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Agenda item 10

### Technical assistance and capacity-building

## Report of the Chair of the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights\*, \*\*

### *Summary*

The present report is submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 18/18, in which the Council invited the Chair of the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights to present a comprehensive report on the Board's work on an annual basis, starting from the twentieth session of the Council. Pursuant to Council resolution 36/28, the present report is submitted to the Council at its fifty-fifth session, in March 2024. It provides an update on the work of the Board of Trustees of the Voluntary Fund since the previous report of the Chair of the Board ([A/HRC/52/80](#)).

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\* The present report was submitted to the conference services for processing after the deadline so as to include the most recent information.

\*\* The annexes to the present report are circulated as received, in the language of submission only.



## **I. Introduction**

### **A. Background**

1. The United Nations Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights, established by the Commission on Human Rights in its resolution 1987/38, receives voluntary contributions from Governments, organizations and individuals. The objective of the Voluntary Fund is to provide financial support for technical cooperation aimed at building and strengthening national and regional institutions, legal frameworks and infrastructure that will have positive long-term impacts on the implementation of international human rights standards.

2. The Board of Trustees has been operational since 1993, and its members are appointed by the Secretary-General for a three-year term, renewable once. The mandate of the Board is to assist the Secretary-General in rationalizing and improving the technical cooperation programme. It meets twice a year and reports on its work to the Secretary-General and the Human Rights Council. Its current members are Azita Berar Awad (Islamic Republic of Iran) (Chair), Nozipho January-Bardill (South Africa), Santiago Corcuera-Cabezut (Mexico), Margaret Nicholson (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) and Dainius Pūras (Lithuania). The position of Chair is held on a rotational basis, covering at least two sessions of the Board and an annual Human Rights Council oral update. At its fifty-sixth session, the Board re-elected Ms. Berar Awad as Chair, with her new term as Chair starting on 1 June 2023.

### **B. Mandate**

3. The approach of the Board is set out in the 2011 annual report of the Secretary-General to the Human Rights Council.<sup>1</sup> The Board, during the period under review, continued expanding opportunities for proactive specific guidance on technical cooperation in the field of human rights, including support provided through resources of the Voluntary Fund to assist States in developing their national capacities to promote the effective implementation of human rights obligations and animating the sharing of good practices among Member States.

4. As members also of the Board of Trustees of the Voluntary Fund for Financial and Technical Assistance in the Implementation of the Universal Periodic Review, members of the Board offer policy guidance and advice to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to enhance the effectiveness of technical assistance and financial support to States in implementing the recommendations made in the context of the universal periodic review and other international mechanisms. In 2023, the Board continued supporting the efforts made by OHCHR to optimize the provision of guidance to United Nations partners for the implementation of the universal periodic review outcomes and compilation of good practices in the use of that mechanism. The universal periodic review and other international human rights mechanisms continue being important entry points with Member States and provide valuable guidance for the United Nations and OHCHR initiatives in supporting them.

5. During 2023, the increased demand for OHCHR in-country presence and support continued, including requests by Member States for support by OHCHR regional offices, where OHCHR does not have an in-country presence; requests by United Nations country teams for the deployment of human rights advisers to United Nations resident coordinators' offices; and other types of technical support projects. The seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the thirtieth anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action served as catalysts for Member States to expand cooperation with OHCHR, including on enhancing support to technical cooperation in the field of human rights. The Board is very much encouraged by the increasing number of requests by States, including as part of the work of the Human Rights Council, for technical

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<sup>1</sup> [A/HRC/16/66](#).

cooperation and advisory services, either from OHCHR alone or in collaboration with other United Nations entities.

6. The Board continued facilitating the sharing of experiences, inspiring and encouraging States to expand partnerships with OHCHR and often with other United Nations entities and bilateral partners in order to receive advisory services and technical assistance in the field of human rights. The Board is particularly pleased about the increasing willingness of Member States to share good practices and results achieved through human rights technical cooperation with OHCHR and other United Nations partners, as well as with bilateral, regional and international partners. This has been reflected by Member States and observers of the Human Rights Council and national partners with whom the Board met, as well as in relevant Council resolutions, such as the recently adopted resolutions [53/11](#) and [54/28](#). In 2023, the Board continued to provide advice to OHCHR and United Nations partners on ways to strengthen technical cooperation, including as part of the Secretary-General's proposals to reform the United Nations.

7. The Board, within the scope of its mandate to facilitate support for technical cooperation programmes and initiatives aimed at strengthening the protection of all human rights, including economic, civil, cultural, political and social rights, continued discussing with OHCHR and States ways to enhance partnerships to address the impacts of global crises, in particular, with respect to the lingering impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, as well as the impacts of inflation, food insecurity, conflicts and climate change in further exacerbating inequalities. In all of those areas, the emphasis is placed on building programmes that address the costs of the existing human rights gaps, as well as the cost-saving benefits of the preventive action that technical cooperation in the field of human rights contributes to.

## II. Activities of the Voluntary Fund and the Board

8. As in past years, the Board was able to hold one session in a country in which OHCHR had a presence. Country visits and in situ discussions with OHCHR field presences, United Nations entities and national and regional partners are key tools for the Board to continue providing sound policy advice on technical cooperation programmes at the country and regional levels.

9. The Board held its fifty-sixth session in Geneva from 24 to 26 May 2023. The session was the first in-person session the Board held in Geneva since 2019, following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, between 2019 and 2023, the Board held online meetings and visited several countries across regions, continuing its engagement with OHCHR and a wide array of partners in very different settings. The fifty-sixth session was consequently the first opportunity for the Board to hold dedicated discussions with Volker Türk as United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and with the different parts of OHCHR that had a significant role in framing its technical cooperation activities at the country level. During the session, the Board discussed with a wide range of experts and partners the issue of how OHCHR could enhance the provision of technical cooperation in the field of human rights, given the challenges and opportunities that exist today for the implementation of the mandate conveyed upon the Office by Member States, in follow up to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.

10. The fifty-seventh session was held in Central Asia from 12 to 17 November 2023, the first visit of the Board to the region. The Board undertook in-person visits to two countries in which OHCHR has field presences, namely, Kyrgyzstan (Bishkek, 12–14 November) and Kazakhstan (Almaty and Astana, 15–17 November), and held online meetings in others. At the session, the Board focused on reviewing the technical cooperation and advisory services provided by OHCHR to enhance in-country respect for human rights in the region through the work of its Regional Office for Central Asia and the Human Rights Advisers in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. The Board also discussed with the Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Director of the OHCHR Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division, experts and partners the issue of support for programmes run by OHCHR regional

offices and their relevance in responding to the specific needs of countries, including through the collaboration of OHCHR with United Nations country teams in the region.

11. The sessions were chaired by Ms. Berar Awad. The Board also reviewed the status of implementation of the workplan and cost plan for the Voluntary Fund, including the status of implementation of the funding covering the Fund's cost plan for 2023. At its fifty-seventh session, the Board endorsed the proposed workplan for 2024.

12. During the sessions, the Board highlighted the rapidly evolving environment for technical cooperation in the field of human rights and the opportunities provided by initiatives such as the Human Rights 75 initiative, the Sustainable Development Goals Summit and the preparations for the Summit of the Future to reinvigorate the important role human rights have to play in the provision of technical assistance to Member States to ensure sustainable development and the institutional capacity-building necessary for peaceful and resilient societies. The Board stressed the relevance and importance of providing adequate and sustainable funding for technical cooperation for continued support for national and regional efforts to advance the enjoyment by all of all civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights, in particular considering the damage caused, in terms of the lives lost and the detrimental effect upon the enjoyment by billions of people of their human rights, by the impacts of global crises, such as armed conflict, widening social and economic inequalities, climate change and the misuse of digital technologies.

#### **A. Fifty-sixth session**

13. The fifty-sixth session of the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights and the nineteenth session of the Board of Trustees of the Voluntary Fund for Financial and Technical Assistance in the Implementation of the Universal Periodic Review were held in Geneva, from 24 to 26 May 2023.

14. This was the first opportunity for the Board to meet with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk. The objectives of the fifty-sixth session were: (a) to learn from the strategic approach adopted by OHCHR in marking the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, through the Human Rights 75 initiative, in view of the important role technical cooperation plays in the implementation of the mandate given to the Office by Member States, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action; and (b) to emphasize technical cooperation as the necessary complement to the work undertaken by the robust United Nations human rights system that has developed from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in identifying the opportunities and challenges to advancing human rights across the globe, noting the increase of country-specific recommendations from human rights mechanisms, including as part of the fourth cycle of the universal periodic review. Two members of the Board concluded their mandates at the end of the session, namely, Morten Kjaerum (Denmark) and Valeriya Lutkovska (Ukraine).

