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Consolidated Annual Progress Report on  
**Activities Implemented under the  
UNSDG Human Rights Mainstreaming  
(UNSDG-HRM) Fund**

REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE  
AGENT OF THE UNSDG-HRM FUND

• 1 JANUARY  
• 31 DECEMBER

• 2019

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United Nations Development Programme GATEWAY: <http://mptf.undp.org>



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## PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS



Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights



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United Nations Development Programme



United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization



United Nations Population Fund



United Nations Children's Fund



UNITED NATIONS  
SYSTEM STAFF COLLEGE

United Nations System Staff College

## CONTRIBUTORS



DENMARK,  
Government of



FINLAND,  
Government of



GERMANY,  
Government of



IRISH AID



NORWAY,  
Government of



SWEDISH  
INTERNATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
COOPERATION  
AGENCY

This annual report on the activities implemented under the United Nations Sustainable Development Group Human Rights Mainstreaming Fund (the UNSDG-HRM Fund)<sup>1</sup> is submitted to donors by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTF Office), in its capacity as the Administrative Agent (AA) of the UNSDG-HRM Fund in fulfilment of the reporting provisions of the Standard Administrative Arrangement. The information presented in this Progress Report covers the period from 1 January to 31 December 2019. This report is consolidated based on information contained in the individual programme narrative reports and financial information provided by the UNSDG-HRM Fund Secretariat and Participating UN Organizations.

<sup>1</sup> Previously named the UNDG Human Rights Mainstreaming Mechanism (UNDG-HRM), the operational name of this Fund was changed to the UN Sustainable Development Group Human Rights Mainstreaming (UNSDG-HRM) in December 2019. This name change reflects the change in the name of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) to United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) in May 2018.

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Definitions and Abbreviations



**“[W]e must take maximum advantage of the connectivity between human rights and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets correspond overwhelmingly to existing – and legally binding – human rights commitments. We must keep human rights principles at the fore of SDG implementation, and use our human rights instruments to contribute.”**

Secretary General, message to all UN staff on the launch of the Call to Action on Human Rights, 24 February 2020



# Executive Summary

## INTRODUCTION

2019 was an unusual year for many reasons, not all positive. It marked the fourth year since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda), making it an appropriate moment to reflect on our progress in translating the agenda’s promise into reality for the world’s people. The Decade of Action reminded us we have only ten years left to deliver on this promise, and we need to accelerate efforts significantly if we are to reach the Sustainable Development Goals. In line with the vision of the 2030 Agenda and its pledge to “leave no one behind”, international norms and standards constitute a core foundation of the UN’s work at country level and its unique role, commitment and driving force for an integrated, people-centred approach that incorporates human rights and gender equality as critical components. The UN Sustainable Development Group Human Rights Mainstreaming Fund (UNSDG-HRM Fund) is more relevant than ever in pursuing this vision.

The year, however, was also marked by records that stood in stark contrast with the aims of the 2030 Agenda, with multiple signs that we are falling behind in achieving the promise to leave no one behind. Disregard for human rights is widespread, undermining human dignity and development progress, and giving rise to new challenges. Inequality is growing for more than 70 per cent of the global population. Root causes - including inter-generational, economic, ethnic, gender-based, geographic or other grounds of discrimination prohibited by international law – need to be addressed for truly inclusive, structural transformations. In 2019, the number of billionaires in the world doubled over the last decade; the world’s richest 1% owning twice as much as bottom 90% combined; extreme poverty and

food deprivation are far from eradication even in the most developed countries. 2019 was also the second warmest year in Earth’s history, bringing us closer to a possible climate change catastrophe that will significantly impact on the rights of all, and of marginalised populations in particular. 2019 also brought a record number of mass protests everywhere around the globe that were frequently marked by disproportionate responses and restrictions on individual rights and freedoms and civic space, further eroding levels of trust in government institutions.

Against this backdrop, the UN put in place the first steps in the reform of its Development System, aiming to reposition itself as a more effective partner to countries

in their efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda. The UNSDG-HRM Fund was a core part of these efforts. The continued support of the UNSDG-HRM Fund in 2019 enabled the UNSDG to continue to integrate human rights, the human rights based approach (HRBA) and the principle of leaving no one behind (LNOB) in the policies and resources that strengthen the system's leadership and work at national, regional and global levels. This was achieved through work led by the UNSDG Task Team on Leaving No One Behind, Human Rights and the Normative Agenda

(Human Rights Task Team), working closely with the UNSDG-HRM Fund Secretariat (Fund Secretariat), the broader UNSDG, and the UN Resident Coordinator System on fostering policy coherence, the issuing of key guidance and tools for UN Country Teams (UNCTs) on HRBA and LNOB, in the supporting RCs and UNCT human rights leadership and capacities including through the deployment of Human Rights Advisors, and in joint efforts to leverage other mechanisms and funding sources to increase the impact of UNSDG-HRM Fund investments.

## CONTEXT – REFORM, TRANSITIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE UNSDG-HRM FUND

The UN system is duty-bound to support the vision Member States established in the Charter and have elaborated through numerous commitments to human rights since 1945. The 2030 Agenda challenges the UN to ensure the SDGs are implemented in accordance with international law, through integrated and comprehensive approaches that ensure that no one is left behind and the furthest behind are reached first. The 2016 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) (A/Res/71/243) recognised the importance of the UN development systems (UNDS) in supporting government efforts to achieve the SDGs, based on full respect for human rights. It called upon the UNDS to strengthen its support to building national capacities. The UNDS reform initiated by the General Assembly in 2018 (A/Res/72/279) put in motion the unprecedented set of changes required to improve UN support for Member States to address the

development challenges of the 2030 Agenda in line with country's human rights obligations. In the context of these decisions, ensuring greater human rights leadership and technical capacities in the UNDS for coherent integration of human rights is key to a UNDS that fulfils its role in supporting the transformative vision of the 2030 Agenda.

