



UNSDG Human Rights Mainstreaming Multi-Donor Trust Fund

TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT REPORT: 2012 -2019

HRM DIRECT COSTS - 00082198

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1. Executive Summary

This report highlights the key achievements of the Technical Secretariat (“Secretariat”) of the UNSDG Human Rights Mainstreaming Multi-Donor Trust Fund (“the Fund”) for the period of 2012 to June 2019. During this time, the Secretariat was hosted and managed by the Development Operations Coordination Office in UNDP (with funds implemented by UNDP and OHCHR¹). New hosting arrangements were put in place in 2019 as a result of the UN development system repositioning and establishment of the UN Development Coordination Office.

Since its establishment in December 2010, the Fund has supported the United Nations Development Group (UNDG)/ United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) to further institutionalize the mainstreaming of human rights in the UN Development System (UNDS). It enables UN Resident Coordinators (RCs) and UN Country Teams (UNCTs) to advance the values of the UN Charter and ensure that human rights are at the heart of development work through coherent, system-wide policies and coordinated inter-agency action at all levels.

During the reporting period, the Secretariat provided overall leadership, coordination and facilitation support to the coordination of inter-agency efforts on human rights mainstreaming, including in its role as Secretariat to the inter-agency coordination mechanisms on human rights mainstreaming, including the Fund’s Steering Committee, the Resources Management Committee (RMC), Participating UN

¹ HRM Fund Project code 0082198. Commenced 23 March 2012.



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Organizations, and the Administrative Agent². It also provided advice on UNDG/UNSDG policies and guidelines, ensured institutional linkages and information sharing with the UNDG/UNSDG inter-agency coordination mechanisms, and coordinated support to and communication with RCs/UNCTs and Regional UNSDG on behalf of the Fund.

Throughout the reporting period, the Secretariat played a catalytic role in supporting and providing the Secretariat for the UNDG/UNSDG inter-agency human rights coordination and mainstreaming mechanisms to design and deliver joint initiatives to advance human rights in development work, including the initiatives requiring resources from the Fund. During the reporting period, the Secretariat of the Fund was a critical driver for enhancing policy coherence and joint work grounded in human rights norms. The Secretariat led the development of the inter-agency vision and priorities on human rights mainstreaming, ensured that these were reflected within broader UNDG/UNSDG dialogues, priorities and coordination structures, designed strategic workplans to strengthen development policy frameworks and programme support, and facilitated the implementation of the entire programming of the inter-agency mechanism, including (but not limited to) activities receiving funding.

As the UNDG/UNSDG priorities and working mechanisms were reviewed and re-structured several times³, the Secretariat contributed to UNDG/UNSDG discussions to ensure that critical elements of mainstreaming human rights in development work were reflected. The Secretariat provided critical coordination and technical support across the transitions between mechanisms, contributing to institutional coherence and change management efforts and minimizing disruptions to the ongoing work and initiatives supported by the Fund. This was crucial for the Fund in two respects: from 2011-2018 the UNDG inter-agency human rights coordination mechanisms served as the Steering Committee of the Fund and hence ensuring adequate guidance to the members on their strategic and governance responsibilities was essential to the continued operation of the Fund; secondly, the workplans of these groups guided the inter-agency human rights mainstreaming activities of the UNDG/UNSDG and all activities supported by the Fund were aligned with the priorities identified through these mechanisms.

² The responsibilities of the Secretariat are further detailed in the Terms of Reference of the Fund. Current Terms of Reference are available at: <http://mptf.undp.org/document/download/23674>. Historical Terms of Reference of the Fund are also available at: <http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/HRM00>

³ Effective January 2015, the UNDG Human Rights Mainstreaming Mechanism (UNDG-HRM) was transformed into the UNDG Human Rights Working Group (HRWG), in line with an overall revision of the UNDG working mechanisms. The HRWG then became the standing senior-level body on human rights within the UNDG, and served as the Steering Committee of the Fund. In February 2017, the UNDG realigned the existing Working Groups to more closely reflect the current Strategic Priorities of the UNDG. Through this decision, the HRWG and the members of the HRWG were integrated into a Results Group "Give Voice to Common Values and Norms" (RG VVN). From April – December 2017, the UNDG RG VVN served as the Steering Committee of the Fund. As a result of the UN development system reforms and re-structure of the UNSDG and its working arrangements in 2017/2018, the UNSDG body serving as the Fund Steering Committee in 2017 - the RG VVN - was dissolved at the end of 2017. Under the new architecture, agreed by the UNSDG Principals on 2 May 2018, there was no equivalent Results Group dedicated primarily to human rights mainstreaming. Accordingly, a separate, inter-agency Steering Committee was established for the Fund to ensure operational efficiency and stability. The Steering Committee was guided by the policy priorities and workplan of a Task Team on Leaving No One Behind, Human Rights and the Normative Agenda, which operated under the UNSDG from 2018 to 2021.



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The Secretariat provided strategic leadership and substantive guidance to the inter-agency work to strengthen policy coherence and common messaging on human rights in the development context (including the QCPR and UN Development System repositioning), leveraging and amplifying the voices of UNDG members through coordinated approaches. For several years the Secretariat led the UNDG's efforts on human rights knowledge management, resulting in a strong policy-practice loop and the profiling and exchange of country level experiences on human rights mainstreaming across the UNDS. The Secretariat also provided technical advice and coordination support to agency work plan leads in taking forward their respective activities at global, regional, and country levels. In doing so, it helped ensure UNCTs benefitted from the breadth of resources available on human rights mainstreaming from across the UN system; and supported implementing entities (including regional UNDG and UN country teams) in keeping their projects aligned to their stated project objectives and focused on results.

In addition to these tasks, the Secretariat ensured a smooth functioning of the Fund in terms of governance, operationalization of funds and fundraising, including through advice on navigating institutional reforms, and identifying potential challenges opportunities for the achievement of the vision and objectives of the Fund.

In carrying out its responsibilities under the Terms of Reference of the Fund, the Secretariat played a central role in establishing and managing an inclusive and effective inter-agency coordination structure, fully integrated within UNDG/UNSDG architecture, which was key to the Fund's strategic objectives of further institutionalizing human rights in the UNDS during this period. Working closely with the members of the inter-agency mechanism and with the additional resources provided by the Fund to support the workplans of the inter-agency mechanism, the Secretariat ensured a process was in place to define common priorities, and accelerated progress and substantially contributed to the following human rights mainstreaming result areas:

- a. Enhanced system-wide policy coherence on integrating human rights across the UN development system at global, regional, and country level
- b. Strengthened UN leadership on human rights - RCs and UNCT leadership leverage the normative mandate, expertise, and convening role of the UN to address human rights in country
- c. Strategic and responsive human rights Knowledge Management across the UN development system
- d. Coordination and partnership building for further mainstreaming human rights in development

Examples of the Secretariat's support that were noted in the report of the independent evaluation of the Fund (2010-2019) include:

- Driving the inter-agency coordination and facilitating the engagement and ownership of colleagues (including from across HQ and the field) in processes at both strategic and technical levels designed to identify and respond to human rights mainstreaming needs in the UNDS,

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examples include the Frontiers Dialogues, the Frontiers Forum and Policy and Operational Support on Human Rights in the SDGs as well as the Operational Guide on LNOB for UNCTs;

- Identifying opportunities in UNDG/UNSDG work on development policy, developing guidance and tools for policy coherence and mainstreaming human rights, coordinating with entities to provide advice based on agency inputs. Examples include the Senior Policy Dialogues (2012- 2014), development of common messages on the QCPR 2012 and 2016, IMS indicators on human rights mainstreaming, reviews of CCAs and UNDAFs and common messages for UNDS reform discussions;
- Substantive guidance, coordination and organizing with entities in the development and implementation of the RC leadership strategy, ensuring it responds to the challenges and opportunities of the current environment and is informed by broad contributions across the UNDG/UNSDG and inputs from the field, for instance on the HRA Strategy, in dialogues linked to broader UNDG leadership processes, development of the Guidance Note on Human Rights on RCs for UNCTs and Annexes, assuming a leading role on letters to RCs on engagement with the human rights mechanisms;
- Substantive guidance to operational support to country and regional colleagues to ensure alignment of efforts with UNDG/UNSDG priorities and emerging good practices, for example, in - country projects and through the support to regional HRAs, organization of the UNDG LAC Community of Practice and HRA Communities of Practice.