15. The meetings took place as OHCHR was holding national and regional dialogues with partners to mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Consequently, much of the session was focused on the opportunity this milestone provided to remind Member States of the universality, indivisibility and interdependency of human rights and to demonstrate that they are more necessary than ever, to both prevent and overcome economic, social, political and environmental challenges.

16. Through direct discussions and exchanges with a cross section of senior officials at OHCHR and the Office's partners in Geneva, the Board familiarized itself with the progress made in integrating human rights in key organizational processes, including Our Common Agenda, the related quintet of change, United Nations 2.0 and the preparations for the upcoming Summit of the Future. The Board highlighted the recognition in those processes of the potential human rights has to identify solutions and ways to address grievances, encouraging OHCHR to adopt measures directed at increasing the role of human rights in those processes and in all other spheres of the Organization's work.

17. The Board was also briefed on the preparation of the United Nations Human Rights Management Plan 2024–2027, and the related OHCHR 2.0, in particular how internal and external discussions taking place as part of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights were expected to contribute to the plans. In summary, the discussions during the session provided a natural space to jointly reflect with OHCHR on how technical cooperation could better serve as a mechanism to realize the potential that the drafters of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Vienna Declaration Plan of Action saw in human rights, in the light of the significant experience gained since, for OHCHR and today's international and national human rights systems.

18. In its meeting with the High Commissioner, the Board noted the efforts of OHCHR to work with Governments and other stakeholders in building a shared agenda around human rights through pledges to be presented in December as part of a high-level event marking the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Board emphasized that technical cooperation was the necessary complement to the work undertaken by the robust United Nations human rights system and noted the country-specific recommendations made by human rights mechanisms, including as part of the cycles of the universal periodic review.

19. The Board welcomed the initiative of OHCHR to undertake a review of its work in the field and seek ways to strengthen the capacity of its existing field presences, many of which are currently operating with a very minimal set-up that is considerably below their capacity requirements. The Board has consistently observed, including through its country visits, that effective support to implementation requires an in-country presence, where engagement with local stakeholders can happen and trust is built in a long-term and sustainable manner. The Board expressed its wholehearted support for the High Commissioner's efforts to enhance the impact of OHCHR on improving lives, by strengthening its presence in the field, and advocated for additional efforts in communicating concrete examples to partners of the impact at the country level, including those provided through the Board's own observations and country visits.

20. The Board noted the need – as part of the efforts to increase funding from Member States to ensure that the activities of OHCHR have a meaningful impact in the field – for OHCHR to strengthen its messaging on the contribution that technical cooperation in the field of human rights makes to prevention of conflict and violence, as highlighted in various reports of the Human Rights Council and other policy-making bodies of the United Nations. The Board believes that the Agenda for Peace provides a new opportunity to highlight this important finding. The Board was pleased to learn that the United Nations Human Rights Management Plan 2018–2023 showed a significant investment in prevention over time and provided numerous examples of the contribution technical cooperation made in the field of human rights.

21. The Board also advocated for OHCHR to strengthen its capacities in the development of adaptation and mitigation strategies for environmental transition. The Board was pleased to hear about the enhanced cooperation OHCHR was establishing with key actors in this area, including the United Nations Environmental Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the International Labour Organization and other United Nations entities, and encouraged OHCHR to expand its capacities into the field, in line with the recommendations made by the Board in its 2023 report (A/HRC/52/80), noting how important it was for regional offices supporting Small Island Developing States to have dedicated capacities in this regard.

22. In terms of thematic areas to strengthen, the Board observed that OHCHR had expanded its work to support human rights in the digital sphere in response to the challenges that artificial intelligence and other technological advancements posed to the human rights of millions of people around the world. The Board encouraged OHCHR, beyond the specific projects and initiatives it was already undertaking in that area, to accelerate efforts to design a comprehensive framework for action, including the key areas for intervention in the field, so as to help strengthen the national and global governance mechanisms to address those challenges.

23. The Board underlined the added value of OHCHR technical cooperation in promoting collaborative efforts across the United Nations system and between the United Nations system and national partners, through the mandate of the High Commissioner to coordinate all human rights activities in the Organization. The Board commended OHCHR for continuing to promote investment in the deployment of human rights advisers to United Nations country teams, as the demand for this form of support continues to grow exponentially, while the resources to seize opportunities to advance human rights continue to shrink. The Board requested OHCHR to invest in strengthening the support to human rights advisers in discharging their functions and to invest in enhancing the capacity of human rights advisers to effectively contribute to the preparation of the United Nations country team country analyses and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks through closer collaboration with other parts of OHCHR.

24. On the Voluntary Fund for Financial and Technical Assistance in the Implementation of the Universal Periodic Review, the Board took note of how the Fund, through its seeds projects, and in close cooperation with the OHCHR treaty body capacity-building programme, has continued to support the creation or strengthening of national mechanisms for reporting and follow-up for the effective implementation of the recommendations of human rights mechanisms. The Board believes it is useful to reinforce the principle of complementarity as one of the main principles of the universal periodic review set by the Human Rights Council.

25. The Board also reminded OHCHR of the widely recognized role that parliaments have in ensuring the follow-up to recommendations made by international human rights mechanisms, many of which require legislative action, affect human rights policies and define budget allocations. In 2023, 50 per cent of the projects supported by the Voluntary Fund for Financial and Technical Assistance in the Implementation of the Universal Periodic Review set as an objective the enhancement of knowledge about and strengthening of the capacity of national parliaments to implement the recommendations of the universal periodic review, compared with 10 per cent in 2022. Strengthened coordination within OHCHR, including staff working with other mechanisms and in the field, is necessary to maximize the impact of such efforts. The Board also recalled its previous and consistent recommendations regarding extending capacity-building activities for effective implementation of new legislation beyond the adoption phase by countries in the follow-up to the universal periodic review.

26. The Board expresses its full appreciation for the final debriefing session in Geneva, co-convened and co-organized with the Government of Sweden, with the participation of Member States, which provided a better understanding of how OHCHR was addressing key challenges on the ground through its technical cooperation efforts. Member States showed an interest in concrete country examples that illustrated how OHCHR had been able to use its convening role at the country level to build trust and promote dialogue between Governments and civil society, particularly as civic space was shrinking, and to address key economic and social rights challenges in specific contexts.

## **B. Fifty-seventh session**

27. The fifty-seventh session of the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights and the twentieth session of the Board of Trustees of the Voluntary Fund for Financial and Technical Assistance in the Implementation of the Universal Periodic Review were held in Bishkek, Almaty and Astana from 12 to 17 November 2023. The aim of the sessions was to review the technical cooperation and advisory services provided by OHCHR to enhance respect for human rights in the countries of the Central Asia region. It was the first visit by the Board to the region. The sessions served, in particular, as a means to focus on OHCHR plans to undertake a review of its field presences and seek ways to increase its footprint in countries, and to identify how technical cooperation could support the efforts of OHCHR to obtain more predictable funding for its work in the field, from both multi-year and long-term regular and extrabudgetary sources, as well as plans to strengthen the role of field presences in the work of OHCHR. The

session was the first session in which Margaret Nicholson (United Kingdom) and Dainius Pūras (Lithuania) participated, as new members of the Board.

28. The sessions were held as a hybrid meetings, with both in-person discussions with OHCHR partners in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan and virtual meetings with selected partners in Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan and different divisions and units of OHCHR in Geneva.

29. In its first visit to the Central Asia region, the Board was particularly sensitive and further sensitized to the challenges recently independent countries face, as Governments develop the legislative, institutional, policy and cooperation frameworks needed to meet their human rights obligations. Through their interactions with OHCHR partners in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, the Board noted the significant contribution that technical cooperation in the field of human rights can provide to countries in addressing those challenges, through the work of both regional offices and human rights advisers deployed to United Nations country teams.

30. With regard to the drafting of legislation, the Board noted the demand for better legislation and encouraged OHCHR to invest in technical assistance to legislative reviews by providing national language translation capacities. This will assist countries in the region to better align national legislation to human rights norms and standards. One example of this was the support that the Human Rights Adviser in Kazakhstan was able to provide to the United Nations country team in providing guidance to the country on the elaboration of the country's Social Code. The Board believes that the ability of the Human Rights Adviser to collaborate and coordinate with different United Nations entities in the United Nations country team, each within their area of expertise, in order to produce a comprehensive human rights-based analysis of elements to be considered in a policy as broad as the Social Code constituted a best practice. This example demonstrates how the United Nations system can provide integrated and high-quality policy advice when it comes together in support of human rights. Notable too, is the cooperation with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe that OHCHR and the United Nations country teams in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have established on promoting economic, social and cultural rights, which provides an additional layer of support.