Since 2011 the UNSDG has championed a comprehensive and systematic approach to strengthening policy coherence in integrating human rights in development. This work has been advanced under the guidance of the standing UNSDG human rights mainstreaming structures<sup>2</sup> with the support of the UNSDG-HRM Fund. The efforts continue with greater urgency to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda; an agenda that is about leaving no-one behind, reaching those furthest behind

<sup>2</sup> Since the inception of the UNSDG-HRM Fund, the standing human rights mainstreaming mechanisms of the UNDG / UNSDG have been: UNDG Human Rights Working Group (UNDG-HRWG), the UNDG Results Group: Give Voice to Common Values and Norms (RG VVN) and the UNSDG Task Team on Leaving No One Behind, Human Rights and the Normative Agenda.

first, and addressing inequality and discrimination and advancing the enjoyment of all human rights: economic, social and cultural, as well as civil and political rights. This requires the UN to be firm in upholding the values and norms agreed by our Member States.<sup>3</sup>

In 2019, the UNSDG-HRM Fund enabled the UNSDG to take forward human rights mainstreaming initiatives and strategically leverage the ongoing reform processes for sustained impact. Ensuring that human rights are fully embedded in the new UNDS was a priority for the UNSDG-HRM Fund, supporting the Human Rights Task Team and the broader UNSDG in the design and implementation of new policies, structures and capacities. The deployment of catalytic expert capacity to RCs and UNCTs remains a key strategy for ensuring that increased policy coherence on human rights in development translates into the changes needed at country level. As elaborated below, results were seen in improved integration of human rights into system-wide policies at the global level and strengthened UNCT results in the integration of human rights into development at the country level.

The investments of the UNSDG-HRM Fund also helped prepare the UNDS for emerging local, national and megatrends that are threatening hard-won human rights and development gains; building capacities which have now proven to be of major value in the context of unexpected COVID-19 crisis. Through increasing the number of Human Rights Advisers (HRAs) deployed to countries, holding peer-to-peer dialogues with the RCs, and helping inform the efforts to integrate human rights and leave no one behind into the new guidance on Common Country Analysis (CCAs) and UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (Cooperation Frameworks), the UNSDG increased the readiness and capacity of UN teams

<sup>3</sup> A/72/124, paras 14 & 16

to respond in coherent, joined-up ways to the new development context. With these added capacities, the UNSDG will continue efforts to put human rights at the centre of development work in 2020 and beyond, ready to support the emerging needs of countries and UNCTs, including responding to the COVID-19 crisis, consolidating the UNDS reforms, and implementing relevant recommendations from the forthcoming QCPR 2020.

The Secretary General's [Call to Action on Human Rights \(Call to Action\)](#), launched in February 2020, emphasizes the commitment of the UN system to advance human rights through all its work, providing renewed importance to UNSDG-HRM Fund. The past investments and achievements of the UNSDG-HRM Fund provide a strong foundation for the UNDS to be ready to take forward relevant actions and achieve concrete impact, building on results at policy and operational level to support countries to implement the 2030 Agenda in accordance with international law. Efforts to implement the ambitions of the Call to Action will undoubtedly increase the demand for scaling up the work that has been led by the Human Rights Task Team - such as the work to support RC human rights leadership, including through the deployment of HRAs, guidance and peer support, the application of the HRBA, policy discussions on frontier issues such as the closing of civic space, zero discrimination in health, or human rights and the environment, and encouraging the full use of human rights mechanisms in SDG implementation - as well as newer areas of engagement. With the continued support of the UNSDG-HRM Fund, the UNSDG is well-positioned to further strengthen ongoing initiatives, and to achieve direct impact across many of the 7 domains of action, in particular ensuring rights are at the core of sustainable development.

## UNSDG-HRM Fund investments enabling integration of human rights in immediate COVID-19 responses

At the moment of finalization of this report, the world was facing an unprecedented test: combating the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 has exposed and exacerbated existing inequalities and is having profound impacts on the rights of people across all regions, most notably those already at risk of being left behind. It has underscored the urgency and relevance of supporting countries to implement a rights-based approach to development, and of the priorities for the UN recently identified in the Secretary-General's Call to Action on Human Rights.<sup>4</sup>

The investments of the UNSDG-HRM Fund in strengthening capacity of RCs and UNCTs to apply the HRBA, operationalize the commitment to leave no one behind, strategically engage with human rights mechanisms and strengthen the capacity of national institutions to monitor inequalities and discrimination have laid the foundation for much of the work that is now urgently required. Investments in the HRA programme are proving to be particularly valuable. HRAs on the ground and already working closely with RCOs and UNCTs have been able to provide rapid advice to RCs and

UNCTs to support national efforts to address the human rights dimensions of the crisis and the responses, focusing on the most vulnerable. Lessons learned and experiences of HRAs during the Ebola crisis are also being reviewed and applied. Some early illustrations of HRAs' roles include: support provided to the RC's leadership to draw a baseline which has informed the COVID-19 early recovery plans as well as strategic lines of action for the new Cooperation Framework (Uruguay) and integration of human rights into humanitarian or socio-economic impact analyses relating to the crisis (Bangladesh and Montenegro).

The integration of international norms and standards in the design and implementation of COVID-19 socio-economic responses is as critical as ever.<sup>5</sup> In 2020, the UNSDG-HRM Fund's support, including deployment of HRAs, surge capacity to support the application of the HRBA in UNCTs' joint analysis and planning, and other forms of guidance and capacity building for UNCTs will all be crucial resources at country level in supporting countries' COVID-19 response and recovery, and in preventing future development and humanitarian crises.

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/un\\_policy\\_brief\\_on\\_human\\_rights\\_and\\_covid\\_23\\_april\\_2020.pdf](https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/un_policy_brief_on_human_rights_and_covid_23_april_2020.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-04/UN-framework-for-the-immediate-socio-economic-response-to-COVID-19.pdf>

## PROGRESS HIGHLIGHTS

The UNSDG-HRM Fund was a critical resource to the UNSDG in 2019, supporting the broader effort to reposition the UNDS to become a stronger partner to countries in implementing the 2030 Agenda.

Under the vision and priorities set by the UNSDG and its Human Rights Task Team, the UNSDG-HRM Fund supported inter-agency engagement to ensure that as the UNDS reforms are taking root, RCs and UNCTs can exercise their human rights responsibilities and have the human rights capacities they need, and are supported by the requisite policies, tools and guidance. In 2019, the UNSDG laid out much of the central guidance for UNCTs under the UNDS reform, including developing the new [UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework Internal Guidance](#) (Cooperation Framework Guidance), a central piece of the reform effort. The strategic value of the human rights mainstreaming initiatives supported by the Fund is reflected in the positive feedback and results from UNDS colleagues and partners in the field.