2. Period of Secretariat support covered in the report & implementing organisations

The Technical Secretariat received its first funding (direct cost) in March 2012. This report covers the activities of the Fund Secretariat from the period of 2012 to 30 June 2019. The Secretariat of the Fund was established within and managed by the UN Development Operations Coordination Office (DOCO) in UNDP, in its capacity as the secretariat of the United Nations Development Group. UNDP (the Development Operations Coordination Office) received and implemented funds for the purposes of providing Secretariat support to Fund in line with the Terms of Reference of the Fund and relevant decisions of the Steering Committee, including for the Secretariat staff members on UNDP contracts. OHCHR covered the cost of OHCHR staff in the Secretariat from 2011 until the first funds were received in 2012, and thereafter OHCHR received funds for staffing costs for those Secretariat staff who were on OHCHR contracts.

From 1 July 2019, new Secretariat hosting arrangements were put in place in the context of the repositioning of the UN development system, with the Secretariat administratively hosted by UNDP (Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office) and physically hosted and managed by the new Development Coordination Office in the UN Secretariat.

3. Overview of the Fund

The Fund was created in December 2010 to “support the implementation of objectives and priorities of the UNDG Human Rights Mainstreaming mechanism, established by the UNDG Principals on 30 November

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2009, to further institutionalize the mainstreaming of human rights into UN operational activities for development by further strengthening system-wide coherence, collaboration and support for UNRCs and the UNCTs on human rights mainstreaming, as well as to strengthen the coherence of UN responses to national priorities, thus ensuring strong national ownership and capacity to fulfill human rights obligations. The Fund will support strategic activities at global, regional and country level that ultimately contribute to the *transformational change and/or impact* at the country level.”⁴

In contributing to the overall objective, the Fund has focused on four primary components:

1. *Promoting a coordinated and coherent UN system-wide approach towards the integration of human rights principles and international standards into UN operational activities for development;*
2. *Providing coherent support for Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams in mainstreaming human rights;*
3. *Developing a coherent UN-system wide approach, through cooperation and collaboration among UN agencies, to providing support towards strengthening national human rights protection systems at the request of governments; and*
4. *Contributing to the integration of human rights issues in the overall UNSDG advocacy on development agenda and global issues.*

The Fund operationally started in 2011 with USD 4 million donor contributions by the end of 2012. The Fund remains today a critical source of funding to the UNSDG’s inter-agency initiatives to advance policy coherence at global level and to provide support to RCs and UNCTs to ensure that the UN’s normative role, particularly human rights, gender equality and women’s empowerment are a core feature of institutional change and transformational UN support to countries.

The Fund’s achievements since its establishment have been enabled with generous contributions from: the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the Governments of Norway, Denmark, Germany and Finland, and Irish AID.

4. Contribution to the SDGs

The Fund’s focus on mainstreaming human rights in development has become increasingly relevant over the years as Member State resolutions have increasingly recognised the importance of human rights for sustainable development and the role of the UN development system in supporting Member States to implement their normative commitments.

Established in the era of the Millennium Declaration and MDGs, the Fund made key contributions towards building a common understanding within the UNDG and with Member States and partners

⁴ Purpose of the Fund as outlined in the original Terms of Reference of the Fund (dated 21 October 2010): <http://mptf.undp.org/document/download/10163>. This was updated in February 2019 to reflect changes in the UNDG/UNSDG working mechanisms, but was not changed significantly.

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on the need to strengthen international commitment to human rights as a foundation for sustainable development. With the support of the Fund, the inter-agency coordination mechanism on human rights convened several senior level policy retreats in the lead up to the negotiations on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to define a common vision and strategy to strengthen policy coherence and joint advocacy for integrating human rights into global development agendas, including the QCPR, Rio+20 and post-2015 development agenda. The 2012 retreat resulted in an agreed set of common human rights messages and joint follow-up actions to be led by the inter-agency coordination mechanism, including a series of events and briefings with Member States, civil society representatives, human rights experts and UN agencies to provide a platform for discussion and to increase recognition by Member States of the centrality of human rights and the key human rights principles in the final outcomes including the discussion on the post-2015 development agenda. At the request of Member States, the Secretariat facilitated the participation of the inter-agency coordination mechanism in a dialogue on the HRBA in the context of the QCPR inter-governmental process, which contributed to stronger language on human rights in development in the 2012 QCPR resolution, which for the first time first time, stressed the need for strengthening the normative and operational linkages within the UN development system. The proactive engagement in the processes leading up to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development contributed towards broad support for human rights language in the final outcome.

Following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (the 2030 Agenda), the Fund's focus on the integration of human rights and the application of the HRBA contributed to increased coherence in the UN's support to the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including the commitment to leave no one behind. Through relatively modest funds provided to its work by the Fund and the collaborative engagement of UNSDG entities, the UNSDG empowered RCs and UNCTs to better leverage the full breadth of the UN's mandate and normative authority on human rights to strengthen their support to Member States to implement their human rights responsibilities and the 2030 Agenda".

During the period covered by this report, the Fund reinforced the efforts of the UNDG/UNSDG and its inter-agency human rights coordination mechanisms to anchor policies, systems, guidance, and support in human rights, enabling RCs and UNCTs to jointly provide strategic, rights-based support to countries. The momentum and ownership for human rights mainstreaming created by the Fund through this multi-year engagement paved the way for increasing policy space and recognition of human rights as central to effective and sustainable development progress. Moreover, the investments in coordinated, human rights-based work at the country level provided the momentum for further institutionalizing this approach. These investments have thus taken on even greater importance in the context of the UNDS repositioning, which emphasized the need for a coherent UNDS, with a new generation of UNCTs focused on delivering the rights-based 2030 Agenda.

5. Key results achieved by the Fund during the report period with critical support of the Secretariat

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a. Enhanced system-wide policy coherence on integrating human rights in the implementation of the SDGs across the system at global, regional, and country level

The early phase of the Fund's operations provided several opportunities for the UNDG to support inter-governmental discussions on the future priorities for sustainable development. The Secretariat of the Fund organized a senior-level policy retreat in 2012, which provided strategic direction and created strong momentum for the UNDG inter-agency human rights coordination mechanism (UNDG-HRM) to develop common messages and coordinated inputs for key inter-governmental processes of Rio+20, the 2012 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR). The UNDG-HRM, through its Co-Chairs and with the support of the Secretariat, organized a series of side events and briefings with Member States and civil society in the context of the negotiations for the Rio+20 Outcome Document as well as the QCPR. These collective efforts and joint advocacy contributed to increased recognition by Member States of the centrality of human rights in the global development agenda in the final outcomes of the Rio+20 Summit. The General Assembly resolution on the QCPR in 2012 (A/RES/67/226) was also strengthened in human rights terms, representing a crucial step forward and sign of Member States' support for efforts to mainstream human rights into the work of the UN development system.