31. The Board also recognized the productive engagement that both the OHCHR Regional Office for Central Asia and the Human Rights Adviser in Kazakhstan had established with the countries' national human rights institutions and the national mechanisms for the prevention of torture, two key institutions for national human rights protection. The Board was pleased to learn of the work undertaken to assist national human rights institutions in both countries and to seek accreditation as compliant with the Paris Principles, and of the efforts undertaken in both countries to strengthen the national mechanisms for the prevention of torture. This work included advising authorities on the best measures to preserve the capacities of the national mechanism in Kyrgyzstan, and training newly elected members and advocating for the implementation of the recommendations of the national mechanism in Kazakhstan. The Board noted in particular the positive results achieved in Kyrgyzstan by the national preventive mechanism and the collaboration that the OHCHR Regional Office for Central Asia had facilitated between the mechanism and the Subcommittee on the Prevention of Torture to enhance the capacities of the country in aligning its legislation on torture with international standards.

32. The Board also appreciated the contribution of OHCHR to the institutionalization of human rights training for judges and other judicial authorities in relation to criminal justice, enforced disappearances, torture, non-discrimination and economic, social and cultural rights, at a time when constitutional and legislative frameworks were still continuously evolving. Examples of this include collaboration with the Higher School of Justice under the Supreme Court of Kyrgyzstan to integrate human rights into its curricula, and collaboration in Kazakhstan with the Ministry of Justice to develop a list of indicators covering the rights to education, participation in public affairs, adequate housing, fair trial and freedom from torture and the prevention of violence against women. On several of those issues, the Board noted the significant gap that existed between urban and rural realities, and noted the importance of ensuring that access to justice was enhanced in rural areas, especially for those groups most at risk of human rights violations. The Board encouraged the OHCHR Regional

Office for Central Asia to work with local authorities to ensure that the progress achieved in advancing justice in the countries of the region translated into tangible results for rural populations and populations outside the capital.

33. The Board emphasized the need to complement laws and policies with comprehensive human rights education programmes, noting the prevalence of narratives and the persistence of practices, particularly in rural settings, that are contrary to human rights, such as domestic violence against women and violence against children, bride kidnapping and attacks against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons. The Board also highlighted the need for national dialogues on the impact of climate change and policies for environmental transition in the region as well as the impact of income inequality, inflation and other economic policies on economic, social and cultural rights. Both sets of issues are prominent in the region, with multiple manifestations. The Board highlighted the opportunities, in particular in Kazakhstan, to engage the business community in those efforts.

34. The Board also praised the growing engagement by Governments and other stakeholders, in both countries visited, with the United Nations' human rights mechanisms, in particular the universal periodic review. The Board was encouraged to hear about the work undertaken by civil society, in particular by representatives of groups at risk of being left behind, in transmitting their experience to the different mechanisms and the support that the OHCHR Regional Office for Central Asia and the Human Rights Advisers in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan had provided in disseminating information about the work of human rights mechanisms and their recommendations in the region. The Board was also pleased to hear about the technical assistance being provided for the establishment of national mechanisms to report and follow up on the recommendations of the United Nations human rights mechanisms, such as in the preparations for the review of Kyrgyzstan by the Committee on the Rights of the Child in September 2023 and the participation of Kazakhstan in the fourth cycle of the universal periodic review in 2025.

35. During its visit to Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, the Board recognized notable examples of efforts to enhance participation by groups at risk of being left behind, such as in the drafting of laws on youth and on persons with disabilities in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, with support from OHCHR. Notable among these efforts was the work undertaken by the OHCHR Regional Office for Central Asia to help develop educational modules on human rights, non-discrimination, diversity and tolerance, to be introduced into the countries' secondary school curricula. The investment in human rights education for the younger generations is an investment in peace and social cohesion for the present and future. The Board also emphasized, across the region, the importance of working with young people, who constitute a great part of the countries' populations, encouraging young people's participation in policymaking and bringing to the attention of authorities at the national and local levels the urgency of recognizing young people's priorities. In this regard, greater access to educational and economic opportunities, in particular employment opportunities and access to decent work, are of utmost importance.

36. Technical cooperation in the field of human rights can also help different parts of society and the Government to identify, through dialogue, sustainable solutions to the country's human rights challenges. The Board was pleased to hear that, in both of the countries visited, OHCHR had contributed to enhancing the participation of civil society in development processes through its advice on key laws, such as in the drafting of laws on mass media and on non-governmental organizations and their financing. In addition to guiding legislators in ensuring that draft laws are in compliance with international human rights standards, OHCHR and the United Nations can also contribute with lessons learned from similar efforts in other parts of the world that can help policymakers avoid pitfalls encountered elsewhere.

37. During the visit, the Board was pleased to find active civil society in the region and excellent examples of close work between civil society and human rights mechanisms, including treaty bodies, special procedures of the Human Rights Council and the universal periodic review. The Board noted the positive impact of the efforts of OHCHR to promote the ratification of human rights instruments, reporting and visits by mechanisms, and of the capacity-building provided to civil society organizations in engaging with the mechanisms. In conversations with authorities in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, the Board emphasized the



potential contribution of active non-governmental organizations to enhancing policies, including in the areas of economic, social and cultural rights. The Board encouraged all partners to consider non-governmental organizations not only as service providers, but as partners in pursuing good developmental policymaking.

38. Finally, the Board noted with satisfaction the commitment of resident coordinators and United Nations country teams to human rights and expressed its strong appreciation of the important role played by OHCHR in the region, through the work of both the OHCHR Regional Office for Central Asia and the human rights advisers deployed to Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. The Board believes that efforts in the region to include explicit references to recommendations of the universal periodic review in the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks constitutes a good practice that deserves to be shared elsewhere. Continued close cooperation between the United Nations entities on the ground will be fundamental to address newer challenges, such as the situation of refugees, stateless persons and migrants, combating pollution, and mitigating the impact of climate change on the most vulnerable in the region.

### **III. Technical cooperation**

#### **A. Enhancing technical cooperation in the field of human rights: key initiatives**

39. The Board notes with appreciation efforts by States Members of the Human Rights Council, in adopting resolutions, to identify different ways to enhance technical cooperation in the field of human rights, most recently in resolution [54/28](#), on enhancement of technical cooperation and capacity-building in the field of human rights. In that resolution, the Council requested OHCHR to establish and maintain an online repository of technical cooperation and capacity-building activities in the implementation of universal periodic review recommendations, with voluntary submissions made by States, as well as relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and other stakeholders, and to report on a yearly basis on the information there. The Board also welcomes the adoption of resolution [53/11](#), on enhancement of international cooperation in the field of human rights, in which the Council requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to organize a series of regional seminars, to consider the contribution of North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation to the enjoyment of all human rights, including the right to development.

40. Initiatives such as these contribute to greater efficiency and visibility of existing and potential technical cooperation in the field of human rights. They also allow Member States, international and regional organizations, and all other stakeholders to exchange views, identify challenges and gaps, and share good practices and experiences pertaining to human rights technical cooperation and encourage OHCHR and other United Nations entities to identify ways in which they can enhance their offers of technical cooperation to Member States. The Board is pleased to have contributed through its reports and interventions to those efforts and looks forward to continuing to collaborate with such initiatives in the future.

41. The Board also acknowledges the monumental efforts by OHCHR and the international community to mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the thirtieth anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action throughout 2023. The Board is pleased to learn of the resounding success that the OHCHR Human Rights 75 initiative had in terms of the number of countries that were involved in the national and regional dialogues that were organized; the number of delegations that participated as part of the high-level event on 11 and 12 December 2023; and the more than 700 pledges that OHCHR received as part of the commemoration, the majority of which were from Member States and many of which were related to technical cooperation in the field of human rights. The Board looks forward to learning more about the follow-up by OHCHR of the results of the national and regional dialogues, and the pledges received.

42. The Board is pleased to learn that OHCHR will be defining its next United Nations Human Rights Management Plan in 2024 and that, as part of that process, it is embarking on OHCHR 2.0, in order to ensure that OHCHR is fit for the future. It was particularly pleased to learn that, as part of the plan, OHCHR envisages enhancing capabilities in the field, including through new approaches to regional and country operations. The Board welcomes this important initiative and looks forward to learning more about its implementation at its future sessions, in particular about how the capacities of OHCHR to deliver impactful technical cooperation on human rights is expected to be enhanced through the initiative.