In the context of the ongoing reforms of the UNDS, the funding landscape for the UNSDG's human rights mainstreaming priorities was also in transition in 2019. In addition to the UNSDG-HRM Fund resources for 2019-2020, USD 4.3 million from the DCO-managed Delivering Together Facility (DTF) was allocated to the HRA programme. These DTF funds, together with resources contributed by RCs/ UNCTs and OHCHR, covered almost all the 2019 HRA costs, freeing up UNSDG-HRM Fund resources for new HRAs and other activities in 2019, and ensuring the continuation of the HRA programme in 2020. The consolidation of funds from these sources in 2019 was a strategic approach to maximize resources and increase the sustainability of the UNSDG's human rights mainstreaming initiatives. The strategy was informed by the expected closure of the DTF and the decision to revert to the UNSDG-HRM Fund as the primary mechanism for supporting UNSDG human rights mainstreaming activities, including HRAs.

**Through strategic use of these combined resources, the UNSDG delivered the following key results in 2019:**

- 1. Policy Coherence - human rights reflected in the UNDS reform implementation** - including through anchoring human rights and LNOB in the new guidance to UNCTs on CCAs and Cooperation Frameworks and related support materials for UNCTs, piloting and wide dissemination of the UNSDG Operational Guide on LNOB for UNCTs (LNOB Guide), and revision of the UNSDG Common Learning Package on HRBA.
- 2. Strengthened RC and UNCT capacities to lead on human rights at the country level** - including through continuation of the RC Human Rights

There were also several important operational achievements within the UNSDG-HRM Fund in 2019. Increased commitment from donors in late 2019 enabled the Steering Committee to develop a 2020 workplan under which the UNSDG will deliver expanded results in the field and at policy level, further strengthening the integration of human rights in the implementation of UNDS reforms and contributing towards UN system priorities including the Decade of Action, the Secretary General's Call to Action, Human Rights up Front and prevention, and other areas of integrated cross-pillar support. The Steering Committee will also undertake an evaluation of the UNSDG-HRM Fund in 2020, which will inform the development of a multi-year results framework until 2024. This will provide the basis for sustainable and strategic actions across the UNDS that will further advance us towards the vision of a UNDS that

places the people as rights-holders at the heart of its development efforts.

As of 31 December 2019, the cumulative amount transferred to Participating UN Organizations from the UNSDG-HRM Fund was US\$ **15,856,126** with a balance of US\$ **12,077,475** remaining in the UNSDG-HRM Fund account (much of which was received in late 2019) for 2020 programming. The maturity and strength of the UNSDG-HRM Fund and its support structures is evident in its delivery rate for 2019, which reached 88 percent. This highlights the ability of the Participating Organizations, supported by the Fund Secretariat and the Human Rights Task Team and the Fund's Governance structure to effectively deliver on the work plan and to adapt planning as necessary in an evolving funding environment.

Leadership peer dialogues series and facilitated platforms for strategic exchange, including webinars between RCs and the UNSDG's Human Rights Task Team.

**3.** — **Human rights more systematically promoted and integrated into UNCT support to 2030 Agenda through deployment of HRAs** - scaling up the programme and further strengthening the HRA Community of Practice.

**4.** — **Coherent and strategic engagement with UN human rights mechanisms** – including through policy guidance complemented by relevant reporting requirements and the provision of tailored country-specific information to RCs/UNCT on opportunities to engage with human rights mechanisms.

# SDG achievements

*“In putting equality and non-discrimination at the centre of its efforts, the 2030 Agenda includes goals and targets that cover a wide range of issues effectively mirroring the human rights framework, not only on economic and social rights but also on civil, political and cultural rights, and the right to development. People and their inherent dignity are at the heart of sustainable development efforts, which should empower all people to become agents and active participants in them.”*

Foundational Primer on the 2030 Agenda, UNSDG 2019

The Human Rights Task Team and UNSDG-HRM Fund focus on the integration of human rights and the application of the HRBA in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and across all SDGs.<sup>6</sup> Through relatively modest funds provided to its work by the UNSDG-HRM Fund and the collaborative engagement of UNSDG entities, the Human Rights Task Team has 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 “in a manner that is consistent with the rights and obligations of States under international law”.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Refer to Annex 2 for Terms of Reference of the Human Rights Task Team

<sup>7</sup> The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, para 18.

The strategic interventions supported through the UNSDG-HRM Fund have taken on even greater importance in the context of the UNDS reforms. Fulfilling the promise for dignity, prosperity and peace on a healthy planet by 2030 requires bold changes to the UNDS for the emergence of a new generation of UNCTs, focused on delivering the 2030 Agenda. The UNSDG-HRM Fund is thus a key tool for reinforcing the efforts of the UNSDG and the Human Rights Task Team to anchor new policies, systems, guidance and support in human rights, enabling UNCTs to build a strategic, rights-based value proposition to countries, with the human rights leadership of impartial, independent and empowered Resident Coordinators who stand up for international norms and standards and the values of the UN Charter.

## KEY STRATEGIC PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

Building on the [Terms of Reference of the UNSDG-HRM Fund](#) and leveraging the opportunities available and priorities of the UNSDG and the Human Rights Task Team, the key programme objectives of the UNSDG-HRM Fund include:

■ **Ensuring rights-based implementation of the 2030 Agenda** by articulating the normative human rights framework for policy and programming support with a focus on:

- Alignment with international norms and standards
- Leaving no one behind
- Active and meaningful participation
- Robust accountability at global, regional and national levels

■ **Supporting a repositioned UNDS that promotes an integrated UN agenda, with human rights and human dignity at its core** by:

- Providing thought leadership on the human rights dimensions on critical issues of our time and creating a common vision across the pillars of the UN system, including through contributing to high-level system-wide discussions and decisions on strengthening the UNDS' actions at global, regional and country level to support implementation of the 2030 Agenda in accordance with human rights
- Providing operational guidance on core values of equality and non-discrimination, including the principle of “leaving no one behind” (building on the CEB UN System Framework for Action - *Leaving No One Behind: Equality and Non-Discrimination at the Heart of Sustainable Development*)
- Providing messages on human rights mainstreaming to inform the UN Development System reform efforts, and integrating essential human rights elements of HRBA, LNOB and gender equality and women's empowerment into new UNDS policies, frameworks and guidance (including the repositioned UNDAF, now “UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework”)

