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Promotion and protection of human rights: implementation of human rights instruments

United Nations voluntary trust fund on contemporary forms of slavery

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution [46/122](#), provides an overview of the work of the United Nations voluntary trust fund on contemporary forms of slavery, in particular the recommendations for grants to beneficiary organizations that were adopted by the Board of Trustees of the fund at its twenty-eighth session, held in Geneva from 27 November to 1 December 2023. It also provides information on other recommendations adopted by the Board and activities related to the fund.

* [A/79/150](#).



I. Introduction

A. Submission of the report

1. The present report was prepared in accordance with the arrangements approved by the General Assembly in its resolution [46/122](#), by which it established the United Nations voluntary trust fund on contemporary forms of slavery. It provides the recommendations adopted by the Board of Trustees of the fund at its twenty-eighth session, held in Geneva from 27 November to 1 December 2023. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights approved those recommendations on behalf of the Secretary-General on 8 February 2024.

B. Mandate of the fund

2. In line with resolution [46/122](#), the fund was established with the purpose of extending humanitarian, legal and financial aid to individuals whose human rights have been severely violated as a result of contemporary forms of slavery. The fund receives voluntary contributions from Governments, non-governmental organizations, private or public entities and individuals.

C. Administration of the fund and Board of Trustees

3. The Secretary-General administers the fund through the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), with the advice of a board of trustees and in accordance with the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations.

4. The Board of Trustees is composed of five members with relevant experience in the field of human rights and in particular issues of contemporary forms of slavery. They serve in their personal capacity and are appointed by the Secretary-General with due regard to equitable geographical distribution. On 1 August 2023, the Secretary-General extended the terms of Suamhirs Piraino-Guzman (Chair, Honduras), Hina Jilani (Pakistan) and Ecaterina Schilling (Republic of Moldova) for a second and final mandate of three years. On 1 October, he appointed Fatimata M'Baye (Mauritania) and Susan Coppedge (United States of America) to the Board to replace Danwood Mzikenge Chirwa (Malawi) and Georgina Vaz Cabral (France), whose terms ended on 30 September 2023.

II. Management of grants

A. Admissibility criteria

5. In accordance with the mandate of the fund, as set out in resolution [46/122](#), the beneficiaries of assistance from the fund are individuals whose human rights have been severely violated as a result of contemporary forms of slavery. Project admissibility criteria are outlined in the fund's guidelines for the use of grantees and applicants.¹ Project proposals are aimed at delivering services to beneficiaries who are victims of contemporary forms of slavery and, when applicable, members of their families. Contemporary forms of slavery that qualify to benefit from project grants include traditional and descent-based slavery, serfdom, servitude, forced labour, debt bondage, the worst forms of child labour, forced and child marriage, the sale of wives and inherited

¹ Available at www.ohchr.org/en/documents/legal-standards-and-guidelines/united-nations-voluntary-trust-fund-contemporary-forms.

widows, trafficking in persons and human organs, sexual slavery, sale of children, commercial sexual exploitation of children and the use of children in armed conflict.

6. Grants are allocated to projects implemented by civil society organizations that are aimed at providing rehabilitation, reparation, empowerment and integration services to survivors of contemporary forms of slavery through direct assistance. This may include medical, psychological, social, legal, humanitarian and educational assistance, such as vocational or skills training, or other assistance in support of an independent livelihood. Detailed information on the types of assistance provided to survivors through the projects financed by the fund, as well as their impact on the lives of the beneficiaries, is available on the OHCHR website.²

B. Monitoring and evaluation

7. The fund's secretariat conducts a thorough evaluation of all grant applications through a desk review. As part of the evaluation process, on-site visits to applicant organizations are normally conducted. According to criteria adopted by the Board of Trustees at its twenty-seventh session, as an oversight measure and to the extent possible, all projects should be visited before a grant is awarded and at least once during the five years of consecutive funding permitted under the guidelines.

8. In line with the above, in 2023, the Board member Ms. Schilling, the secretariat and OHCHR field presences visited a total of 16 project applicants in 11 countries, namely Albania, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, France, Guinea, Kenya, Lebanon, Mauritania, Mexico, Nepal and Ukraine.

III. Financial situation of the fund

9. In 2023, the fund received contributions, pledges and public donations from nine donors for a total of \$1,229,947. The table below shows the contributions and pledges received in 2023.