## **B. Measuring the results of technical cooperation and the response of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**

43. During its visits to the field, and in particular the two most recent visits to the Pacific and Central Asia regions, the Board has found evidence, numerous times, of the meaningful results that OHCHR can help Member States achieve when capacities are deployed at the field level. The Board encourages OHCHR to continue strengthening its capacities to provide technical cooperation in the field, with particular attention to deploying additional capacities at the regional level to provide adequate support to Member States and partners with respect to human rights priorities for the region, as they emerge. The recent efforts by OHCHR and Member States to deploy dedicated support capacities in key areas, such as anti-discrimination, the right to development and the universal periodic review, at the regional level will contribute significantly to the capacity of OHCHR to provide better technical cooperation to Member States.

44. The Board was disappointed to learn that the Human Rights Mainstreaming Multi-Donor Trust Fund has been scheduled to close in 2024, owing to lack of funding, despite the continuous efforts made by OHCHR and the Development Coordination Office to seek additional contributions to the Fund. The Fund was a major contributor to the human rights adviser programme, channelling funds through the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights. The Board commends OHCHR for its decision to maintain the human rights adviser programme and to take on the responsibility of fundraising for the programme via the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights. Through the combined efforts of OHCHR, the Development Coordination Office and resident coordinators, the Board hopes that funding will be found to cover the full \$20.4 million needed in 2024 to maintain and continue expanding the deployment of human rights advisers to United Nations country teams.

45. The strategic value of human rights advisers in resident coordinator's offices is undeniable, as the Board was able to ascertain in its visits to the field. During its two most recent missions, to the Pacific and Central Asia regions, the Board saw ample evidence that human rights advisers are not only effective in mobilizing actions to promote human rights by resident coordinators, but also by their colleagues in the resident coordinator's office and by the entities that compose the United Nations country teams. In the absence of the possibility of having an OHCHR office or technical mission in all countries, OHCHR should aim to have human rights advisers deployed to United Nations country teams.

46. In addition to seeking funds to maintain and continue expanding the deployment of human rights advisers to United Nations country teams, OHCHR should seek ways to strengthen its capacities to support human rights advisers in responding to the opportunities for human rights technical cooperation that are identified locally. In-country demands for the support of human rights advisers often extend beyond the needs of the United Nations country team to supporting national stakeholders on behalf of the resident coordinator or the United Nations country team. These are opportunities for OHCHR to expand its work in the country. Consequently, human rights advisers need close coordination with OHCHR to determine how to best respond to expectations for support, in close coordination with the resident coordinator. In countries where human rights advisers have not been deployed, but other OHCHR offices provide support, OHCHR should emphasize that office's role in advising the resident coordinator and the United Nations country team on human rights, in accordance with the High Commissioner's mandate to promote and protect human rights activities throughout the United Nations system.

47. Finally, the Board has continued to, and will continue to, advocate for technical cooperation programmes to be formulated and implemented with the broadest possible participation of all elements of society. As stated in previous reports, decisions on policies that do not reflect the voices, realities and rights of society, including those at risk of being left behind, have been shown to be not only unsustainable but also harmful, in that they may serve to perpetuate long-standing patterns of discrimination and marginalization that prevent the development of peaceful and resilient societies. Technical cooperation and advisory services should continue to promote and protect participation and civic space. OHCHR and other United Nations entities will need to update programmatic priorities and methods to strengthen their capacities for outreach to the different parts of society, including the business community, given their significant role in promoting and protecting key human rights.

#### **IV. Status of funding and donors**

48. At its fifty-sixth and fifty-seventh sessions, the Board was provided with updates on the overall financial status of the Voluntary Fund. It discussed and analysed the status of implementation of the workplan for the Voluntary Fund for 2023. An analysis of funding trends between 2013 and 2023 (see annex I) shows an increase in 2023. The strong support for the Voluntary Fund is a good reflection of the strategic vision and enhanced capacity of OHCHR to communicate the crucial results achieved in supporting States. The financial resources continue to be welcomed by the Board, as they are very much needed to maintain support for States and the requests for support continue to expand. The Board emphasizes once again the importance of unearmarked funds, which provide the flexibility and predictability OHCHR requires to respond to the needs and demands of the human rights situations on the ground.

49. In 2023, the total income of the Voluntary Fund amounted to \$32,483,766, comprising paid contributions for 2023, pledges receivable, miscellaneous income and interest. Contributions in 2023 were higher than in previous years, compensating partially for the funding shortfall of the Human Rights Mainstreaming Fund. In previous years, the Voluntary Fund had built up reserves to ensure greater stability for the programmes it wished to support. Given those reserves, a more ambitious budget of \$34.4 million was prepared for 2023. In 2023, the total expenditure of the Voluntary Fund amounted to \$28,327,452. The careful management of expenditure allowed OHCHR to secure an adequate balance to ensure the continuity of work in 2024, taking into consideration also the need to stabilize the human rights adviser programme. The reserve balance of the Voluntary Fund amounted to \$24,437,507 as at 31 December 2023.

50. In 2023, the Voluntary Fund provided resources for technical cooperation programmes designed to build strong human rights frameworks at the national level in 59 regions, countries and territories (down from 69 in 2022): Afghanistan, Argentina, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Burundi, Burkina Faso, Chad, the Central African Republic, the Congo, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Eswatini, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lesotho, Libya, Madagascar, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, Mozambique, Myanmar (based in Bangkok), Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Rwanda, Samoa, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Zambia, Zimbabwe, the State of Palestine and the South Caucasus region (Georgia).

51. The continued funding shortfall of the Human Rights Mainstreaming Fund had an impact on the Voluntary Fund and meant that, for the first time, the number of countries supported by human rights advisers decreased. The Board encourages OHCHR to ensure that the potential closure of the Human Rights Mainstreaming Fund in 2024 does not affect the human rights adviser programme further. Funding nevertheless allowed the facilitation of significant national efforts to incorporate international human rights standards into national laws, policies and practices in the countries covered, with a particular emphasis on the human rights dimensions of the global crisis, including inequalities, climate change and global

pandemics, providing much-needed technical support on integrating human rights into policies and practices aimed at addressing those and other challenges.

52. The Voluntary Fund has also contributed to the establishment and strengthening of national structures, institutions and capacities to ensure adherence to international human rights standards, including national human rights institutions. Detailed information on income and expenditure under the Voluntary Fund, its financial status in 2023 and a list of donors and contributors is contained in the annexes to the present report (see annexes II–IV).

53. Through its sessions in 2023, the Board has continued to cooperate with the OHCHR External Outreach Service to maximize opportunities to expand the visibility of the results of OHCHR support through technical cooperation. Outreach events, for example during its sessions, provide a useful way for the Board to communicate its views and observations and engage partners to expand the donor base of the Voluntary Fund and support, in particular, the work in the region. There is growing interest on the ground in the Board's findings and suggestions regarding engagement with OHCHR on technical cooperation, and Board members are invited to share their views on lessons learned across regions.

## V. Main findings and recommendations

54. In its discussions with different interlocutors, both at headquarters and in the field, the Board has observed a growing recognition by all – Member States, United Nations entities, civil society and others – of the relevance of technical cooperation in the field of human rights in bringing about the solutions needed to the different challenges the world faces today. The Board welcomes the efforts made by Member States and OHCHR to enhance technical cooperation and recommends that the key components of the sound technical cooperation programmes that the Board has outlined in its reports be translated into standards for the development of technical cooperation programmes in the field of human rights. The Board also welcomes the findings outlined by the High Commissioner in his report<sup>2</sup> and recommends that they be understood as complementary to the key components of the sound technical cooperation programmes advanced by the Board.

55. In recent reports, the Board has focused on the impact of COVID-19, particularly on economic and social inequalities that predated the pandemic. In the Board's last report, it also emphasized the need to focus on the challenges posed to human rights by climate change and environmental pollution. Seeing the impact conflict and violence are now having on the rights of millions and the growing threats arising from the potential misuse of digital technologies, the Board recommends that, in addition to a focus on economic and social rights and climate change, increased attention should be given to confronting the human rights risks arising from conflict and violence and emerging digital technologies. As preventive action is key to resolving those and other challenges before they evolve into crises, the Board recommends that OHCHR invest in additional capacities at the country level to identify and follow risks to emerging human rights in those four areas, as well as capacities to communicate them early to Member States for prompt action.