■ **Supporting RCs and UNCT leadership to engage politically and tactically on human rights**, by:

- Providing capacity support on human rights to RCs and UNCTs, including through scaling-up deployment of in-country Human Rights Advisers
- Developing and rolling-out guidance and tools on human rights for RCs and UNCTs
- Supporting the implementation of UN management decisions and UN system-wide strategies relating to human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment
- Advancing a Human Rights Leadership Development Strategy for RCs and UNCT Members

■ **Strengthening coherent and strategic engagement by UNCTs with human rights mechanisms**, such as treaty bodies, special procedures and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), by ensuring integration into development programming and advocacy

■ **Maintaining effective UN system-wide knowledge management in human rights and development**, including knowledge exchange through the online UNSDG Community of Practice (Yammer group) on Leaving No One Behind, Human Rights and Gender, and curated resources available on the UNSDG website and the UN HRBA Practitioners' Portal: <http://hrbaportal.org/>

■ **Supporting RCs and UNCTs to deliver on their responsibilities under the Human Rights up Front initiative and prevention agenda** through these global, regional and country level initiatives.

## FUTURE SUPPORT TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL'S CALL TO ACTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

The Call to Action identifies seven areas where concerted effort can achieve significant impact for the enjoyment of human rights on the ground. Some of the results in this report, supported by the UNSDG-HRM Fund, provide an indication of the strength of concerted and collective efforts across the UN system in ensuring human rights are at the core of our work at all levels. The following actions included in the Call to Action will be particularly relevant for the UNSDG-HRM Fund's future support:

(1)

### rights at the core of sustainable development

- Support Member States to ensure that human rights principles inform implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including empowering people and creating avenues for civil society participation, as well as taking human rights-sensitive, non-discriminatory approaches to data collection, monitoring, and reporting.
- Encourage the full use of human rights mechanisms, including the UPR, treaty bodies and the special procedures, as well as NHRIs to contribute to SDG implementation, particularly at the national and local levels.
- Support Member States and other stakeholders in making better use of the UPR outcomes, as well as of reports of the treaty bodies in national development planning, and in follow-up and reporting, including on the SDGs and in the preparation and consideration of voluntary national reviews at the HLPF on sustainable development.
- Continue our efforts to help design policies that support the most vulnerable and/or excluded groups, recognizing and responding to multiple and intersecting deprivations and sources of discrimination.

(2)

### rights in times of crisis

- Continue to enhance the UN's organizational culture, building upon existing initiatives – including Human Rights Up Front and follow-up to the Rosenthal report – which emphasize prevention, protection and human rights in our awareness, decision-making and programming.
- In UN mission and non-mission settings, ensure that mandate implementation and/or engagement by RCs and UNCTs are informed by a human rights risk and opportunity analysis, including gender specific analysis. Expand, as necessary, the presence of Human Rights Advisers in UN Country Teams.

(3)

**gender equality and equal rights for women**

- Engage with and support Member States on policies and legislation that promote gender equality and equal rights for women, including, in particular, repealing discriminatory laws and enacting positive laws, eliminating violence against women and girls in all spheres, ensuring sexual and reproductive health and rights, and striving for women's equal representation and participation in all spheres
- Apply a gender lens to everything the UN does, including engagement with Member States and internal decision-making.
- Ensure that risk analysis and early warning methodology pay particular attention to incitement to all forms of violence against women, including through cyber- and electronic means, as well as analysis of shifts in the realization and protection of the human rights of women.
- Consult regularly with diverse women's human rights organizations to discuss trends, challenges and potential solutions, including in the context of the 2030 Agenda.

(4)

**public participation and civic space**

- Ensure that RCs, UNCTs and Heads of UN peace operations develop partnerships with civil society organizations to contribute to an enabling environment for civic space, including for women's organizations and women's rights defenders.
- Increase UN support at field level for the promotion of laws and policies that protect the right to equal participation and civic space, including a free and independent media.

(5)

**rights of future generations, especially climate justice**

- In the context of including civil society voices in UN bodies at country level, create space for young people to participate in shaping the decisions that will affect their future, including but not limited to climate change.
- Consider ways for more fully involving a wider array of stakeholders in policy processes concerning climate action.
- Increase UN support to Member States at field level for laws and policies that regulate and promote the right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment, and for effective individual access to justice and effective remedies for environment-related concerns.
- Increase UN support to Member States at field level for the development of protection mechanisms for human rights defenders and environmental activists, particularly young people, women and girls.

(6)

**rights at the heart of collective action**

- Support RCs and UNCTs to communicate the importance of international law and principles and make a concerted effort to ensure predictable and consistent UN responses thereto, including accountability mechanisms.
- Support Member States, including through enhanced capacity-building efforts to national and regional human rights institutions and mechanisms.
- Facilitate the UNCTs' use of human rights tools and entry points, including the UPR, as a basis for implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

(7)

**new frontiers of human rights**

- Support RC/UNCT advocacy for the application of the human rights framework to the digital space, based on the recommendations of the High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation.
- Support RCs/UNCTs to promote effective data protection and the right to privacy, particularly where personal and health-related data are concerned.
- Support UNCTs to work with business to apply the 2011 UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and specifically with social media companies to understand and respond to concerns about existing or potential human rights violations, including by working with civil society and human rights defenders to prevent or quickly redress such violations.

# Achievements of the Fund

## INTRODUCTION

The UNSDG-HRM Fund supported the UNSDG to deliver strong results in 2019 in integrating human rights into global policies and guidance, and strengthening strategic, joined-up actions by UNCTs to support countries to make the transformations required to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

The Steering Committee strategically managed the resources of the UNSDG-HRM Fund to maximize the impact and stability of the initiatives prioritized by the Human Rights Task Team across 2019-2020. With significant resources made available through the DTF and OHCHR to cover the majority of the costs of HRA deployments in 2019, UNSDG-HRM Fund resources were allocated to meet other priorities in 2019 and ensure the availability of resources in 2020 to cover the ongoing costs of the expanding HRA programme.

