabilities, funded through the regular budget. As we work towards that objective, we remain greatly appreciative of the demonstrated commitment to accessibility and making the UN a place for all, through funding from the Special Fund for the Participation of Civil Society in the Social Forum. This contribution gives effect to the rallying cry of the disability movement: “Nothing about us without us.”