56. The Board welcomes the efforts made by the Human Rights Council and OHCHR to underline the linkages between the recommendations made by international human rights mechanisms, the Sustainable Development Goals, and national plans, reports and frameworks for international cooperation. The Board encourages Member States to use the Human Rights Council as a forum to foster technical cooperation in the field of human rights and share good practices and lessons learned. Noting the rapid increase in the number of recommendations that countries receive, including as part of the fourth cycle of the universal periodic review, the Board reiterates its recommendation that OHCHR identify innovative approaches to grouping and streamlining recommendations in order to reduce the burden that partners face when

<sup>2</sup> [A/HRC/53/63](#).

trying to navigate the numerous recommendations countries receive and identify the most relevant areas to prioritize for programming.

57. The Board was pleased to see the deepening of collaboration with the rest of the system, in particular with resident coordinators and United Nations country teams, leveraging the additional capacities in analysis, advocacy and programmes that the rest of the system brings to enhancing the promotion and protection of human rights at the country level. The mandate of the High Commissioner to coordinate human rights promotion and protection activities throughout the United Nations system needs to be translated into concrete joint actions at the country level, including through the support the United Nations provides to countries in implementing the recommendations from international human rights mechanisms. The Board welcomes the High Commissioner's initiative of requesting United Nations country teams to report back to OHCHR on how they will integrate the recommendations of the fourth cycle of the universal periodic review into their country programming. The Board recommends that this practice be extended eventually to all recommendations, and that a standing practice be set up of tracking the assistance provided to countries in implementing recommendations, as part of the work of United Nations Sustainable Development Group.

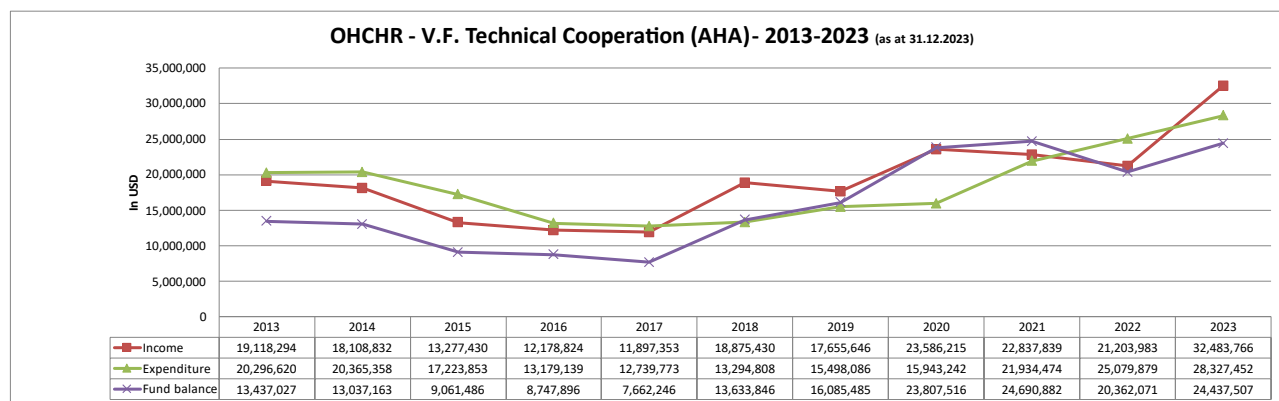
58. In order to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness and coherence of the technical cooperation in the field of human rights provided to countries, the Board recommends that OHCHR and other relevant United Nations entities strengthen their capacities for support at the regional level. In the case of OHCHR, during its visit to Central Asia, the Board witnessed the growing demand from Member States for assistance in adopting a human rights-based approach to the policies being developed on a broad range of subjects, together with several good practices that could be emulated in other regions, as outlined in the present report, in terms of the work of both the OHCHR Regional Office for Central Asia and the human rights advisers deployed to United Nations country teams in the region. Whereas OHCHR capacities in Geneva can support their efforts, effective technical cooperation requires dedicated and tailored support and oversight, which is better achieved through regional capacities. The Board recommends that OHCHR identify opportunities for greater strategic, technical, programme and administrative oversight and other support for its work in the field, to be housed at the regional level.

59. The Board notes with appreciation the acknowledgement by the Human Rights Council and States of the usefulness of its contributions. It is also encouraged by the increasing number of requests from States for OHCHR in-country support. The Board welcomes the contributions received through the various financial instruments managed by OHCHR in 2023, including the voluntary funds. It continues to emphasize the importance of ensuring the sustainability, predictability and flexibility of resources, while also underscoring the need to expand the funding basis for OHCHR so that it has the flexibility and adaptability necessary to cover the overall OHCHR programme. The Board calls on Member States to follow up on the pledges they have made as part of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to support OHCHR in its efforts to strengthen its field presence to enable it to provide adequate and sustainable financing for the technical cooperation in the field of human rights that the world requires today. The Board also recommends that OHCHR make every effort to ensure that the momentum established with those pledges is carried into the upcoming Sustainable Development Goals Summit, ensuring that human rights is rightfully recognized as an indispensable part of the efforts towards bringing the Sustainable Development Goals back on track.

60. The Board would like to thank donors who have increased their contributions to the Voluntary Fund through these challenging times and, in particular, those ensuring multi-year commitments. The Board calls upon Member States that contribute to the Voluntary Fund and to the Voluntary Fund for Financial and Technical Assistance in the Implementation of the Universal Periodic Review to continue their financial support for technical cooperation activities in the field of human rights, including by increasing their contributions to both Funds and their regular budget allocations for the work of

**OHCHR in the field. The Board recommends that special attention be given to the financing of the human rights advisers, noting with concern the continued funding gap and the impact that it has had on the capacities of OHCHR to respond to the growing requests from United Nations country teams for this form of support.**

## Annex I

Contributions to the Voluntary Fund and expenditure trends  
(2013–2023)

## Annex II

## Cost plan of the Voluntary Fund for 2023



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## Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation (AHA)