This report details the achievements supported by the UNSDG-HRM Fund in 2019. It also includes an overview of the full HRA programme in 2019, which has been built and maintained through the UNSDG-HRM Fund in the past and will again be funded through the UNSDG-HRM Fund in 2020. The results of the HRA programme in 2019 are elaborated in more

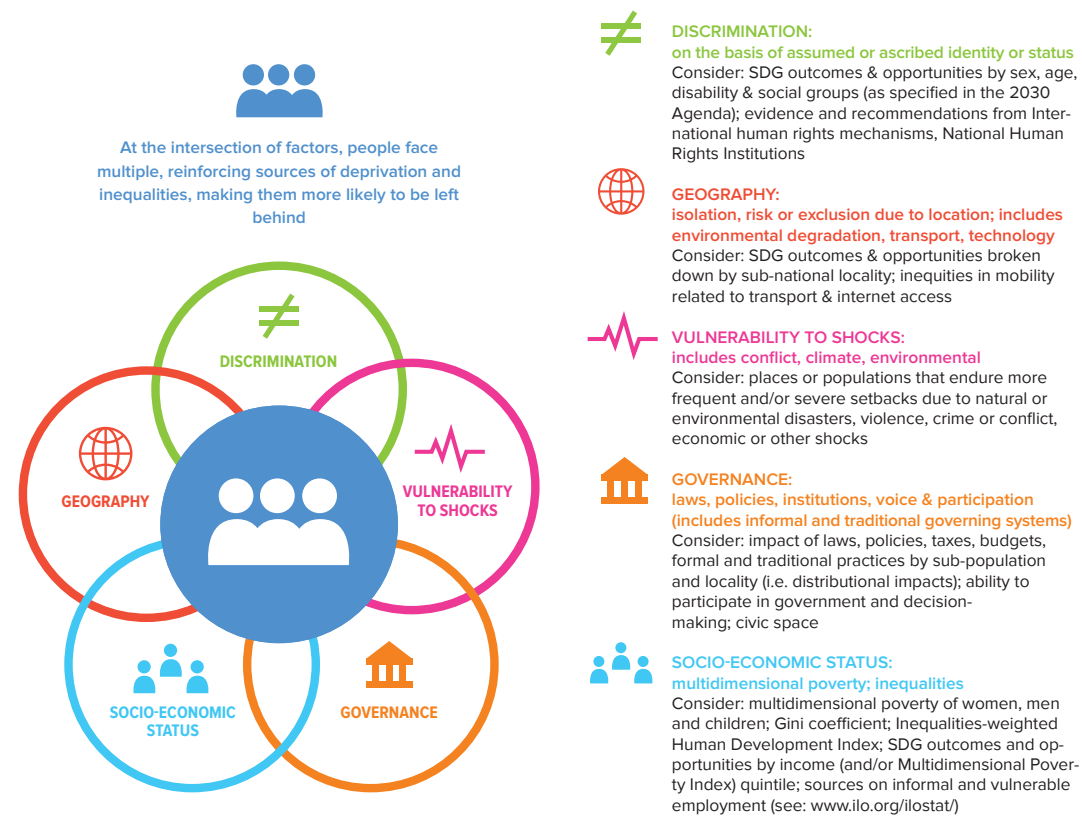
detail in Annex 3. While these are not strictly achievements of the UNSDG-HRM Fund in 2019, they would not have been possible without the previous investments of the UNSDG-HRM Fund.

## 1. POLICY COHERENCE - HUMAN RIGHTS INTEGRATED IN THE UNDS INCLUDING REFORM IMPLEMENTATION

In 2019, with the support of the UNSDG-HRM Fund, the UNSDG and the Human Rights Task Team helped ensure that RCs and UNCTs integrate human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment and the principle of leaving no one behind in analysis, programming



FIGURE 1 FIVE FACTORS OF LNOB: ASSESSING THE EVIDENCE OF WHO IS LEFT BEHIND AND TO WHAT DEGREE?



Assessing the evidence of who is left behind and to what degree (Step 1).  
Excerpt: *UNSDG Operational Guide on Leaving No One Behind for UNCTs* (2018)

and advocacy through the integration of these principles into the policies, guidance and frameworks designed to institutionalize the UNDS reform.

The UNSDG and Human Rights Task Team provided concrete support to RCs and UNCTs to implement the principles of HRBA, LNOB and gender equality and women's empowerment in development work, including CCAs and Cooperation Frameworks in 2019. The 2018 [UNSDG Operational Guide on Leaving No One Behind for UNCTs \(interim draft\) \(the LNOB Guide\)](#) was

widely disseminated to UNCTs and partners in light of the urgency of providing this system-wide operational guidance. At the 2019 High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development members of the Human Rights Task Team presented the LNOB Guide at a [VNR Lab](#) side event organised by DESA, OHCHR, UN Women and Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies. The LNOB Guide contributes to development system coherence and advocacy for a rights-based approach to development, building on the [UN Shared Framework for Action on Leaving No One Behind:](#)

[Equality and Non-Discrimination at the Heart of Sustainable Development](#) (UN Chief Executives Board, 2017) and other relevant UN policies and guidance.

The LNOB Guide was piloted in three countries in 2019: **Nepal, Cameroon and Tunisia**. The pilots generated feedback on the operationability of the LNOB Guide and the process and capacity-building support needed to facilitate its application at country level.<sup>8</sup> Through the application of the Guide, the pilots also strengthened UNCTs' efforts to operationalize the principle of LNOB, leveraging strategic opportunities and entry points in each country identified by the UNCTs, including where relevant the development of the new CCA. Throughout the process, UNSDG entities and the Fund Secretariat engaged regularly with the RCs and UNCTs, providing strategic guidance and technical inputs to strengthen the outcomes of the pilots, and facilitating cross-country exchange to share ideas and experiences across the countries.

Through the piloting, several areas for strengthening the LNOB Guide were identified, including the need for more methodological/operational guidance on consolidating analysis from qualitative and quantitative data sources, how to grapple with data gaps, and the use of humanitarian data and tools on vulnerability and risks. The piloting also identified areas for support and capacity building to enable the application of the steps in the Guide, such as tools for gathering data through consultations with groups left behind, and on undertaking a causal analysis in line with the HRBA. The Human Rights Task Team will address the outcomes of the UNCTs' evaluations of the Guide in the finalization.