Following the adoption of the 2012 QCPR, the Secretariat played a critical role in strengthening policy coherence in human rights mainstreaming across UN operational activities for development by providing guidance on strengthening the normative and operational linkages in the context of the QCPR, for the development of the UNDG Standard Operating Procedures for Delivering as One countries, as well as the revised Resident Coordinator job description and the Guidance Note on UNCT Conduct and Working Arrangements.

In 2014, the Secretariat carried out a mapping of human rights mainstreaming policies of the UN development agencies, funds and programmes, identifying the core priorities and issues that the UN development system as a whole is based on. In parallel, it reviewed the most recent UN Development Assessment Frameworks (UNDAFs), from a human rights perspective, to identify the extent to which human rights were mainstreamed into these frameworks in practice. This analysis and research informed the UNDG position paper on: "The UN's fitness for purpose for 2015", where human rights were recognized as core the UN development system's strategic positioning in the post 2015 era. It also provided the basis for the UNDG inter-agency coordination mechanism (UNDG-HRM) to articulate a [vision and message for the UN on implementing human rights post 2015](#). This message ensured a coherent and common voice on human rights across the UN development system and articulated the key components of a "rights-based development agenda" for the UN, which UNDG-HRM Member Agencies, as well as country and regional colleagues drew upon as part of their engagement on post 2015. The Secretariat provided guidance and substantive input to the design of the three UNDG seminars on "Delivering as One in a post 2015 world" (Connecticut, Istanbul, and Bangkok) to ensure that there was a strong, clear and consistent message (for over 160 participants) on the importance of embedding human rights into all of the UN's operational work.

Following the adoption by Member States of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Secretariat in collaboration with OHCHR and UNFPA, developed a [Chronology of UN Milestones on Human Rights & Development](#) in 2015 charting the relationship between human rights and development since the inception



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of the UN. The chronology was held up as a best practice for other Working Groups and drawn upon in advocacy to position human rights as central to the UN's "Fitness for Purpose" in the 2030 agenda.

The Secretariat also developed a vision and strategy for ensuring a human rights-based implementation of the 2030 Agenda. This consisted of leading the UNDG inter-agency human rights coordination mechanism (HRWG) in developing a set of policy and operational messages to support UNCTs in integrating human rights into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the organization of Frontiers Dialogues and the Frontiers Forum. The operational messages were developed through a 2-day workshop that brought together different experts across the system including HRWG focal points, a select group of Human Rights Advisers and representatives from different UNDG Working Groups. The messages were widely drawn upon by the UNDG Working Groups in the designing of the new Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support – a common approach to the UNDG's support to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the country level – and the new UNDAF Guidance. It also informed the work of individual UN Agencies in their efforts to develop guidance material on implementing the 2030 Agenda.

From its inception, the inter-agency coordination mechanism on human rights identified strengthened agency engagement with human rights mechanisms as a priority.

The Secretariat also worked with OHCHR to facilitate participation of the UNDG/UNSDG inter-agency human rights coordination mechanisms in the annual meetings of the Special Procedures and of the UN Treaty Body Chairpersons to exchange experiences on engagements between these mechanisms and UNCTs. During the reporting period, the Secretariat conducted surveys and participated in annual meetings to present analytics from the annual UNCT coordination results reporting (the UNDG Information Management System) showing trends in reporting by UNCTs on engagement with and use of the recommendations of the various mechanisms to help build mutual understanding of good practices and opportunities for further engagement. The Secretariat also facilitated coordination amongst the agencies, funds and programmes who also contributed to these important dialogues. In 2015, the Secretariat worked closely with OHCHR and Co-Chairs of the inter-agency human rights coordination mechanism (HRWG) in sending out letters to each UN Resident Coordinator regarding key upcoming opportunities for UN Country Teams to engage with the UN human rights mechanisms. The letters provided country specific information to facilitate UNCT strategic planning and coherent engagement by providing a comprehensive overview of all upcoming reviews by treaty bodies, the UPR and forthcoming visits of Special Procedures mandate holders. Based on positive feedback from RCs, this became an annual initiative that was led by the Secretariat each year during the reporting period.

As noted above, the Secretariat-led strategy for supporting human rights-based implementation of the 2030 Agenda was centered around the development of policy and operational messages, Frontier Dialogues on critical issues and the convening of a Frontier Forum. In 2016, the Secretariat supported the UNDG inter-agency human rights coordination mechanism (HRWG) in convening a series of "Frontier Dialogues", led by various UNDG members, to develop thought leadership on human rights implications of key challenges facing the international community. The Secretariat spearheaded the initiative,

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identifying key themes, generating inter-agency support and designing the concept and methodology. The Secretariat also played a key role in supporting lead agencies in conceptualizing and implementing the Dialogues. The Dialogues explored how human rights place the dignity of the human person at the center of the UN system's efforts, can help facilitate strategic solutions and the expansion of partnerships with the humanitarian, peace and security, and political arms of the UN. The themes were selected based on the shared belief that new thinking was required in response to emerging key challenges confronting the international community; the need to articulate and mobilize a strong and powerful defense of human rights on emerging trends or challenges and current national and international responses; the need to identify new conduct in order to ensure the protection of human rights and empowerment; and the fact that on these issues human rights concerns were witnessing a shocking silence. The Dialogues' outputs fed into the Human Rights Frontiers 2030 Forum and various other inter-agency efforts, such as the Joint UN Statement on Ending Discrimination in Healthcare Settings⁵. The Secretariat supported the development of short briefs summarizing the key messages from each Dialogue were included as an Annex in the web-version of the UNDG Guidance Note on Human Rights for RCs and UNCTs. The Dialogues' themes included: [Expanding Civil Society Space](#); [Human Rights and the Prevention of Violent Extremism](#); [Statelessness](#); [Human Rights and Urbanization](#); Business and Human Rights; [Zero Discrimination in Health Care](#); and [Environment and Human Rights](#).

The 2016 Human Rights Frontiers 2030 Forum "Uniting the UN to Leave No One Behind", convened by the UNDG Human Rights Working Group and organized by the Secretariat, was a milestone achievement that brought together senior UN representatives and practitioners from the field and headquarters to leverage their different mandates and expertise on how to best translate the rights-based vision of the 2030 Agenda into effective practice. The Forum provided 'thought leadership' on key frontiers for human rights in the context of Agenda 2030, and reflected on the leadership implications for the UNDG. The Forum provided a strong affirmation of the centrality of human rights and their importance in bringing the UN together in implementing the 2030 Agenda. The common vision that emerged combined three interdependent and mutually reinforcing areas of change: "Thought Leadership", "Principled Leadership" and "Communities of Effort." Combined, these provided the basis for a strategy to successfully place the person and human dignity at the center of the UNDG's combined efforts and bring about the cultural shift required to ensure that we live up to the promise of "leaving no-one behind".

In conceptualizing, designing and organizing the "Human Rights Frontiers 2030 Forum," the Secretariat ensured that the initiative responded to the challenges and opportunities of the new SDG environment and benefited from broad participation and input across the entities and of field colleagues. It also played a key role in moving forward leadership support on human rights, both in terms of facilitating stock-taking of the support provided by HRAs to RCs and UNCTs, as well as organizing a consultation with RCs prior to the Frontiers Forum to ensure that the leadership support strategy of the inter-agency human rights

⁵ Available at : <https://www.who.int/gender-equity-rights/knowledge/ending-discrimination-healthcare-settings.pdf>



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coordination mechanism (HRWG) responded to country-level needs and realities. Also as part of the preparations for the Frontiers Forum, the Secretariat reached out to over 40 UN Country Teams (UNCT) to gather feedback on their efforts towards integrating human rights in supporting SDG implementation along the lines outlined in the HRWG's [Policy and Operational Support for UNCTs on Integrating Human Rights into SDG Implementation](#). The Secretariat also continued the dialogues with relevant UNCTs in follow-up to the Forum.