Contributions and pledges received in 2023

(United States dollars)

<i>Donor</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Date of receipt</i>
Andorra	10 672	27 November
Australia	169 262	23 June
	290 812	27 December
France	37 115	31 December
Germany	107 411	11 October
	471 491	15 December
Luxembourg	16 429	31 August
Portugal	10 787	27 December
Qatar	20 000	15 June
Saudi Arabia	85 000	3 January
Spain	10 964	6 October
Total	1 229 943^a	

^a Variance is due to rounding.

² See www.ohchr.org/en/about-us/funding-and-budget/trust-funds/united-nations-voluntary-trust-fund-contemporary-forms-slavery.

10. In 2023, the fund reached the milestone of \$1 million in income for the second time in its 30-year history. The first time this threshold had been achieved was in 2021. The following year, contributions fell to previous levels. The Board is grateful for all contributions and that funding levels increased again in 2023. Nevertheless, instability of income and underfunding remain challenges for the fund. Since 2002, the fund has received a total of \$16.3 million in contributions from Member States, which represents an average yearly income of \$742,409. At the same time, the demand for funding has significantly exceeded the capacity of the fund to support projects, as admissible project applications received for 2024 amounted to a total of \$3,843,783, more than five times the current funding levels.

11. As at 30 June 2024, the fund had received \$158,226 in pledges from three Member States (Luxembourg, Philippines and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) for the year.

IV. Twenty-eighth session of the Board of Trustees and intersessional activities

12. The twenty-eighth session of the Board was held in Geneva from 27 November to 1 December 2023. In line with its programme of work, the Board considered three main issues: (a) grant-making and policy-related recommendations; (b) dialogue with the fund's grantees; and (c) coordination and strategic partnerships.

13. The Board revised its terms of reference, rules of procedure and methods of work. The main changes were aimed at reinforcing the real and perceived impartiality of the Board by having members recuse themselves from the consideration of grants in their countries of nationality or residence. The changes were also aimed at fostering continuity by extending the term of the Chair from one year to two years. The adopted changes were applied from the twenty-eighth session and Mr. Piraino-Guzman was reappointed Chair for an additional year.

A. Grant-making and policy-related recommendations

Policy recommendations

14. The Board considered policy issues during its session, introducing several amendments to the guidelines. Suggested changes include eliminating any exception to continued funding for organizations after five consecutive years, to enable more first-time applicants to receive a grant and predictability for ongoing applications. Oversight of grants was strengthened by introducing a six-month reporting requirement for all grantees, rather than only for first-time grantees. Measures to mitigate risk were taken by including clauses to tackle mismanagement, fraud and misuse of funds. Additional changes entail the clarification, simplification and alignment of administrative requirements with those introduced by the Umoja grantor management module. The Board agreed that the comprehensive revision of the guidelines previously recommended should be conducted during 2024.

Annual grants for 2024

15. During its annual call for 2024 applications, open from 15 January to 1 March 2023, the secretariat of the fund received 146 grant applications from civil society organizations for projects to be implemented between 1 January and 31 December 2024. After the applications were screened by the secretariat of the fund, 113 project applications were found admissible, amounting to \$3,112,995 in requests for direct assistance to people subjected to contemporary forms of slavery. Following

evaluation by the secretariat, project applications were examined by the Board at its twenty-eighth session.

16. To guide the competitive grant-making process, the Board applied criteria adopted at its twenty-seventh session, notably that it would endeavour to increase the average grant size and prioritize first-time applicants and local organizations with limited access to additional resources, in order make the contribution of the fund more impactful and to give new partners the opportunity to count on the support of the fund.

17. The Board had recommended not specifying thematic or geographic priorities in its annual call for applications for 2024 in order to keep the fund open and accessible to all applicants assisting victims and survivors of contemporary forms of slavery. The Board, the fund's secretariat and OHCHR field presences instead conducted outreach to organizations working with populations in situations of vulnerability, notably Indigenous Peoples, minorities, people on the move, persons with disabilities, older persons, those living in homelessness, including street children, and those affected by climate change. Briefings on the grant application process were held for civil society organizations and for OHCHR staff providing them with technical assistance.

18. At its twenty-eighth session, the Board reviewed admissible project proposals recommended for funding by the secretariat following thorough evaluations. The grant-making process involved weighing the needs and merits of each application against available income. Based on this competitive review process, the Board recommended the approval of 45 annual grants for 2024 amounting to \$1,096,100. In case additional resources had become available before the end of 2023, the Board placed eight additional grants, amounting to \$105,000, on a reserve list. Additional resources did not materialize, leaving deserving projects without financial support and restricting access to essential services for potential project beneficiaries. The High Commissioner, on behalf of the Secretary-General, approved these grant recommendations on 8 February 2024.