<sup>8</sup> As some of the pilot activities in Nepal were delayed in 2019, the LNOB Guide is being applied in 2020 to the analysis of groups left behind as a result of COVID-19 and the priority areas for addressing this through the health and socio-economic responses thereto.

The pilots also demonstrated positive outcomes from application of the LNOB Guide, as highlighted below:

Strengthened national understanding and expertise on the UN conceptual and operational framework for implementing the principle of LNOB and relevant elements of the HRBA (eg. Think Tanks, civil society, national statistical offices, governmental partners).

The step-by-step approach to collection and analysis of available data on progress towards the SDGs for different groups (including from humanitarian databases, where relevant) facilitated a more rigorous identification of groups left furthest behind, including in some cases groups that had not previously been identified by the UNCT.

The LNOB Guide fostered a more coherent, UNCT-wide understanding and approach to the identification of groups left behind, together with a common understanding of critical data gaps for measuring and monitoring inequalities in progress towards the SDGs.

The LNOB Guide proved useful for framing and stimulating discussion amongst the UNCT on what the UN can do to strengthen analysis, programming and advocacy to reach the furthest behind.

Key findings from the LNOB analysis were integrated into CCAs and (draft) Cooperation Frameworks and entity Country Programme Documents, as well as national development strategies, resulting in strengthened attention to human rights, LNOB and gender equality and women's empowerment.

Simultaneously with the piloting, the Human Rights Task Team members and the Fund 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, which include HRBA, LNOB and gender equality and women's empowerment. The value of the LNOB Guide to the UNDS was further illustrated by its integration 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.

Through its support to **the updating of the UNSDG Common Learning Package on the Human Rights Based Approach (CLP)**, the UNSDG-HRM Fund also aimed to ensure that the HRBA, gender equality and women's empowerment and Leaving No One Behind (three of the Guiding Principles) are fully and comprehensively applied by UNCTs when embarking on the process of elaborating the new CCAs and Cooperation Frameworks. An essential first step was the effort of the Human Rights Task Team to update the CLP, ensuring it is fully aligned with today's development context, including the 2030 Agenda and the vision and steps in the new Cooperation Framework Guidance. The UNSDG-HRM Fund enabled a small group of UN experts including HRAs from across the globe to participate in a workshop where they prepared an initial draft update of the CLP informed by experience in supporting UNCTs in applying the HRBA. The revised CLP also clarifies the linkages between the HRBA and the principles of LNOB and gender equality and women's empowerment, so that UN country teams

are not working on these efforts in siloes but in an integrated and effective way. The revised draft of the CLP will serve as a basis for future training support to be provided in the roll-out of the new Cooperation Framework Guidance. Time was also dedicated to identifying strategic entry points for the roll out of the revised training package at global, regional and country level. The discussions amongst the UN representatives at this expert meeting also informed the development of the Companion Package on the Cooperation Framework, which was initiated by DCO in mid-2019.

The Fund Secretariat and members of the Human Rights Task Team also supported the roll out of **the UN System Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS)**, launched by the Secretary General in June 2019. Grounded in the standards of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the implementation of the Strategy at country level is a catalyst for application of rights-based approaches in development through coordinated and coherent UNCT-wide programmatic and operational activities. At country level, HRAs have played a key role in supporting UNCTs to integrate the CRPD and the UNDIS into their programmatic work and operational policies and practices.

## 2.




### STRENGTHENED RC AND UNCT CAPACITIES TO LEAD ON HUMAN RIGHTS AT THE COUNTRY LEVEL

*"It is important to underline that human rights are the responsibility of each and every United Nations actor and that a culture of human rights must permeate everything we do, in the field, at regional level and at Headquarters. I look in particular to our leaders in the field, including Heads of Mission and Resident Coordinators, to play their part."*

[[The Highest Aspiration: A Call to Action on Human Rights](#), UN 2020]

With support from the UNSDG-HRM Fund, the Human Rights Task Team held the second **Human Rights Leadership Dialogue for RCs** in December 2019, in partnership between OHCHR, DCO and UNDP.<sup>9</sup> These dialogues respond to an increasing demand from RCs for more opportunities to exchange their experiences and concerns about their human rights leadership role.

The Human Rights Leadership Dialogue for RCs from the Middle East and North Africa provided a forum for frank and open exchange of effective strategies and approaches for UN engagement on several human rights concerns that are posing significant challenges to the realisation of the 2030 Agenda. Co-facilitated by Kate Gilmore, Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights and ASG Nada Al-Nashif, UNESCO, as well as Laila Baker, the DCO Regional Director for the Arab States, the focus themes for discussion included:

-  Freedoms of opinion and expression, assembly and association, particularly in the context of the challenges facing the region at the time of the dialogue. It included focused discussion on the challenges to civic space and identified possible avenues and approaches for tackling the trend.
-  Discrimination in relation to minorities, issues related to citizenship status and statelessness as well as issues relating to the human rights of migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs).
-  Gender equality and discrimination in laws, policies, and practices against women and girls, including violence against women.

<sup>9</sup> The first dialogue was held in May 2018 with RCs from Asia and the Pacific

The dialogue was timely given developments in the Middle East and North Africa region since the beginning of 2019, including increased social unrest and mass protests, often rooted in people's anger about inequalities, corruption, and the denial of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. In many countries, social movements demanding sweeping changes had been countered with disproportionate, and sometimes violent, restrictions on freedoms of assembly, association, opinion and expression. This in turn had obstructed the crucial roles that civil society plays, not only in advancing sustainable development, but also in the prevention of instability and violent conflict.

The discussion also addressed modalities and types of integrated analysis and system-wide support to RCs, with a focus on the reinforcement of political and human rights analysis and strategies vis-à-vis UNCTs and the role of RCs in-country, including in leveraging the analytical capacity of the UN system and building consensus on strategic priorities for the UN's support to the country through the CCA and Cooperation Framework.

The dialogue adopted several key messages as well as recommendations for follow-up which will feed into the strategies and approaches for further support to RCs and UNCTs in the region as well as the global RC human rights leadership strategy.