| Project Number | Approved Cost Plans 2023   |           | Expenditure       |      | Implementation % |
|----------------|--|-----------|-------------------|------|------------------|
|                | Field Operations & Technical Cooperation Division                  | Total USD | USD at 31.12.2024 |      |                  |
|                | (a) HR Advisers/HR Mainstreaming (43 countries):                   |           |                   |      |                  |
|                | <u>Europe and Central Asia (7 countries)</u>                       |           |                   |      |                  |
| SB-009371.29   | - Bosnia and Herzegovina   | 240,186   | 235,304           | 98%  |                  |
| SB-009371.58   | - Kazakhstan   | 204,564   | 199,757           | 98%  |                  |
| SB-009371.22   | - Macedonia  | 105,081   | 100,169           | 95%  |                  |
| SB-009371.15   | - Moldova  | 246,220   | 266,058           | 108% |                  |
| SB-009371.14   | - Montenegro   | 301,945   | 269,212           | 89%  |                  |
| SB-009371.27   | - Southern Caucasus, Georgia                                       | 273,496   | 289,964           | 106% |                  |
| SB-009371.59   | - Tajikistan   | 238,674   | 234,414           | 98%  |                  |
|                | <u>Africa (14 countries)</u>                                       |           |                   |      |                  |
| SB-009371.26   | - Burundi  | 316,212   | 298,022           | 94%  |                  |
| SB-009371.57   | - Congo-Brazzaville  | 323,101   | 332,280           | 103% |                  |
| SB-009371.49   | - Eswatini   | 254,475   | 250,924           | 99%  |                  |
| SB-009371.52   | - Gambia   | 249,627   | 248,895           | 100% |                  |
| SB-009371.30   | - Guinea Bissau  | 315,757   | 330,210           | 105% |                  |
| SB-009371.25   | - Kenya  | 293,462   | 293,375           | 100% |                  |
| SB-009371.21   | - Lesotho  | 346,371   | 327,200           | 94%  |                  |
| SB-009734.01   | - Nigeria  | 340,659   | 276,252           | 81%  |                  |
| SB-009371.09   | - Madagascar   | 229,930   | 232,460           | 101% |                  |
| SB-009371.53   | - Mozambique   | 248,970   | 226,608           | 91%  |                  |
| SB-009371.10   | - Rwanda   | 21,400    | 374               | 2%   |                  |
| SB-009371.50   | - Sierra Leone   | 309,210   | 400,334           | 129% |                  |
| SB-009371.48   | - Zambia   | 283,272   | 278,223           | 98%  |                  |
| SB-009371.02   | - Zimbabwe   | 261,414   | 244,242           | 93%  |                  |
|                | <u>MENA (1 country)</u>  |           |                   |      |                  |
| SB-009371.04   | - Jordan   | 296,343   | 247,433           | 83%  |                  |
|                | <u>Americas (11 countries)</u>                                     |           |                   |      |                  |
| SB-009371.37   | - Argentina  | 125,888   | 107,635           | 86%  |                  |
| SB-009371.34   | - Barbados   | 264,020   | 263,205           | 100% |                  |
| SB-009371.41   | - Belize   | 102,995   | 89,873            | 87%  |                  |
| SB-009371.35   | - Brazil   | 132,671   | 131,205           | 99%  |                  |
| SB-009371.20   | - Costa Rica   | 231,609   | 197,877           | 85%  |                  |
| SB-009371.28   | - Dominican Republic   | 252,271   | 251,743           | 100% |                  |
| SB-009371.39   | - Ecuador  | 179,419   | 183,482           | 102% |                  |
| SB-009371.42   | - Guyana   | 68,684    | 50,150            | 73%  |                  |
| SB-009371.43   | - Paraguay   | 105,832   | 100,721           | 95%  |                  |
| SB-009371.40   | - Trinidad & Tobago  | 187,234   | 141,117           | 75%  |                  |
| SB-009371.38   | - Uruguay  | 195,630   | 192,863           | 99%  |                  |
|                | <u>Asia &amp; Pacific region (10 countries)</u>                    |           |                   |      |                  |
| SB-009371.03   | - Bangladesh   | 277,181   | 263,024           | 95%  |                  |
| SB-009371.12   | - Maldives   | 307,857   | 268,061           | 87%  |                  |
| SB-009371.33   | - Mongolia   | 80,233    | 66,872            | 83%  |                  |
| SB-009371.11   | - Myanmar  | 290,086   | 271,376           | 94%  |                  |
| SB-009371.46   | - Nepal  | 86,671    | 76,894            | 89%  |                  |
| SB-009371.08   | - Papua New Guinea   | 183,723   | 57,417            | 31%  |                  |
| SB-009371.47   | - Philippines  | 234,904   | 205,345           | 87%  |                  |
| SB-009371.60   | - Samoa  | 254,412   | 248,783           | 98%  |                  |
| SB-009371.24   | - Sri Lanka  | 187,457   | 176,758           | 94%  |                  |
| SB-009371.07   | - Timor Leste  | 261,380   | 264,267           | 101% |                  |
| 62%            | Total HRA costs traditionally funded by MPTF-HRM Fund and VFTC-EXB | 9,710,526 | 9,190,379         | 95%  |                  |






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## Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation (AHA)

| Project Number | Approved Cost Plans 2023  |            | Expenditure       |      | Implementation % |
|----------------|---|------------|-------------------|------|------------------|
|                | Field Operations & Technical Cooperation Division   | Total USD  | USD at 31.12.2024 |      |                  |
|                | <b>(b) Support to HR Advisers</b>   |            |                   |      |                  |
| SE-018492      | - Bosnia and Herzegovina  | 58,677     | 61,834            | 105% |                  |
| SE-002068      | - Moldova   | 315,421    | 286,462           | 91%  |                  |
| SE-002065      | - Southern Caucasus, Georgia & Azerbaijan   | 543,946    | 513,161           | 94%  |                  |
| SE-002365      | - Serbia  | 268,729    | 239,444           | 89%  |                  |
| SE-016967      | - Burundi   | 689,248    | 407,363           | 59%  |                  |
| SE-002063      | - Kenya   | 770,278    | 717,361           | 93%  |                  |
| SE-002077      | - Madagascar  | 133,358    | 146,940           | 110% |                  |
| SE-002085      | - Rwanda  | 511,815    | 501,426           | 98%  |                  |
| SE-002072      | - Paraguay  | 197,113    | 165,372           | 84%  |                  |
| SE-020017      | - Bangladesh  | 167,456    | 140,224           | 84%  |                  |
| SE-016966      | - Maldives  | 97,279     | 49,360            | 51%  |                  |
| SE-002064      | - Papua New Guinea  | 359,730    | 234,047           | 65%  |                  |
| SE-007555      | - Philippines   | 162,326    | 164,308           | 101% |                  |
| SE-002083      | - Sri Lanka   | 1,005,764  | 592,857           | 59%  |                  |
| SE-002099      | - Timor Leste   | 281,308    | 221,534           | 79%  |                  |
| SE-009371.31   | - Support to HRAs - HQ cost recovery  | 267,542    | 312,468           | 117% |                  |
| 38%            | Total HRA support costs covered by VFTC-EXB/UXB   | 5,829,990  | 4,754,061         | 82%  |                  |
| 100%           | Sub-total HR Advisers:  | 15,540,515 | 13,944,440        | 90%  |                  |
|                | <b>(c) Human Rights Components of UN Peace Missions (6)</b>   |            |                   |      |                  |
| SE-019890      | - Afghanistan (UNAMA)   | 217,126    | 169,118           | 101% |                  |
| SE-006018      | - Afghanistan (UNAMA) - former project under down   | -          | 49,913            | n/a  |                  |
| SE-019887      | - Central African Republic (MINUSCA)  | 84,750     | 75,000            | 96%  |                  |
| SE-007195      | - Central African Republic (MINUSCA) - former project under down  | -          | 6,107             | n/a  |                  |
| SE-002088      | - Haiti (BINUH)   | 1,254,110  | 1,119,803         | 89%  |                  |
| SE-019891      | - Iraq (UNAMI)  | 0          | -                 | 0%   |                  |
| SE-002092      | - Libya   | 139,126    | 99,184            | 71%  |                  |
| SE-019888      | - Mali (MINUSMA)  | 185,772    | (7,364)           | -4%  |                  |
| SE-019889      | - Somalia (UNSOM)   | 363,957    | 322,086           | 88%  |                  |
|                | Sub-total Peace Missions:   | 2,244,842  | 1,833,847         | 82%  |                  |
|                | <b>(d) Country/Stand-alone Offices (6)</b>  |            |                   |      |                  |
| SE-018925      | - Burkina Faso  | 2,495,289  | 1,742,562         | 70%  |                  |
| SE-002089      | - Chad  | 1,601,181  | 1,114,600         | 70%  |                  |
| SE-002069      | - Mauritania  | 1,904,771  | 1,062,402         | 56%  |                  |
| SE-002059      | - Mexico  | 2,807,975  | 2,801,277         | 100% |                  |
| SE-002066      | - Niger   | 1,306,448  | 1,183,052         | 91%  |                  |
| SE-016232.01   | - State of Palestine  | 4,213,360  | 2,919,614         | 69%  |                  |
|                | Sub-total Country/Stand-alone Offices:  | 14,329,024 | 10,823,507        | 76%  |                  |
|                | <b>(e) Technical Cooperation projects &amp; Strengthened Capacities in Regional Offices</b>   |            |                   |      |                  |
| SE-019764      | - Kenya - UNDP support for Democratic Dividends for Sustainable Transformation  | 172,331    | 172,883           | 100% |                  |
| SE-019884      | - Kenya - UNDP/PBF support for Counter Hate Speech and Incitement   | -          | 91,832            | 0%   |                  |
| SE-024008      | - Kenya - UNDP/PBF promoting peace  | 350,000    | 214,000           | 61%  |                  |
| SE-023669      | - Kenya - UNWOMEN grassroots women  | 51,376     | 51,627            | 100% |                  |
| SE-024010      | - Kenya - UNWOMEN Kenya GBV Survivors   | 124,244    | 10,773            | 9%   |                  |
| SE-019917      | - Mozambique - UNESCO support for Human Rights of Persons with Albinism   | 38,082     | 24,470            | 64%  |                  |
| SE-002067      | - Russian Federation  | 855,800    | 859,340           | 100% |                  |
| SE-020885      | - Rwanda - Strengthening Capacities of NCHR & Civil Organizations   | 606,754    | 514,319           | 85%  |                  |
| SE-017421      | - Philippines - UNDP/UN joint programme on Human Rights   | 88,392     | 11,729            | 13%  |                  |
|                | Sub-total Technical Cooperation projects & Strengthened Capacities in Regional Offices:   | 2,286,978  | 1,950,972         | 85%  |                  |
|                | Accounting adjustments related to closed projects   |            | (225,314)         | */   |                  |
|                | Total (including programme support costs)   | 34,401,359 | 28,327,452        | 82%  |                  |
|                | FSC = 13% for projects funded by donors voluntary contributions;<br>FSC = 7% for projects funded by MPTF/PBF, UNDP & other UN Agencies. |            |                   | 82%  |                  |
| Footnote:      | */ Negative figure resulting from adjustments to prior year commitments/expenditure   |            |                   |      |                  |