The Secretariat was critical to the development of inputs from the inter-agency human rights coordination mechanism (HRWG) into the 2016 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) process, including in gathering, analyzing and presenting data and results of human rights mainstreaming initiatives, human rights inputs to the Secretary-General's report on the QCPR and the consolidation of information on the major references to human rights and the normative basis of the UN system in General Assembly resolutions relevant to operational activities of the UN development system. Following the adoption of the QCPR, the Secretariat provided guidance and support to the contributions of the inter-agency human rights coordination mechanism (at the time, the Results Group Give Voice to Common Values and Norms) aimed at strengthening the UN's attention to and capacity to support implementation of human rights in all pillars through the mandated reform processes, including inputs on appropriate positioning and references to norms and values including human rights and gender equality in the reviews of the UNCTs and RC structure, the regional functions and capacities, and the system-wide strategic document.

The Secretariat supported the inter-agency human rights coordination mechanism to develop a [UNDG joint statement commemorating the anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development](#), which reaffirmed the commitment to making the right to development a reality for all and to supporting Member States in realizing the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Secretariat coordinated and facilitated inputs from the members of the inter-agency human rights coordination mechanism (HRWG) to the development of the UNDAF Guidance (finalised in 2017) to ensure that the human rights-based approach was adequately reflected and integrated as a programming principle. The Secretariat also worked closely with the HRWG members to identify entry points for providing guidance to better support UNCT engagement with human rights mechanisms. Drawing on analytics, direct engagements with human rights mechanisms, UN entities and the annual communications to Resident Coordinators on opportunities to engage with human rights mechanisms, the Secretariat initiated a process with the HRWG to update and expand a pre-existing publication on strategic engagement with human rights mechanisms. The updated resource included new resources, checklists for UNCTs and a new section on the ILO supervisory machinery and bodies. This was integrated into the UNDG website as a [web-based guide to Strengthening Engagement with the International Human Rights Mechanisms](#) in 2017.

In response to demand from UNCTs for coherent guidance on operationalizing the pledge to leave no one behind (LNOB), the RG VVN initiated the development of the Operational Guide on Leaving No One Behind for UN Country Teams. In order to ensure system-wide support and timely delivery of this product, the Secretariat provided significant support in the form of substantive inputs on scope and content, meeting

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coordination, procurement and management of consultants and internal briefings to facilitate the endorsement of the Guide as an interim draft by the UNSDG. The LNOB Guide was subsequently piloted in three countries in 2019 (Nepal, Cameroon and Tunisia) which generated feedback on the operationability of the LNOB Guide and the process and capacity-building support needed to facilitate its application at country level including the development of new CCA and Cooperation Frameworks. The Secretariat provided coordination and technical support to the HQ leads and UNCTs to conceptualize and implement the pilots with financial support from the Fund.

The Secretariat supported the integration of the key elements of the LNOB Guide into foundational guidance of the UNSDG, including the UN Foundational Primer on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the guidance on the Cooperation Framework, and related guidance on CCAs and the application of the Guiding Principles of the Cooperation Framework. The LNOB Guide was also integrated into the first Call for Concept Notes of the Joint SDG Fund (funding envelope: USD 60 million) which focused on identification and activation of policy accelerators that unleash rapid progress across the SDGs focusing on LNOB, and specifically social protection.

In 2018 and early 2019, the Secretariat supported the efforts of the UNSDG inter-agency coordination mechanism (the Task Team on LNOB, Human Rights and the Normative Agenda) to enhance strategic UNCT engagement with the human rights mechanisms, including discussions on the integration of UPR, Treaty Body and Special Procedures outcomes in the new guidance on the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework including the Common Country Analysis. The Secretariat coordinated the inter-agency group responsible for drafting the specific guidance on implementation of the Guiding Principles of the new Cooperation Framework, promoting an integrated approach to the HRBA, LNOB and gender equality. The Secretariat also strengthened accountability systems for implementation of UN senior management directions and priorities and analytics on progress in actions to implement the HRBA at country level, including through facilitated the development and inclusion of new indicators in the UNSDG Information Management System (e.g. on UNCT use of recommendations from the human rights mechanisms in CCA and UNDAF/Cooperation Frameworks), and providing technical guidance to UNCTs on the use of the human rights-related markers and tags in UN Info - the platform for digitizing the UNDAF/Cooperation Framework and Annual Work Plans.

b. Strengthened UN leadership on human rights - RCs and UNCT leadership leverage the normative mandate, expertise, and convening role of the UN to address human rights in country:

Throughout the reporting period the Secretariat supported the inter-agency efforts, including those financed by the Fund, to provide support to RCs and UNCTs to fulfil their human rights roles and responsibilities, particularly in engaging politically and tactically on human rights to advance sustainable development. This included global and regional initiatives, as well as country-level projects.

Expanding advisory capacities and support to RCs and UNCTs through country and regional HRAs



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The Secretariat played a key role in the development of the Human Rights Adviser (HRAs) programme, a flagship initiative implemented by OHCHR on behalf of the system. During the reporting period, the number of HRAs supported by the Fund increased from 2 in 2012 to 12 in 2019. In the initial years of the Fund, the Secretariat provided technical and coordination support to the development, endorsement and implementation of the UNDG Strategy on the Deployment of HRAs to RCs and UNCTs. The Secretariat also provided substantive advice and coordination support to OHCHR, including on modalities for sustainable engagement and financing of the programme through UNDG/UNSDG structures, and facilitating consultation with RCs and across the Fund governance structures on the extension of HRAs and the deployment of new HRAs.

As the UN development system reform discussions began, the Secretariat provided talking points and information for senior level discussions to ensure continued support to RCs, including specifically on HRAs, one of the most effective tools for supporting RCs in leading the human rights agenda on the ground, both within the UNCTs and vis-à-vis national partners. In November 2018, OHCHR and the Secretariat, in collaboration with the UNSDG inter-agency human rights coordination mechanism (the Task Team on LNOB, HR and the NA), convened a workshop to strengthen the HRAs' impact in supporting the UNCT to provide system-wide principled, normatively grounded and human rights-based development cooperation (i.e. evidence based, standards observant, upholding of the rule of law), and to enhance exchange between the Human Rights Advisors and the members of the UNSDG Task Team for a more effective policy-to-practice feedback loop. The Secretariat played a key role in designing and facilitating the sessions involving the Task Team at the workshop, processing travel for HRAs, and in implementation of follow up actions.

The Fund also supported regional projects that included deployment of HRAs to support the Regional UNDG in two regions between 2014-2017/8. In 2013, the Secretariat coordinated outreach to Regional UNDG Teams and substantive support for the development of the regional proposals and regional strategies on human rights mainstreaming. This work resulted in the deployment of 2 regional HRAs – one in Latin America and the Caribbean and one in Asia Pacific – which provided technical advice and coordination the regional UNDG and advisory support to UNCTs to mainstreaming human rights from 2014 – 2017/18. Throughout these projects, the Secretariat provided guidance and support to the Regional Human Rights Advisers to strengthen the impact of their work, particularly with respect to ensuring the integration of human rights, leaving no one behind, and gender equality and women's empowerment in the policies and priorities of the regional UNDG Teams.