19. Through those 45 grants, the fund is assisting more than 10,800 people subjected to contemporary forms of slavery in 34 countries in 2024 to facilitate reintegration and empowerment. For example, in Cameroon, a grant of \$15,000 to the Centre for Human Rights and Peace Advocacy enables 60 victims of trafficking and contemporary forms of slavery, in particular children previously involved with armed groups and child victims of sexual exploitation, to receive holistic support. The organization also operates a family tracing service for children and facilitates education as a form of empowerment. In Guatemala, the Consejo Nacional de Desplazados de Guatemala is assisting 740 Indigenous persons subjected to forced labour in the palm oil industry with a grant of \$25,000. In 2023, the organization helped to establish a union, a milestone to safeguard the human rights of workers. In the Kingdom of the Netherlands, through a \$18,000 grant to FairWork, some 150 victims of trafficking for the purpose of forced labour receive legal aid, social services and training about their rights, creating a multiplier effect as many assist their peers. In the Philippines, 30 victims of sexual exploitation, including girls, receive shelter, medical, legal and psychosocial aid through a \$30,000 grant to the People's Recovery, Empowerment and Development Assistance Foundation. In Serbia, some 60 victims of trafficking and early and forced marriage have access to legal, psychological and medical support through a \$20,000 grant to Anti-Trafficking Action, an organization that also operates a hotline as an intake and prevention mechanism.

20. Figures I and II show the 45 approved grants for 2024 by region and by type of contemporary form of slavery.

Figure I
Grants awarded for 2024, by region

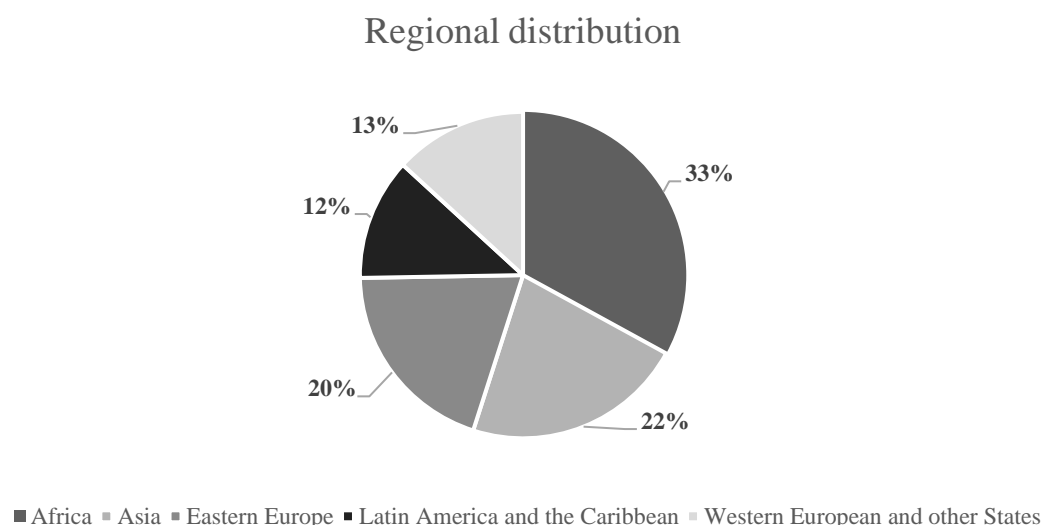
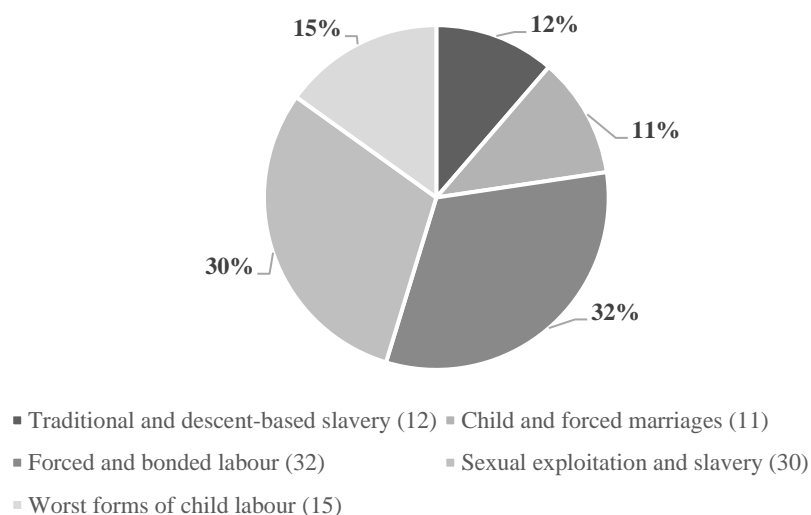