## Annex III

## Financial status of the Voluntary Fund (2023)

|   |                 |               |  |
|---|-----------------|---------------|--|
|    |                 |               | PSMS/FBS/Reporting<br>Trust Fund: AHA<br>Prepared on: 29/02/2024 |
| United Nations Voluntary Fund<br>for Technical Cooperation (AHA)  |                 |               |  |
| <b>Financial report of Income and Expenditure<br/>for the period 01 January - 31 December 2023</b>  |                 |               |  |
| <b>I - Income</b>   |                 |               | <b>Total Income</b>  |
| <b>Contributions received for the VFTC in 2023</b>  |                 |               | <b>USD</b>   |
| - Voluntary Contributions received for 2023 - Earmarked to the VFTC (non-specific)  |                 |               | 11,305,866.50  |
| - Voluntary Contributions received for 2023 - Earmarked to specific projects  |                 |               | 9,059,050.41   |
| - UNDP/UN-Agencies contributions received for 2023 - Earmarked to specific projects   |                 |               | 608,056.11   |
| - Gain/(loss) on exchange (on contributions 2023)   |                 |               | (113,243.76)   |
| - Gain/(loss) on exchange (on prior year pledges paid)  |                 |               | (30.00)  |
| <b>Contributions received for the HRAs under VFTC in 2023</b>   |                 |               |  |
| - MPTF contributions received for 2023 - Earmarked for HRAs program   |                 |               | 5,000,000.00   |
| - Voluntary Contributions received for 2023 - Earmarked for HRAs program/specific HRAs projects   |                 |               | 6,001,532.13   |
| - Gain/(loss) on exchange (on contributions 2023 for HRAs)  |                 |               | 1,051.59   |
| <b>Pledges received for 2024</b>  |                 |               |  |
| - Voluntary Contributions VFTC (non-specific) - USD 2,439,024.39  |                 |               |  |
| - Voluntary Contributions earmarked to specific projects (Burkina Faso/Pol/Rwanda/Kenya) - USD 3,634,092.31   |                 |               |  |
| - Voluntary Contributions earmarked to specific HRAs projects (Myanmar/Bangladesh) - USD 1,366,563  |                 |               |  |
| Transfers (to) from reserves and other trust funds  |                 |               |  |
| Interest and miscellaneous income   |                 |               | 621,483.68   |
| <b>Total Income (I)</b>   |                 |               | <b>32,483,766.66</b>   |
| <b>II - Expenditure <sup>*/</sup></b>   |                 |               | <b>Total Expenditure</b>   |
| <b>Category</b>   |                 |               | <b>USD</b>   |
| CL010 - Staff costs   | 108,652.60      | 19,065,455.19 | 19,174,107.79  |
| CL010 - Other Personnel costs (consultants' fees)   | (60,896.29) **/ | 466,093.33    | 405,197.04   |
| CL160 - Travel of Staff & Consultants   | (19,352.62) **/ | 635,400.20    | 616,047.58   |
| CL160 - Travel of Representatives/Participants to seminars  | (88,355.62) **/ | 415,146.84    | 326,791.22   |
| CL120 - Contractual Services  | (36,164.73) **/ | 573,670.77    | 537,506.04   |
| CL125 - General Operating & Other Direct Costs (including meeting facilitation services)  | 95,473.00       | 2,445,567.99  | 2,541,040.99   |
| CL130 - Supplies, Commodities & Materials   | 9,694.80        | 52,269.17     | 61,963.97  |
| CL135 - Equipment, Vehicle & Furniture  | 99,884.68       | 246,459.89    | 346,344.37   |
| CL140 - Transfers and Grants to Implementing Partners (>\$50,000)   | 467,685.53      | 515,168.13    | 982,853.66   |
| CL145 - Grants out (<\$50,000) & Fellowships  | 12,272.55       | 633,288.16    | 645,560.71   |
| CL155 - Programme Support (Indirect) Costs  | n/a             | 2,690,038.97  | 2,690,038.97   |
|   | 588,893.90      | 27,738,558.44 |  |
| <b>Total Expenditure (II)</b>   |                 |               | <b>28,327,452.34</b>   |
| */ Actual disbursements and firm commitments - **/ Adjustments include prior year commitments   |                 |               |  |
| <b>Net excess/(shortfall) of income over expenditure (I-II)</b>   |                 |               | <b>4,156,314.32</b>  |
| <b>III - Opening balance</b>  |                 |               |  |
| Opening balance (01.01.2023) with unpaid pledge prior period (\$232,316.60)   |                 |               | 20,362,070.56  |
| <b>IV - Other adjustments</b>   |                 |               |  |
| Accounting adjustments / Transfers (to) from reserves and other trust funds   |                 |               | 209,414.51   |
| Refunds to donors   |                 |               | (232,801.45)   |
| Write-off   |                 |               | (57,490.60)  |
| Outstanding contributions receivable (prior period 2021/2022)   |                 |               | (1,000.00)   |
| Outstanding contributions receivable (unpaid for 2023)  |                 |               | -  |
| <b>Available Funds Balance (I+III+IV-II) without pledges</b>  |                 |               | <b>24,436,507.34</b>   |
| <b>Available Funds Balance (I+III+IV-II) with pledges</b>   |                 |               | <b>24,437,507.34</b>   |
| Contributions and pledges received to the trust fund are managed as pooled funding to cover the staff and activity costs.<br>The end of year unspent contributions balance relates to donors' voluntary contributions who normally have not put in writing a specific implementation end date,<br>nor have objected to funds being carried forward to subsequent years to cover the trust fund on going activities. |                 |               |  |
| This is to certify that the above statement of income and expenditure is materially correct and that the expenditure was incurred in connection with<br>the approved projects for which the contributions were received.  |                 |               |  |