Country projects

In late 2012 the inter-agency human rights coordination mechanism (UNDG-HRM) launched a call for proposals from UNCTs for country level catalytic initiatives on human rights mainstreaming (the support comprising of US\$ 100,000 per project). The vision behind this "focused support" was that seed funding would support UNCTs take forward innovative inter-agency projects on human rights mainstreaming, from which lessons learned, methodologies and results would be drawn, which in turn would feed back into the wider efforts of the inter-agency human rights coordination mechanism to support UNCTs

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integrate human rights into their development work. The Secretariat provided technical inputs to the conceptualization of the initiative and coordinated an inter-agency group that developed the parameters of the call for proposals conducted the technical review of 49 proposals received against established criteria. The Secretariat also reviewed all proposals for compliance with the administrative requirements. As the only initiative of the Fund where proposals were solicited from UNCTs on the basis of a call for proposals, the Secretariat also played a significant role in the management of this process once the proposals were approved. The Secretariat was responsible for liaising with the implementing entities on progress and reporting and provided substantive guidance and operational support to country colleagues to ensure the alignment of approved projects with UNDG priorities and emerging good practices. The Secretariat was also instrumental in supporting the translation of knowledge gained through the projects into the ongoing policy and support initiatives at HQ and regional levels. In 2016, at the request of the Fund's Resource Management Committee (RMC), the Secretariat conducted an informal assessment of the initiative and submitted a report to the RMC.

RC leadership strategy

In 2015 the Secretariat played an essential role in co-leading with OHCHR the substantive revision and updating of the [UNDG Guidance Note on Human Rights for RCs and UNCTs⁶](#), which contains guidance and resources to support RCs and UNCTs to engage politically and tactically on human rights - through advocacy, analysis, and joint strategies. This guidance also contributed to the implementation of the Human Rights up Front initiative. The Secretariat developed the first revised draft of the Guidance Note and coordinated consultations with 24 Resident Coordinators and the members of the inter-agency human rights coordination mechanism, in partnership with OHCHR. The Secretariat also managed the final editing and publication process. This Guidance Note drew on the experiences of a large number of Resident Coordinators and members of UN Country Teams. It has proven highly valuable to RCs/UNCTs, with 50% of surveyed RCs in 2020 indicating the Guide is mostly or very useful ([HRM Fund Final Evaluation Report - Volume II](#), 2021). In 2017 the Secretariat published a web-based version of the Guidance Note on the UNDG website, with updated content and Annexes. This ensured that the content was more readily accessible to UN staff and suitably prominent on the UNDG webpage as a flagship publication.

The Secretariat also took the first steps in 2015 towards developing the UNDG Human Rights Leadership Development Strategy. In collaboration with OHCHR and UNDP, it conceptualized and organized two half-day "Dialogues" in New York and Geneva with UN leaders in country offices on the political and practical realities of leading the human rights agenda on the ground. These Dialogues were attached to the broader UNDG Leadership Seminar Series on "Delivering Together in a Post 2015 World". These dialogues provided a platform for peer-to-peer exchange on how to take action in different country contexts and identified areas where further support is needed. The high turnout (with over 70 UN leaders participating), level of engagement and experiences shared at the Dialogues underlined the need for such support and value of the interactive methodology developed by the Secretariat. The Secretariat also helped the Regional Human Rights Adviser in Asia Pacific to draw on the methodology in organising a regional Dialogue with RCs as part of a Regional UNDG Team meeting.

⁶ Based on a document drafted by OHCHR in 2000 as interim guidance and adopted by UNDG 18 months later



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This was followed up in 2016 with a half-day consultation with Resident Coordinators (organized by the Secretariat in collaboration with OHCHR and UNDP), to better understand the needs of UN country leadership in supporting a rights-based sustainable development agenda and to identify opportunities and challenges in exercising “principled leadership.” The RC consultation and Forum affirmed that principled leadership is a key component of our vision for a cultural change in the UN system. It affirmed that “incentive structures, support mechanisms and political backing at the highest level must align to provide RCs, UNCTs and HQ colleagues what they need to engage effectively (and when needed, courageously) on human rights concerns, to promote and guide the required institutional change and to facilitate the needed capacity, including financial and substantive support, more commensurate with expectations.” Building on the outputs of these events, the Secretariat supported the development of a proposal for a dedicated initiative on RC human rights leadership.

Under this initiative, the Secretariat, OHCHR and UNDP jointly designed and convened the first Human Rights Leadership Dialogue for RCs in Asia Pacific (held in Bangkok in May 2018). This dialogue provided a valuable platform for identifying effective tactics and strategies and exploring possibilities for human rights leadership support from the Regional UNSDG. Through a facilitated forum, RCs explored strategies, tactics and approaches for ensuring that the 2030 Agenda is implemented in line with human rights; identified good practices in integrated analysis and responding to the challenge of shrinking civic space (drawing on global level discussions and expertise); and engaged in exchange with civil society and regional UNSDG Directors on UN human rights leadership priorities and support needs in UNCTs. This model has been adapted and utilized in subsequent RC Human Rights leadership dialogues.

In early 2019 the Secretariat supported the three co-leads of the Human Rights Task Team to hold a webinar for RCs on “Making LNOB a Reality: Tactics, Methods and Approaches for Successful RC Leadership”. The webinar provided a forum for dialogue between the 60+ participating RCs and the Co-leads of the Human Rights Task Team on strategic entry points for advancing LNOB including Voluntary National Reviews, human rights mechanisms and Cooperation Frameworks. It enabled RCs to share experiences in leading coherent UNCT efforts to leave no one behind and highlighted the LNOB Guide and other tools and support available from the UNSDG in this area.

c. Knowledge Management: enhanced UN-wide knowledge sharing on mainstreaming human rights in development

The Secretariat made significant contributions towards progress in UN-wide knowledge-sharing on human rights and the HRBA in development. At the global level the Secretariat’s role in nurturing and maintaining the UNDG inter-agency human rights coordination mechanisms was in itself a major contribution to knowledge sharing and collaboration between UNDG/UNSDG entities. During the reporting period the frameworks and composition of the UNDG/UNSDG inter-agency coordination architecture changed several times, and the Secretariat was instrumental in navigating these developments and ensuring that coordination and collaboration on human rights remained a core feature of the architecture. The



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Secretariat supported the development of new Terms of Reference, membership lists, workplans and other strategic planning documents of the inter-agency coordination mechanisms on human rights throughout the reporting period, maintaining the community of practice and relevant linkages with the UNDG/UNSDG. The Secretariat's guidance and support to the regional projects implemented under the Fund also contributed to the establishment and maintenance of these regional inter-agency groups in AP and LAC, which facilitated horizontal as well as vertical information-sharing.

One of the first UNDG human rights knowledge tools for UNCTs developed with the support of the Fund to enhance UN wide knowledge sharing on human rights in development was the case study publication: *Mainstreaming Human Rights in Development, Stories from the Field*. The publication, launched in 2013, offered examples from Kenya, Moldova, Philippines, Tanzania, Uruguay and Vietnam of the critical role that UNCTs play in supporting efforts by national actors to integrate human rights into national development programmes and policies, drawing on the UN's convening power, normative role and impartiality. The Secretariat led the process, including liaison with the UNCTs and other stakeholders, and writing the publication. This served as a key resource for UNCTs also informed policy discussions at HQ level on the operationalization of human rights in development work, and the importance of supporting and scaling up good practices. Recognizing that codifying and sharing the valuable knowledge and experiences gained by UN staff on human rights mainstreaming is crucial for enhancing the overall capacity of the UN, the UNDG inter-agency human rights mainstreaming coordination mechanism dedicated Fund resources towards full-time dedicated capacity/expertise to support this objective from 2014 - 2017. The integration of these additional KM resources into the Fund's Secretariat in DOCO enabled linkage and synergies with other areas of the UNDG's inter-agency human rights mainstreaming work, DOCO's overall knowledge management functions and other parts of the UNDG and UN system. The Secretariat was thus able to build on knowledge platforms previously supported by UNDP – including HuriTALK and the HRBA Portal - and facilitate the further integration of knowledge sharing tools and resources across the UNDG.