Figure II
Grants awarded for 2024, by type of contemporary form of slavery



Special call for the Sahel region

21. During its twenty-eighth session, the Board and its partners jointly took stock of the impact of the special call for the Sahel region. The call had been launched in 2022 in partnership with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and OHCHR field presences in the region to address the needs of survivors of traditional and descent-based slavery. As a result, in 2023, the fund awarded nine grants to assist over 5,000 survivors of this often overlooked human rights violation in Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger. A national consultant provided technical assistance to build the institutional capacity and sustainability of the applicant organizations, most of which are community-based and survivor-led associations.

22. While assessing the initiative, the Board and the ILO representative lauded the operational partnership, which bore concrete results, as a model of good practice. For instance, in the Niger, over 1,000 children born into descent-based slavery obtained birth certificates, thereby gaining access to education, health care and other basic rights and breaking the cycle of slavery for themselves and future generations. To cite another example, in Mauritania, 16 people born into descent-based slavery now have revenue-generating activities through financing for a butcher's shop, two tailor shops and a flour processing workshop, as well as vegetable seeds and horticultural equipment. These initiatives also benefit their family and community. During their discussion with the Board, OHCHR staff in Mauritania and the national consultant supporting implementation emphasized the importance of flexibility and determination in allowing smaller organizations, often working in remote locations with limited access to the Internet and other resources, to overcome administrative and operational challenges. They emphasized that this approach goes beyond support for direct project beneficiaries to also strengthen the fabric of civil society to prevent and combat slavery.

23. The nine organizations funded under the special call in 2023 applied for grants for 2024 through the regular call for applications. The applications were assessed through the competitive process, along with all other project applicants worldwide. Of the 45 grants recommended by the Board (see paras. 15–20), 6 were for organizations supporting survivors of traditional and descent-based slavery in Mauritania and the Niger, an illustration of the fund's role in providing seed funding to grow and sustain grass-roots initiatives.

Annual grants for 2025

24. During the session, the Board considered ways to address gaps in support for survivors of certain types of slavery, recommending outreach in each geographic region to encourage organizations working in these areas to apply for a grant in 2025. In Africa, trustees agreed to continue to give priority to supporting victims of descent-based slavery (see paras. 21–23). In the Asia-Pacific region, the Board noted the need to address child marriage and child labour, sexual slavery and trafficking for sexual exploitation, as well as debt bondage and forced labour. In the Eastern European region, the Board maintained its recommendation to continue to support Roma organizations assisting girls subjected to child marriage (see para. 30). In the Latin America and the Caribbean region, trustees recommended outreach to organizations supporting people on the move subjected to forced labour, sexual exploitation and child labour. In Western European and other States, the Board flagged that migrant farm workers subjected to labour exploitation amounting to contemporary forms of slavery require more support.

25. During its annual call for applications for 2025, open from 15 January to 1 March 2024, the secretariat of the fund received 118 grant applications from civil society organizations for projects to be implemented between 1 January and 31 December 2025. Project applications were screened for admissibility by the secretariat of the fund in March and April 2024. A total of 95 project applications were found admissible, amounting to \$2,616,831 in requests for direct assistance to victims and survivors of contemporary forms of slavery. The Board is expected to make annual grant recommendations regarding those applications at its twenty-ninth session, scheduled to be held from 25 to 29 November 2024 in Geneva.

Umoja grantor management module

26. The Board expressed concern about delays in the disbursement of grants for 2023 due to continued adaptations following the transition to the Umoja grantor management module, a requirement for all United Nations Secretariat entities. The

Board also noted the impact of the new process on the workload of grantees and the secretariat of the fund. As a result of mitigation measures adopted by OHCHR, grants for 2024 were disbursed in a timely manner and the application and reporting workload was reduced.