The three co-leads of the Human Rights Task Team held a webinar for RCs in July 2019 entitled "Making LNOB a Reality: Tactics, Methods and Approaches for Successful RC Leadership" with support from the Fund Secretariat. 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 also 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.

The co-leads of the Human Rights Task Team launched a new platform for a Community of Practice on human rights, leaving no one behind and gender in April. This is integrated into the new suite of UNSDG Communities of Practice hosted by DCO, and provides 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. The Fund Secretariat provides ongoing support to this Community of Practice, including monitoring exchanges and disseminating relevant system-wide tools and initiatives.

### 3.

#### HUMAN RIGHTS MORE SYSTEMATICALLY PROMOTED AND INTEGRATED INTO UNCT SUPPORT TO 2030 AGENDA THROUGH DEPLOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS ADVISERS

In 2019, the HRA programme was further expanded to enable RCs and UNCTs to engage in a more active, joined-up and strategic manner on human rights issues in the context of development and, where relevant, humanitarian and peacebuilding efforts. As the UNDS reforms were implemented at the country level, HRAs supported RCs and UNCTs in implementing their human rights responsibilities, including integrating human rights in CCAs and Cooperation Frameworks. Under the leadership of the RCs, HRAs also supported governments, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), National Statistics Offices, civil society organisations and a range of other national partners to better integrate human rights norms, standards and principles into country level activities, strengthening the overall national capacity to implement the 2030 Agenda. HRAs also facilitated UNCTs to leverage other UN planning processes - such as the Joint SDG Fund and UN system-wide strategies on gender equality, youth and disability inclusion - for more coherent and collaborative action on human rights

In the reform context, demand from the field for in-country human rights advisory support continues to increase. The predictability and sustainability of funding for HRA deployments remains critical to ensure strategic and continuous engagement for more sustainable results. The UNDS reforms marked a transition of the funding mechanisms for the HRA programme in 2019. In order to avoid disruption of the programme due to the changes in funding arrangements, and to ensure effective operations, several financial sources were combined through the reporting period. Following the 2019 transition period, a full alignment of funding for all deployments through the UNSDG-HRM Fund and earmarked OHCHR funding is expected in 2020.

Funding was secured from combined sources for deployments in 39 countries in 2019, with staff deployed or recruitments finalized in 37 of these countries.<sup>10</sup> The UNSDG-HRM Fund has been critical in ensuring most of these deployments in previous years. In 2019, the UNSDG-HRM Fund facilitated new deployments in **Burkina Faso, Belize, Costa Rica and Lesotho, and for the HRA in Malaysia.**<sup>11</sup> Through 2019, all other HRA deployments were secured and supported through the DTF, OHCHR funding and a few local contributions from recipient RCs and UNCTs.

<sup>10</sup> Argentina, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus; Bolivia, Brazil, Burkina Faso; Ecuador, El Salvador, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Rwanda, Serbia, Southern Caucasus, Sri Lanka, Timor Leste, Uruguay, Zimbabwe, Belize, Guyana; Trinidad and Tobago (for these last three deployments the recruitments processes started in 2019 and were being finalized). At the moment of finalization of the present report recruitments processes for deployments to Lesotho and Costa Rica had just been launched.

<sup>11</sup> UNSDG-HRM Fund resources allocated to requests for HRAs in Armenia and in Myanmar were not utilized and are being held for future planning.

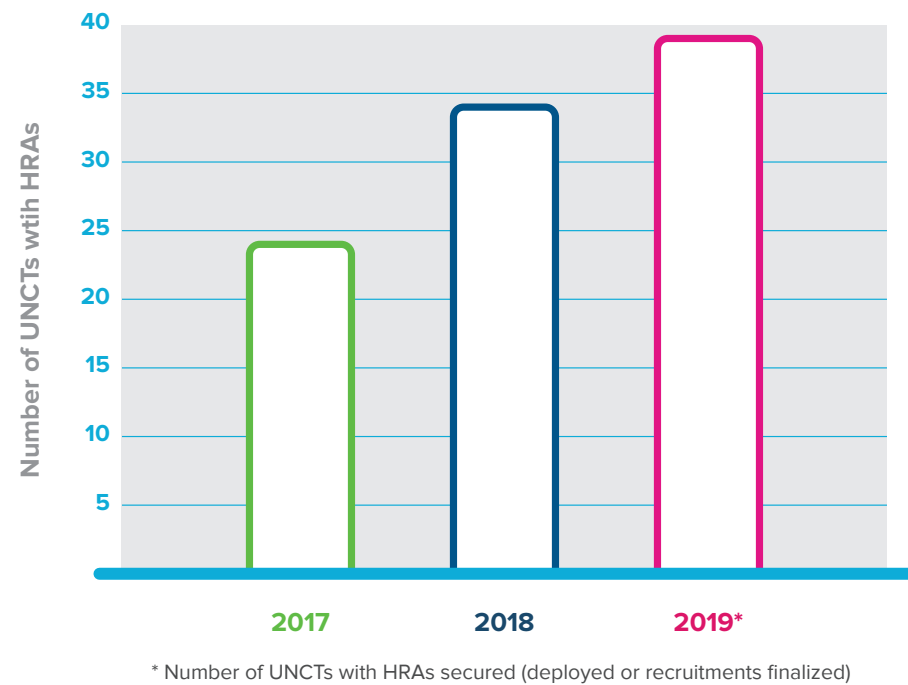
In navigating the changing funding and operating environment in 2019, the Steering Committee, Fund Secretariat, DCO and relevant OHCHR departments worked closely to ensure appropriate measures were taken to maximize the stability and effectiveness of the programme.<sup>12</sup>

In view of the invaluable support provided through the UNSDG-HRM Fund for this programme in recent years, and the expected full funding of the programme by the UNSDG-HRM Fund in 2020, the present report includes a brief overview of the programme and illustrations of results in 2019. As the majority of the HRA deployments supported by the UNSDG-HRM Fund in 2019 were approved later in the year, the results will be reported in 2020.

### OVERVIEW OF THE HRA PROGRAMME

HRAs are a valuable asset for the RCs and UNCTs where they are deployed. The deployment of HRAs under the 2012 UNSDG Strategy is critical for supporting a UN leadership anchored in human rights and positioning human rights strategically at country level. HRAs provide RCs and UNCTs critical human rights support to enhance coherence through stronger integration of human rights norms and standards into country level activities and policy support to deliver on the promise of the 2030 Agenda and leave no one behind.