Throughout the period of 2015-2018, the Secretariat managed, developed and enhanced the UN Human Rights Policy network (HuriTALK) and the UN HRBA Practitioners' Portal, ensuring that these two platforms provided curated and up-to-date resources to assist UN colleagues at the country level integrate a human rights-based approach into their programming work. The HuriTALK network of UN colleagues working in the area of development and human rights grew during this period to nearly 1800 development practitioners from more than 20 UN agencies, funds and programmes. The Secretariat actively encouraged membership and participation, effectively leveraging the network's inter-agency nature to advance the Fund's goals of further institutionalizing human rights mainstreaming across the UN development system entities. Examples of inter-agency knowledge products developed with the support of the Secretariat include the UNCT member queries with consolidated replies on topics such as rights-based root cause analysis in CCAs; HRBA Theme Groups; Use of the UPR and UN support to Parliaments in Protecting and Promoting Human Rights; and the regular HuriTALK resource updates. Through the moderated and facilitated exchange of information, good practices and lessons learned, members developed their understanding of and capacity to integrate human rights-based approaches into development programming. The UN Practitioners' Portal on HRBA pooled together that body of knowledge and experience across the UNDG, making it easily accessible to UN practitioners through a



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single entry-point. The application of this knowledge and learning was vital to improving the quality of the UN's human rights mainstreaming work. The UN Practitioners' Portal on HRBA consistently received 2,500 unique visits a month during the reporting period and was regularly updated with new HRBA relevant publications. The Portal also included a feed to the Secretariat-managed twitter account ([@RightsPortal](#)) that had over 500 followers including UN colleagues and thought-leaders. The twitter account enabled the Secretariat to reach a different audience and to convey, in real time, HRBA related news, tools and resources.

When the UNDG website was overhauled in 2015, the Secretariat developed the content for polished, informative and accessible webpages on the Human Rights Working Group and on the UNDG's Guidance and Policies section on human rights.

The Secretariat also played a key role in identifying topics and convening relevant experts for virtual inter-agency and HQ-regional-country level exchange and dialogue to advance attention to and results on the integration of human rights in development. For example, in 2015, the Secretariat launched a webinar series focused on fostering engagement between the Human Rights Mechanisms and UN Country Teams. The first webinar, "[Strengthening the Human Rights Agenda: A discussion with the Coordination Committee of Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council](#)," featured members of the Coordination Committee for Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council and participation from 60 UN Country Team colleagues (over 30 countries). Webinars held in 2016 covered topics such as "[Integrating human rights and leaving no-one behind in joint policy work](#)" and "[Strengthening the integration of human rights into the work of the UN](#)".

In 2017, the Secretariat provided technical support to the United Nations Development Group for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNDG LAC) to hold a Community of Practice meeting for Latin America on "The 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and the Human Rights based approach: a tool for UN Joint Programming". This event provided for an exchange of good practices and experiences between Human Rights Advisors, leading UN Agencies from country level inter-agency human rights working groups, Regional Human Rights Specialists and RC Coordination Officers in support of the adaptation and implementation the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with a human rights-based approach.

Recognizing the value of system-wide resources that are directly accessible and searchable on the UNDG/UNSDG website, the Secretariat supported the updating and transition of key guidance into web-based resources and worked with DOCO/DCO communications teams to ensure these were prominently placed. For example, in developing the web-version of the UNDG Guidance Note on Human Rights for Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams, the Secretariat was able to add new [Annexes](#) to [highlight the human rights elements of development challenges](#), including on: Expanding Civil Society Space; Human Rights and the Prevention of Violent Extremism; Statelessness; Human Rights and Urbanization; Zero Discrimination in Health Care; and, Environment and Human Rights. Many of these Annexes were informed by the Frontier Dialogues that were convened by different entities and supported by the Secretariat under the initiative of the UNDG Human Rights Working Group. The Secretariat also supported the launch of the [UNDG Web-based Guide on Strengthening Engagement with the](#)



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[International Human Rights Machinery](#). This included updated content to reflect new developments in the UN human rights mechanisms and a new chapter on the ILO Supervisory Machinery. The Secretariat also created easily accessible and printable Checklists on engaging with [Treaty Bodies](#), [Special Procedures](#), [the UPR](#) and [ILO Supervisory Bodies](#) based on the Web-based Guide.

The Secretariat's support to effective knowledge management and sharing also included the development of analytics on actions at country level through integration of human rights-related elements into system-wide monitoring and accountability frameworks. In 2015, the Secretariat also led the development and integration of indicators for annual UNCT reporting on activities and results in human rights mainstreaming in the new Information Management System, managed by DOCO on behalf of the UNDG. This important initiative resulted in the generation of annual quantitative and qualitative information on UNCTs' coordinated/inter-agency human rights mainstreaming actions and results, including support to national partners on engagement with the human rights mechanisms, internal capacity building, and on the integration of human rights in CCAs and UNDAFs/Cooperation Frameworks. The routine collection of the data enhanced the UNSDG's understanding of global, regional and country-level trends in the implementation of global guidance, and enabled cross-profile analysis to identify factors contributing to results. As this reporting process is managed by DOCO/DCO, the Secretariat was the custodian of the profile, responsible for annual review/updating of the questions, validating and analysing the data generated, and sharing the analytics and key messages with UN field staff, donors and HQ-level entities as required to inform policy, coordination and programming discussions. Data have been used in reporting to Member States on the implementation of the human rights/normative aspects of the QCPR, UNDG/UNSDG policy dialogues, the identification of priorities for providing support to RCs and UNCTs in this area, resource mobilization efforts and in reporting and evaluations under the Fund.

In 2019 the Secretariat supported the co-leads of the UNSDG human rights mainstreaming coordination mechanism (Task Team on LNOB and Human Rights) to launch a new Yammer platform for a UNSDG-wide Community of Practice on human rights, leaving no one behind and gender. This platform was integrated into the new suite of UNSDG Communities of Practice hosted by DCO, allowing for inter-linkages with other thematic Communities of Practice and reinforcing the centrality of this area work in development. It provided a space for facilitated engagement between HQ, regional and field colleagues on issues such as UN system policies, priority initiatives and tools, and field experience in implementing the HRBA, leaving no one behind and gender equality and women's empowerment. This platform replaced HuriTALK. The Secretariat provided ongoing support to this Community of Practice, including building the membership, monitoring exchanges and sharing relevant system-wide tools, initiatives and news. The Secretariat also provided guidance and substantive inputs to the migration of relevant resources from the UNDG website to the new UNSDG website, ensuring that key elements and features remained prominent, accessible and appropriately linked with the evolving UNSDG structures and language.

d. Coordination and Partnership Building



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Since the creation of the Fund, the Secretariat has played a central role in ensuring strong partnerships within the UNDG/UNSDG for achieving the vision of the Fund, as well as facilitating collaboration with other UN system partners, such as the Executive Office of the Secretary General, and with current and potential donors. The Secretariat's work with current and potential donors is reported below.