B. Dialogue with the fund's grantees

27. During its twenty-eighth session, the Board convened an online dialogue on the role of technology to facilitate and prevent contemporary forms of slavery with representatives of selected grantees: Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans, Beautiful Dream Society (Lesotho), Novi Put (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and the People's Recovery, Empowerment and Development Assistance Foundation (Philippines). This discussion was in line with the thematic report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences, concerning the use of technology in facilitating and preventing contemporary forms of slavery ([A/78/161](#)).

28. Grantees agreed that, in every context, technology, in particular social media, is misused to lure people into situations of exploitation, often amounting to contemporary forms of slavery. Children are at particular risk, and unemployment also exacerbates vulnerability. Representatives shared examples of good practices, demonstrating how social media could instead be used as a prevention tool, including to raise awareness about the risks of being trafficked and falling prey to contemporary forms of slavery, as well as an alert mechanism for victims to seek support. Representatives also addressed the limitations and potential of technology to prosecute perpetrators, in particular of online sexual exploitation of children. They noted that in certain contexts investigations are rarely pursued by the police, owing to a lack of technical capacity and difficulties in locating alleged perpetrators. They also called for criminal liability of social media platforms. Grantees emphasized the need for measures to protect victims, including shortening procedural delays to reduce retraumatization and offering compensation to allow them to rebuild their lives.

29. The Board hosted a separate meeting with a representative of the organization EverFree, which presented a digital human trafficking victim assessment tool that it had developed known as the Freedom Lifemap model. The organization offered to facilitate access to this new instrument free of charge to grantees of the fund.

C. Coordination and strategic partnerships

30. The Board continued to pursue closer coordination with other actors involved in the field of contemporary forms of slavery, in particular United Nations human rights mechanisms, to discuss complementary roles and priorities to combat, prevent and provide redress for those subjected to contemporary forms of slavery. Ways to increase the visibility of the plight of persons subjected to contemporary forms of slavery and the impact of the fund on their recovery were also considered. The production of a documentary film featuring the journey of Mr. Piraino-Guzman from trafficking survivor to Chair of the Board by Votary Films may provide such an opportunity. For the documentary, a film crew recorded the Chair in the exercise of his functions during the session, a dialogue between him and the High Commissioner for Human Rights and interviews with other Board members and the secretariat.

31. The Board met with staff of the OHCHR Indigenous Peoples and Minorities Section to reflect on a joint outreach strategy to support girl victims of child marriage, in particular through Roma organizations in the Eastern European region. The Board pledged continued support for organizations addressing the issue, in particular those led by Romani women. Of the 45 grants recommended for funding in 2024 (see

paras. 15–20), 2 were for new applicants working on the issue, in Montenegro and Serbia. The fund also addressed the issue of child, early and forced marriage in other contexts by circulating the call for written contributions to the report of the Secretary-General on progress towards ending the practice worldwide ([A/71/253](#)).

Special procedures of the Human Rights Council

32. During the session, the Board engaged in a conceptual discussion about contemporary forms of slavery, including linkages to human trafficking, with OHCHR staff supporting relevant special procedure mandate holders of the Human Rights Council. The Board concluded that a lack of common understanding about the meaning of contemporary forms of slavery contributes to limited awareness of the issue, including State denial about the existence of the practice within jurisdictions, and complicates efforts to increase visibility and support for the fund.

33. The Board also engaged directly with relevant special procedure mandate holders to pursue partnerships throughout the year, including during the Board session. On 9 March 2023, the Chair held an online meeting with the Special Rapporteur on the sale, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, Mama Fatima Singhatsh. They explored ways for the fund to further support child survivors of contemporary forms of slavery and agreed to pursue collaboration, including to bring more financial support to the fund. They also suggested identifying relevant patterns of violations through applications received by the fund and thematic reports by Special Rapporteurs, among other measures.

34. The twelfth Forum on Business and Human Rights took place in Geneva from 27 to 29 November 2023, the same week as the Board session. The Board member Ms. Jilani attended a segment convened by ILO entitled “Eradicating forced labour and trafficking: need for accelerated action on prevention”, reminding participants of the need to support survivors and the role of the fund. The Board subsequently met the Chair of the Working Group on Business and Human Rights, which convenes the Forum, Damilola Olawuyi, to explore the possibility of involving the fund’s grantees in a segment of the thirteenth Forum in 2024.