## Annex IV

## Donors and contributors (2023)

| CONTRIBUTIONS IN 2023 (as at 31.12.2023) |                           |                         |                         |                                  |                                    |  |
|--|---------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| Donor                                    | Pledge Current Year USD\$ | Current Year Paid USD\$ | Gain/(loss) on exchange | Unpaid Pledge Current Year USD\$ | Unpaid Pledge Previous Years USD\$ | Project Title  |
| Australia                                | 65,189.05                 | 68,184.36               | 2,995.31                | 0.00                             | 0.00                               | HRA in Timor Leste                                       |
| Australia                                | 130,378.10                | 136,368.70              | 5,990.60                | 0.00                             | 0.00                               | HRA in Papua New Guinea                                  |
| Australia                                | 528,750.83                | 544,270.68              | 15,519.85               | 0.00                             | 0.00                               | VFTC pooled fund - HRAs programme in Asia-Pacific region |
| Austria                                  | 31,645.57                 | 31,645.57               | 0.00                    | 0.00                             | 0.00                               | HRA in Bosnia & Herzegovina                              |
| Belgium                                  | 548,245.61                | 554,938.96              | 6,693.35                | -0.00                            | 0.00                               | Palestine (oPt)  |
| France                                   | 327,153.76                | 318,133.62              | (9,020.14)              | 0.00                             | 0.00                               | Southern Caucasus (Georgia)                              |
| France                                   | 109,051.25                | 106,044.54              | (3,006.71)              | 0.00                             | 0.00                               | Haiti - Peace Mission Support                            |
| France                                   | 218,102.51                | 212,089.08              | (6,013.43)              | 0.00                             | 0.00                               | Mauritania   |
| France                                   | 305,343.51                | 296,924.71              | (8,418.80)              | 0.00                             | 0.00                               | Chad   |
| Germany                                  | 219,538.97                | 218,102.51              | (1,436.46)              | (0.00)                           | 0.00                               | Afghanistan - HR activities (UNAMA)                      |
| Germany                                  | 101,474.00                | 100,810.04              | (663.96)                | 0.00                             | 0.00                               | Mexico - Environment & Climate Change                    |
| Germany                                  | 29,380.00                 | 29,187.76               | (192.24)                | 0.00                             | 0.00                               | Kenya - Environment & Climate Change                     |
| Germany                                  | 322,234.16                | 316,455.70              | (5,778.46)              | 0.00                             | 0.00                               | HRAs program   |
| Germany                                  | 53,705.69                 | 52,742.62               | (963.07)                | 0.00                             | 0.00                               | HRA in Bosnia & Herzegovina                              |
| Germany                                  | 107,411.39                | 105,485.23              | (1,926.16)              | 0.00                             | 0.00                               | HRA in Myanmar   |
| Germany                                  | 274,122.81                | 269,687.16              | (4,435.65)              | 0.00                             | 0.00                               | VFTC pooled fund / HRAs program                          |
| Germany                                  | 219,298.25                | 215,749.73              | (3,548.52)              | 0.00                             | 0.00                               | Mexico   |
| Germany                                  | 164,473.68                | 161,812.30              | (2,661.38)              | 0.00                             | 0.00                               | Haiti  |
| Germany                                  | 82,236.84                 | 80,906.15               | (1,330.69)              | 0.00                             | 0.00                               | HRA in Kenya   |
| Greece                                   | 53,937.43                 | 55,493.90               | 1,556.47                | 0.00                             | 0.00                               | Palestine (oPt)  |
| Ireland                                  | 110,011.00                | 107,296.14              | (2,714.86)              | 0.00                             | 0.00                               | Palestine (oPt)  |
| Italy                                    | 85,015.94                 | 85,015.94               | 0.00                    | 0.00                             | 0.00                               | Libya - Support to Peace Mission                         |
| Italy                                    | 988,184.75                | 988,184.75              | 0.00                    | 0.00                             | 0.00                               | HRAs program   |
| Japan                                    | 925,925.00                | 925,925.00              | 0.00                    | 0.00                             | 0.00                               | HRA in Sri Lanka   |
| Luxembourg                               | 440,044.00                | 436,205.02              | (3,838.98)              | (0.00)                           | 0.00                               | Palestine (oPt)  |
| Netherlands                              | 2,105,263.00              | 2,105,263.00            | 0.00                    | 0.00                             | 0.00                               | VFTC pooled fund / HRAs program                          |
| Norway                                   | 297,038.89                | 315,974.64              | 18,935.75               | 0.00                             | 0.00                               | Haiti - Peace Mission Support in Haiti                   |
| Norway                                   | 510,535.60                | 543,081.41              | 32,545.81               | 0.00                             | 0.00                               | Chad   |
| Norway                                   | 324,886.29                | 345,597.26              | 20,710.97               | 0.00                             | 0.00                               | Niger  |
| Norway                                   | 371,298.62                | 394,968.30              | 23,669.68               | 0.00                             | 0.00                               | Mauritania   |
| Norway                                   | 46,412.33                 | 49,371.04               | 2,958.71                | 0.00                             | 0.00                               | Burkina Faso   |
| Norway                                   | 417,710.94                | 444,339.34              | 26,628.40               | 0.00                             | 0.00                               | Palestine (oPt)  |
| Norwegian Refugee Council                | 118,894.00                | 118,879.00              | (15.00)                 | 0.00                             | 0.00                               | Palestine (oPt)  |
| Portugal                                 | 32,362.46                 | 32,362.46               | 0.00                    | 0.00                             | 0.00                               | HRA in Guinea-Bissau                                     |

|                             |                      |                      |                   |             |                 |   |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-------------|-----------------|---|
| Portugal                    | 26,968.72            | 26,968.72            | 0.00              | 0.00        | 0.00            | HRA in Timor Leste  |
| Saudi Arabia                | 300,000.00           | 299,992.70           | (7.30)            | (0.00)      | 0.00            | Palestine (oPt)   |
| Spain                       | 109,649.12           | 105,485.23           | (4,163.89)        | 0.00        | 0.00            | VFTC with emphasis on SIDS countries  |
| Spain                       | 164,473.68           | 158,227.85           | (6,245.83)        | 0.00        | 0.00            | Palestine (oPt)   |
| Sweden                      | 654,828.90           | 659,149.65           | 4,320.75          | 0.00        | (0.00)          | Burkina Faso  |
| Switzerland                 | 540,540.54           | 574,712.64           | 34,172.10         | 0.00        | 0.00            | Palestine (oPt)   |
| Switzerland                 | 553,097.35           | 570,776.26           | 17,678.91         | (0.00)      | 0.00            | Palestine (oPt)   |
| Switzerland                 | 180,000.00           | 180,000.00           | 0.00              | 0.00        | 0.00            | Rwanda - Protection System/NCHR   |
| Switzerland                 | 715,768.00           | 715,743.00           | (25.00)           | 0.00        | 0.00            | Burkina Faso  |
| Turkey                      | 150,000.00           | 150,000.00           | 0.00              | 0.00        | 0.00            | Palestine (oPt)   |
| United States of America    | 1,000,000.00         | 1,000,000.00         | 0.00              | 0.00        | 0.00            | Mexico  |
| UNDP MPTF                   | 5,000,000.00         | 5,000,000.00         | 0.00              | 0.00        | 0.00            | MPTF-HRAs deployment  |
| UNDP PBF                    | 93,000.00            | 93,000.00            | 0.00              | 0.00        | 0.00            | Kenya - Counter hate speech & incitement ahead of 2022 elections (00130048) |
| UNDP PBF                    | 350,000.00           | 350,000.00           | 0.00              | 0.00        | 0.00            | Kenya - Promoting Peace (00140292)  |
| UNESCO                      | 0.00                 | 0.00                 | 0.00              | 0.00        | 1,000.00        | Mozambique - H.R. of Persons with Albinism                                  |
| UN Women                    | 113,680.11           | 113,680.11           | 0.00              | (0.00)      | 0.00            | Kenya - Access to Justice for GBV Survivors                                 |
| UN Women                    | 51,376.00            | 51,376.00            | 0.00              | 0.00        | 0.00            | Kenya - Strengthen capacity of grassroots Women                             |
| <b>TOTAL EARMARKED 2023</b> | <b>20,668,638.65</b> | <b>20,816,608.78</b> | <b>147,970.13</b> | <b>0.00</b> | <b>1,000.00</b> |   |

| CONTRIBUTIONS IN 2023 (as at 31.12.2023) |                           |                         |                         |                                  |                                    |                                  |
|--|---------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Donor                                    | Pledge Current Year USD\$ | Current Year Paid USD\$ | Gain/(loss) on exchange | Unpaid Pledge Current Year USD\$ | Unpaid Pledge Previous Years USD\$ | Project Title                    |
| Denmark                                  | 3,744,239.63              | 3,789,886.37            | 45,646.74               | (0.00)                           | 0.00                               | VFTC pooled fund - Non-specific  |
| Finland                                  | 2,439,024.39              | 2,181,025.08            | (257,999.31)            | (0.00)                           | 0.00                               | VFTC pooled fund - Non-specific  |
| France                                   | 1,090,512.54              | 1,060,445.39            | (30,067.15)             | 0.00                             | 0.00                               | VFTC pooled fund-Non-specific */ |
| India                                    | 200,000.00                | 200,000.00              | 0.00                    | 0.00                             | 0.00                               | VFTC pooled fund - Non-specific  |
| Italy                                    | 1,035,598.71              | 1,035,598.71            | 0.00                    | 0.00                             | 0.00                               | VFTC pooled fund - Non-specific  |
| Luxembourg                               | 1,096,491.23              | 1,078,748.65            | (17,742.58)             | 0.00                             | 0.00                               | VFTC pooled fund - Non-specific  |
| Philippines                              | 50,000.00                 | 50,000.00               | 0.00                    | 0.00                             | 0.00                               | VFTC pooled fund - Non-specific  |
| South Korea                              | 500,000.00                | 500,000.00              | 0.00                    | 0.00                             | 0.00                               | VFTC pooled fund - Non-specific  |
| United States of America                 | 1,150,000.00              | 1,150,000.00            | 0.00                    | 0.00                             | 0.00                               | VFTC pooled fund - Non-specific  |
| <b>TOTAL NON-SPECIFIC 2023</b>           | <b>11,305,866.50</b>      | <b>11,045,704.20</b>    | <b>-260,162.30</b>      | <b>-0.00</b>                     | <b>0.00</b>                        | <b>0.00</b>                      |

\*/ France contribution 2023 (non-specific) allocated to the VFTC by OHCHR to secure funding reserves (not initially pledged for the VFTC activities)

|                               |                      |                      |                    |             |                 |             |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|
| <b>TOTAL VFTC GRANTS 2023</b> | <b>31,974,505.15</b> | <b>31,862,312.98</b> | <b>-112,192.17</b> | <b>0.00</b> | <b>1,000.00</b> | <b>0.00</b> |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|