Throughout the reporting period, the Secretariat provided the secretariat support to the UNDG/UNSDG inter-agency human rights coordination mechanism, which served as the Steering Committee of the Fund until early 2019. This inter-agency space enabled UN agencies to work together in a cohesive and coordinated manner to identify and advance priorities to strengthen human rights throughout the UNDS, including activities to be implemented with support from the Fund. The specific role of the Secretariat included providing strategic advice to co-chairs and entity members on UNDG/UNSDG developments and expectations for the inter-agency groups, and on re-calibration of the mechanisms when required to adapt to evolving UNDG/UNSDG architecture. To this end, the Secretariat contributed to senior management and inter-agency discussions on policy coherence with regards to human rights in development and advocated for the importance of a standing inter-agency space dedicated to ensuring policy coherence, guidance and support on human rights and the HRBA for the UN development system. The Secretariat coordinated inter-agency discussions to develop strategic Terms of Reference aligned with the requirements of the UNDG/UNSDG, briefed new leaders and members, and coordinated inter-agency processes for the development, implementation and monitoring of results-focused operational plans/workplans, with financial support from the Fund for implementation where required. Throughout the reporting period, the Secretariat also facilitated links and collaboration with other inter-agency coordination groups to ensure synergies, including the Secretariat of the Human Rights up Front initiative, and with UNDG groups working on the reform processes and guidance requiring inputs on the integration of human rights/HRBA.

The Secretariat also provided coordination and substantive support to projects led by different Participating Organizations, facilitating the engagement and ownership of UNDS colleagues from across HQ and the field and the institutionalization of processes and outputs into the UNDG/UNSDG. For example, it provided technical advice to UNICEF on aligning the human rights mainstreaming monitoring and evaluation framework with ongoing UNDG initiatives and field-based needs, and technical input to the UNFPA-led evaluation of different national coordination systems that track the implementation of recommendations of international human rights mechanisms. The Secretariat also provided significant substantive support to the drafting team on the Operational Guide on Leaving No One Behind for UNCTs—a collaborative effort of the RG VVN and the Results Group: Sustainable Development and Sustaining Peace. This deliverable provided a much-needed common voice across the UNSDG on how UNCTs can support countries to ensure that no one is left behind in efforts to achieve the SDGs, including through translating some of the key elements of the CEB Framework on Leaving No One Behind into simple, operational terms for field staff to take forward. The Secretariat also facilitated the conceptualization and approval of funding for 3 country-level pilots of the Operational Guide on LNOB for UNCTs and led the coordination between the technical support team at HQ, the Resident Coordinators Offices and implementing entities at country level throughout the pilot projects.



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In addition to direct project and policy support, the Secretariat provided important coordination and partnership support to strengthen the impact of the Fund. In providing support to the governance structures of the Fund (Steering Committee and Resource Management Committee), the Secretariat facilitated critical inter-agency discussions on strategic priorities and the design of initiatives to be supported by the Fund, as well as building ownership through transparent and efficient processes for joint decision-making. The Secretariat provided insights and information on opportunities in UNDG/UNSDG work on development policy, coordinated with entities to ensure that agency inputs were considered, and led inter-agency processes to develop common approaches or messages to help address challenges or bottlenecks in mainstreaming human rights in the UNDS. Examples include the Senior Policy Dialogues held in 2012-2014, the common messages on human rights in development for the QCPR in 2012 and 2016 and inter-agency inputs on human rights in the UNDS reform discussions.

The Secretariat provided strategic guidance to the Steering Committee and partner entities to ensure the continued relevance and sustainability of donor support to the vision of the UNDG/UNSDG in further institutionalizing human rights in development work across the system. The Secretariat facilitated and communicated key messages on the priorities and future direction of the Steering Committee in internal and external fora to ensure that partners were aware of the support provided and results achieved with the support of the Fund. This included engaging with the MPTFO and Participating UN Organisations to ensure all administrative requirements for the Fund were maintained, as well as providing technical inputs to senior UN leadership to inform strategic discussions on the feasibility of available mechanisms for funding the UNDS human rights mainstreaming priorities in the changing operational context. The Secretariat played a crucial role in ensuring the seamless transition of funding under the decision to re-direct future contributions for human rights mainstreaming from the Fund to the DOCO-managed Delivering Together Facility (DTF), and back to Fund when the decision was made to close the DTF. Throughout this period of significant change, the Secretariat led on the development and revision of foundational documents, identification of potential challenges and solutions associated with the transitions, and convening partners for strategic decision-making to ensure there was no interruption to funding for critical initiatives, including the HRA programme. The Secretariat also liaised closely with donors, the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office and Participating UN Organizations of the Fund to build consensus around the proposed decisions and, once made, to ensure timely completion of all relevant administrative requirements.

The Secretariat also participated in global dialogues with partners on addressing human rights issues in development, contributing evidence-based insights on opportunities and challenges for the UN development system to further support the realization of human rights through action at global, regional and country levels. For example, in 2018, the Secretariat attended the “Informal meeting of development partners on: International support for the national implementation of human rights obligations and recommendations” (Oslo) and shared analytics and insights on the activities of UNCTs in supporting the implementation of human rights through development work and some of the key results of the Fund.



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6. Secretariat-specific responsibilities and results

a. Operational effectiveness

Support provided by the Secretariat to the Steering Committee, Participating UN Organisations and the Administrative Agent to ensure operational effectiveness included:

Support to the effective and efficient operations of the governance structures of the Fund (Steering Committee and Resource Management Committee): Timely secretariat support is necessary for well-functioning governance structures, which are critical to the impact of the Fund. This involved organizing meetings and agendas, facilitating the participation of the Chair, members and any additional participants/guests, documentation of meetings, and following up or implementing decisions, as required.

Support to review of the PUNO/partner proposals for funding: During this period the Steering Committee approved 26 projects/programmes for implementation, with the HRA programme involving additional review, approval and funds transfer processes for each individual HRA deployment. Drawing on the work of the Secretariat in guiding the inter-agency human rights coordination mechanism to develop and implement strategic workplans for joint support to the integration of human rights in the UN development system, the Secretariat supported PUNOs in the development of proposals to the Fund, conducted initial reviews for compliance with Fund requirements, facilitated the processes for the Steering Committee and RMC technical review and endorsement, and liaised with the Fund's administrative agent for funds transfers in line with Steering Committee decisions. The Secretariat also advised PUNOs on technical requirements for project/programme amendments, extensions and reporting and facilitated the review of these in accordance with the Fund's processes.

Coordination with the UN development system inter-agency coordination architecture to maintain appropriate institutional linkages and maximize impact of the Fund: The Secretariat, hosted by DOCO/DCO, played an important role in coordinating with the relevant architecture of the UN development system during the reporting period. It contributed to internal discussions on changes to the coordination mechanisms to ensure the strategic considerations relevant to the mainstreaming of human rights in the UNDS and the objectives, governance and management of the Fund were taken into consideration. Where proposed changes would impact on the Fund, the Secretariat supported deliberation and decision-making by the Steering Committee to navigate the Fund through the changes. For example, the Secretariat coordinated discussions between DOCO, the MPTFO and the Steering Committee when the Delivering Together Facility was established; when changes as part of the UNDS repositioning resulted in the dissolution of a standing inter-agency coordination mechanism dedicated to human rights, the Secretariat coordinated discussions at the senior level and supported the revision of the Terms of Reference of the Fund to enable its continued operation and governance by an inter-agency Steering Committee. The Secretariat also facilitated the necessary changes to the administrative hosting of the Fund Secretariat.

Preparation and consolidation of annual narrative reports of the Fund: The Secretariat supported PUNOs in meeting their annual reporting obligations under the Fund, and led the preparation of the consolidated annual narrative reports. To ensure high quality reports, the Secretariat liaised bilaterally with the

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Participating UN Organizations and with colleagues at the regional and country levels to strengthen and verify results reported. The Secretariat also conducted additional data analysis to provide a more comprehensive picture of system-wide achievements and Fund-wide operations. The Secretariat liaised closely with the Chair in the final editing and endorsement of these reports.