35. The Board also hosted its annual online dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences, Tomoya Obokata, reiterating appreciation for his support in increasing the visibility and resources of the fund. They discussed the principle of non-punishment of survivors of contemporary forms of slavery and the vulnerabilities of people in and after detention, including prison labour. They also discussed the Special Rapporteur’s thematic reports on homelessness and on the use of technology for which the secretariat of the fund had circulated calls for submission of inputs, and his missions to Canada and Côte d’Ivoire, for which they had facilitated contacts of grantees.

36. Trustees also held an initial online meeting with the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, Gehad Madi, to pursue collaboration. In particular, the fund offered to circulate calls for inputs for his thematic reports to grantees and to facilitate their contacts prior to his missions, and the mandate holder in turn offered to make appeals for the fund where possible. The fund further addressed the vulnerability of people on the move to contemporary forms of slavery by encouraging its grantees to submit relevant inputs for the thematic report on refugees, stateless persons and internally displaced persons by the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, Siobhán Mullally ([A/HRC/53/28](#)).

Human rights treaty bodies

37. The fund also encouraged its grantees to engage with relevant United Nations human rights treaty bodies. For instance, a grantee from Brazil³ submitted inputs to the Human Rights Committee for the review of the third periodic report of Brazil during its 138th session. In its concluding observations, the Committee recommended that the State party “strengthen efforts to combat forced labour and trafficking in persons” and “provide victims with protection, reparations and assistance, including for reintegration” (CCPR/C/BRA/CO/3, para. 44). A grantee in Cyprus⁴ submitted inputs for the Committee’s review of the fifth periodic report of Cyprus. In its concluding observations, the Committee encouraged the State party to “further strengthen its efforts to combat, prevent, eradicate and punish trafficking in persons, and ensure the adequate protection of victims” (CCPR/C/CYP/CO/5, para. 26).

38. Two organizations supported by the fund in Senegal⁵ submitted inputs to the Committee on the Rights of the Child for its review of the combined sixth and seventh periodic report of Senegal during its ninety-fifth session. In its concluding observations, the Committee called on the State party to adopt measures to combat the sexual and economic exploitation of children, including forced labour and abuse in the context of Qur’anic schools, the tourism sector, the mining industry and domestic settings. The Committee noted the vulnerability of refugee children and *talibés*, recommending referral, protection and support services for all children subjected to these human rights violations (see CRC/C/SEN/CO/6-7).

United Nations trust funds

39. During the session, trustees held an online meeting with the secretariat of the United Nations trust fund in support of actions to eliminate violence against women, learning about its mandate, strategy and reach. Trustees recalled that women are more vulnerable to certain types of contemporary forms of slavery, such as forced and early marriage, and trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, noting that all projects supported by the fund assist women and girl beneficiaries and that four have exclusively female beneficiaries. They agreed to maintain working-level contact to share information about, inter alia, grantees, trends and fundraising opportunities.

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

40. On 26 April 2023, in a meeting with the Board, the High Commissioner shared that he had witnessed the impact of the fund first-hand in Ecuador in January 2023 when he visited the residential care facility for young women trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation and abuse run by the organization Alas de Colibrí. With the support of the fund in 2023, the organization is providing more than 35 adolescent girls with shelter, medical, psychological, social, legal and humanitarian aid to enable their recovery. He emphasized the value of the fund to aid groups in situations of vulnerability and underlined the value of supporting community-based organizations.

D. International Day for the Abolition of Slavery

41. On 2 December, International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, the High Commissioner issued a statement recalling that there are still an estimated 50 million victims of slavery today, a quarter of whom are children, and calling “on political and

³ Centro de Defesa da Vida e dos Direitos Humanos Carmen Bascarán.

⁴ Koinonia Karitas Kyprou.

⁵ Amnesty International Senegal and Maison de la Gare.

business leaders to take real action to uphold human rights”.⁶ To commemorate the day, the fund released social media materials to thank and recognize its donors, some of whom reshared them with their own followers. Additional communication materials were released on the United Nations flagship social media account and by OHCHR in the context of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (see paras. 44–47).

42. The Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences, participated in a joint statement to commemorate 2 December that addressed a human rights economy to combat slavery. The statement was endorsed by the Board and numerous special procedure mandate holders, including the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially in women and children, and the Special Rapporteur on the sale, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children.⁷

43. In the statement, the experts expressed concern over an alarming rise in the number of people subjected to trafficking in persons and contemporary forms of slavery. They emphasized the need to work towards “the realization of a human rights economy that places people and the planet at the heart of economic policies, investment decisions, consumer choices, and business models to enhance the enjoyment of human rights for all in the long term”, which requires the active engagement of the private sector, singling out large transnational companies within the technology sector.

44. To prevent exploitation, which may amount to contemporary forms of slavery, experts urged States and businesses to take concrete steps to ensure workers’ association and collective bargaining rights, safe and dignified working conditions, expanded social safety nets, strengthened labour inspectorates and rights-based migration governance, facilitated access to protection and increased access to adequate health care and health services. They also appealed to States to increase their contributions to the fund.

V. Seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

45. 2023 marked the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This was an occasion to reaffirm the collective global commitment enshrined in article 4 of the Declaration that no one shall be held in slavery or servitude and that slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms. In the lead-up to 10 December, Human Rights Day, OHCHR organized various commemorative events featuring the prohibition of slavery and the work of the fund, including a 75-day countdown.⁸

46. On day 54 of the countdown, a video featuring the work of the Centro de Defesa da Vida e dos Direitos Humanos Carmen Bascarán in defending survivors of child labour, servitude and debt bondage in Brazil with the support of the fund was broadcast. The human rights defender Mariana de la Fuente described how over 750 survivors of human trafficking and slave labour had been liberated over 25 years as a result of the organization’s work.⁹ On day 26 of the countdown, the Board member

⁶ See www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2023/12/abolish-slavery-now.

⁷ See www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2023/12/un-experts-urge-shift-towards-human-rights-economy-prevent-contemporary-forms.

⁸ See www.ohchr.org/en/human-rights-75/human-rights-75-countdown.

⁹ See www.ohchr.org/en/video/2023/combating-modern-slavery-requires-new-human-rights-defenders.

Ms. Jilani took part in a podcast¹⁰ on access to justice, giving an account of her lifelong commitment to human rights activism.

47. The work of the fund worldwide across three decades was featured on day 8 of the countdown with a video¹¹ honouring its decisive support for the recovery of thousands of people whose human rights have been severely violated as a result of contemporary forms of slavery in 105 countries through 800 projects. In addition, an interview featuring the Chair of the Board was published on the OHCHR website on the eve of the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery.¹² In the feature story, Mr. Piraino-Guzman recounts his story as a survivor of child sexual exploitation and trafficking and gives a voice to victims on the keys to building roads to recovery.

48. During the pledging session of the Human Rights 75 high-level event, 12 Member States and international partners made pledges to combat contemporary forms of slavery and human trafficking. This will help to guide future efforts to support survivors of this grave human rights violation.

VI. How to contribute to the Fund

49. Governments, non-governmental organizations and other private or public entities are invited to contribute to the fund. Donors should indicate “for the slavery fund, account SH” on a payment order. For more information on how to contribute and further details about the fund, donors are requested to contact the secretariat of the fund at the following address:

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
United Nations
CH 1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland
E-mail: ohchr-slaveryfund@un.org
www.ohchr.org/slaveryfund

VII. Conclusions and recommendations

50. The fund continues to play an indispensable role in enabling people subjected to contemporary forms of slavery to gain access to essential services, by supporting civil society organizations and other service providers. Since its establishment over 30 years ago, the fund has awarded more than \$128 million through over 935 grants in 112 countries, helping tens of thousands of victims and survivors to recover their lives and dignity. For 2024 alone, the fund awarded 45 grants to civil society organizations providing direct medical, psychological, social and legal services to over 10,800 victims and survivors in 35 countries across the world subjected to contemporary forms of slavery, such as the worst forms of child labour, bonded and forced labour, sexual exploitation and child, early and forced marriage.

51. In 2023, the fund received contributions, pledges and public donations from 10 donors amounting to \$1.3 million. The fund would need to enlarge its donor base to receive a minimum of \$3 million yearly to respond adequately to the high demand for the fund’s assistance from civil society actors worldwide. The applications received represent a small fraction of the real needs of persons to be

¹⁰ See <https://universaldeclarationhumanrights75.podbean.com/e/access-to-justice>.

¹¹ See www.youtube.com/watch?v=vW19yy77eds.

¹² See www.ohchr.org/en/stories/2023/12/trafficking-survivor-wants-make-human-rights-mainstream.

liberated from slavery and to gain access to services to recover. The Secretary-General urges all countries and other stakeholders to intensify their efforts to support victims and survivors by contributing to the United Nations voluntary trust fund on contemporary forms of slavery.