Donor coordination and communication, partnerships and resource mobilization: The Secretariat served as primary liaison with current donors of the Fund, providing updates on the activities of the Fund, operational developments and funding needs. It ensured timely communications between donors and the MPTFO on new agreements, contributions and related administrative matters. The Secretariat responded to donor queries on the Fund, where necessary facilitating information exchange between donors and the Steering Committee on substantive matters to ensure the continued engagement of partners and operational efficiencies. The Secretariat was instrumental in ensuring clear communications with donors throughout on relevant changes within the UNDG/UNSDG, including when there was a proposal to integrate funding for human rights mainstreaming into an alternative financing mechanism (the DTF) and close the HRM Fund. During the period of operation of the DTF, the Secretariat ensured the strategic use of resources available through both mechanisms to maximize the stability and sustainability of human rights mainstreaming initiatives, and liaised with both the Steering Committee and the management of the DTF to maintain operational coherence during the transition and support discussions on a suitable long-term solution. The Secretariat also ensured timely communication to donors on the resource needs of the Fund and facilitated the Steering Committee's deliberations and decisions relating to resource mobilization. During the reporting period, the total contribution to the Fund was USD 20.8 million, from 6 donors.

b. Special initiatives:

During the reporting period, the Steering Committee tasked the Secretariat with implementing several initiatives in support of the Fund's objectives where the Secretariat – as hosted by DOCO/DCO – was strategically well-placed to implement, in close collaboration with relevant UNDS entities. Additional resources were provided to the Secretariat as part of the Direct Cost budget to deliver on these initiatives. Achievements from these special initiatives are described above under section 4 on Achievements of the Fund. Details on the Secretariat's role in implementation is below:

Knowledge management across the UNDG/UNSDG (2013-2017): going beyond the Secretariat's core function of knowledge management for the Fund, this initiative involved hiring and management of a Knowledge Management Specialist and engagement of consultants/services to develop and manage content of multiple dedicated online knowledge management platforms (including HuriTALK and the HRBA Portal) for the whole of the UN development system with a focus on enhancing vertical communications and bi-directional information sharing between HQ, regional level and the field, and to create opportunities for linkages and synergies with other areas of the inter-agency human rights mainstreaming work and system-wide knowledge management functions led by DOCO/DCO and other parts of the UN system;

RC human rights leadership (2017 – 2019): In collaboration with UNDP and OHCHR, the Secretariat was responsible for convening regional level peer-to-peer dialogues for RCs, and structured dialogues

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with regional partners including regional UNDG teams and civil society representatives to exchange and reflect on leadership strategies and approaches by which to support human rights-based implementation of the 2030 Agenda. This initiative resulted in the first Human Rights Leadership Dialogue for RCs, held in Asia Pacific in May 2018. In this first Dialogue, the Secretariat was particularly critical in facilitating the strategic engagement of the Regional UNSDG and civil society, and in all operational aspects as the funding implementer for that project (i.e. processing the travel and venue-related costs for the event). Some of the activities envisaged under this initiative were not implemented due to challenges in carrying out the planned activities in the context of the UNDS reforms ongoing at the time. Some of the savings were used to cover approved Secretariat staff costs and the remainder was refunded.

The Secretariat also led the implementation of a separate project under the workplan of the UNDG Human Rights Working Group, *Human Rights Frontiers 2030: Uniting the UN to Implement a 2030 Agenda that Leaves No One Behind* [project number 00101215]. Outcomes of this project are summarized above and the implementation of this project was also reported separately as part of the closure of the project.

7. Lessons Learned

The independent evaluation of the Fund, completed in 2021, found that the provision of the Secretariat to the UNDG/UNSDG inter-agency coordination groups and human rights capacity within DOCO/DCO has been a value-added as it allowed the Fund to deliver additional results pertaining to important quality assurance, coordination and partnership support for the human rights mainstreaming work of the UNDG/UNSDG through its role in supporting the inter-agency human rights mainstreaming mechanisms to deliver on their work plans; importantly, because of the dedicated Secretariat support many inter-agency initiatives have been able to move forward with their initiatives.

One of the key lessons learned is that by investing in a strong technical secretariat, hosted within the entity responsible for inter-agency development coordination, the Fund was able to influence a much wider range of institutional initiatives and create a more enabling environment for effective inter-agency collaboration on integrating human rights in development. Many of the opportunities that the Secretariat was able to create, identify and/or engage in did not require additional project funds. The outcomes of the Secretariat's work in strengthening overall coherence and increasing the impact of projects supported by the Fund represents considerable value for money. A key lesson is also the value of having an interagency mechanism that ensures policy coherence to advance the policy environment for integrating human rights in development without which project funds will not be effective in achieving sustainable institutional strengthening and development results.

The 2030 Agenda, UN development system repositioning and Secretary-General's Call to Action on Human Rights require leadership, policy development and support at HQ, regional and country levels, as well as capacity, knowledge and skillsets for human rights work across the organization. With the support of the Secretariat, the Steering Committee of the Fund agreed on several key steps for 2020 intended to lay the



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foundations for the continuation of the Fund as the primary funding mechanism for the UN development system's inter-agency human rights mainstreaming work to at least 2024.

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Annex 1 – Financial summary

Use of funds for project ID 00082198

From the MPTF Gateway, the direct costs of the Fund Secretariat as released to OHCHR and UNDP for the reporting period amounted to USD 3,979,274. OHCHR and UNDP refunded their respective balances to the MPTFO. The total net funded amounts and expenditure summary are shown below.

Organization	Proj. Reference	Approved budget (real-time)	Net Funded Amount (real-time)	Transfers (real-time)	Refunds (real-time)	Expenditure (annual)	Delivery rate (annual)
OHCHR	S1-32HCA-000030/SB-002308	1,277,223	1,126,151	1,277,223	-151,072	1,126,151	100.00%
UNDP	MULTIREF	2,702,051	2,685,115	2,702,051	-16,936	2,685,115	100.00%
Totals							
		3,979,274	3,811,266	3,979,274	-168,008	3,811,266	

A total of USD 3,979,274 (per MPTF Gateway) was received by the Fund Secretariat from 2012 to 2019. The yearly funds transferred for the direct costs of the Secretariat including the additional funds required for the knowledge management and RC human rights leadership initiatives, are listed below.

- 2012: USD 691,635
- 2013: USD 616,914
- 2014: USD 817,522
- 2015: USD 791,016
- 2016: USD 767, 639
- 2017: USD 160,500
- 2018: USD 134,048
- 2019: USD 0

The Secretariat staff contracts throughout the reporting period were administratively managed by UNDP and OHCHR, with UNDP managing the rest of the budget as administrative host of the Secretariat. As reflected in the Fund’s Annual Consolidated Reports, the Fund Secretariat, in line with the Steering Committee operational requirements, used the funds to support the costs of personnel including staff hired by UNDP and OHCHR as the two core members of the Secretariat, as well as consultants, service contracts and travel to support key initiatives including knowledge management and the implementation of the Human Rights Leadership Development for Senior Field Leaders initiative. From this initiative (total approved budget 160,500), savings from challenges in implementation due to the UNDS repositioning



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were partly used to cover approved Secretariat staff costs and related general operating costs due to exigencies at the time (USD 87,416) and the remainder was refunded by UNDP (USD 16,936). OHCHR refunds reflected savings against estimated staff costs.