### CONTINUED SCALE UP OF THE HRA PROGRAMME

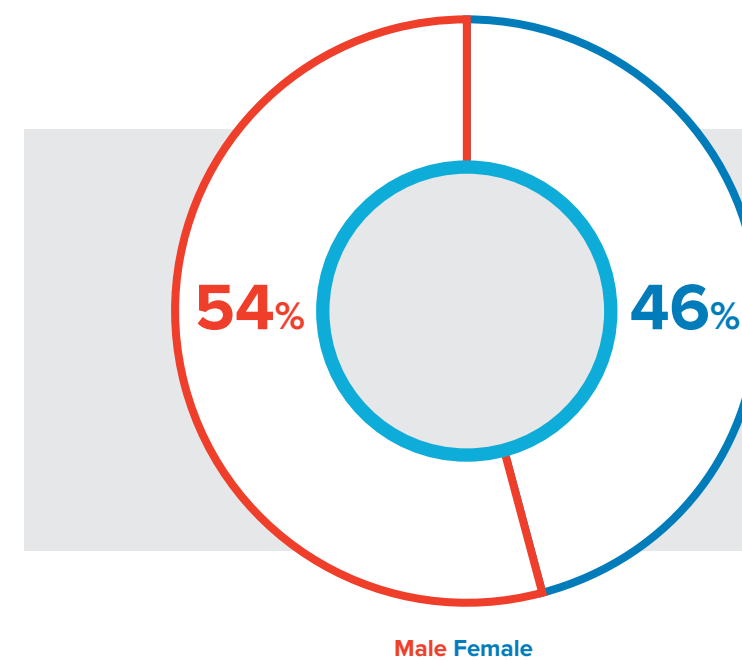


<sup>12</sup> For example, the programme adapted to ensure continued operation in the context of the new RC system funding model; operational costs of HRAs are now included in the funding requests as these cannot be covered by RCOs.

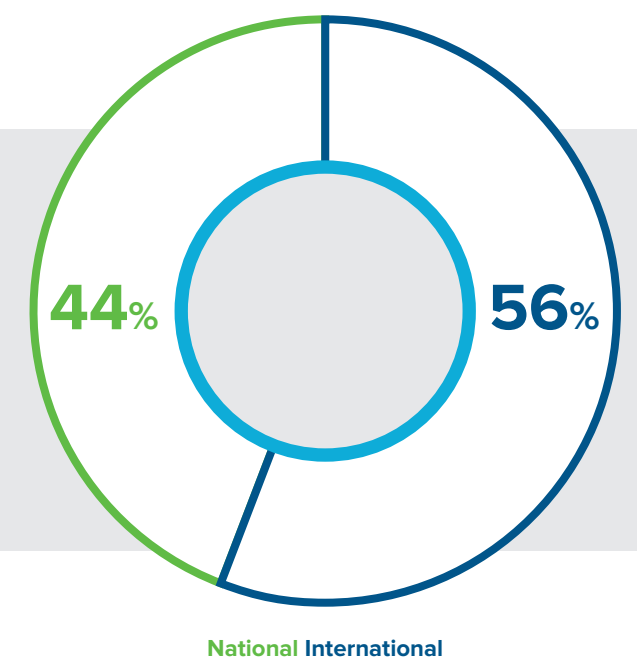
## HRA DEPLOYMENTS SECURED IN 2019



### GENDER BREAKDOWN OF 2019 HRA PROGRAMME

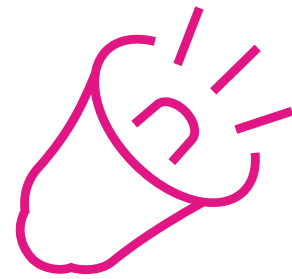


### INTERNATIONAL/NATIONAL PROFILE OF THE 2019 HRA PROGRAMME



## OVERVIEW OF HRA RESULTS

1



**Support in promoting human rights as a common UN value and upholding international norms and standards through advocacy and awareness-raising**

In 2019, HRAs provided technical advice to RCs and UNCTs to ensure awareness and leadership around critical human rights issues and concerns, and in many cases helped to open cooperation avenues for UNCTs with key ministries and state institutions to address them. The technical support from HRAs regarding the rights of marginalized groups facilitated the development and adoption of unified strategies to address challenges and gaps in line with international standards and provide more effective support to efforts to leave no one behind.

### **Aligning drug policies with human rights in Belarus**

Stronger systems for ensuring the life safety of children and adults is a priority for development progress in **Belarus**<sup>13</sup>, including addressing stigma, discrimination and other challenges relating to drug use among adults and children. Throughout 2019, the HRA in Belarus supported coordinated RC and UNCT advocacy to bring drug

policy and legislation in line with international human rights standards, removing some of the structural factors that cause people who use drugs to suffer compounding human rights violations that put them and their families at risk of being left behind. A UNCT advocacy strategy on drug policy was used systematically by the RC and UNCT during the reporting period. The RC significantly increased advocacy in this area with the technical and legal advice from the HRA, including by sending two formal communications to the Parliament, meeting with civil society representatives and convening a joint UN briefing for the diplomatic community to enhance common, rights-based messaging and coordination of efforts. Following advocacy that was undertaken by the UN and partners, drug offenders were included in the Amnesty Law and as a result the terms of imprisonment were reduced by 1 and 2 years for adults and minors respectively.

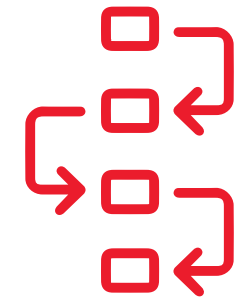
**Integration of human rights into UN programmes and activities, Cooperation Frameworks and other key strategic planning tools and application of the Human Rights-Based Approach**

In 2019, the Cooperation Framework took centre stage as the primary UN instrument for planning and implementation of UN development activities at country level in support of the 2030 Agenda. HRAs' technical expertise has been recognized in strengthening the UNCTs' capacity to apply the Guiding Principles on HRBA, LNOB and gender equality and women's empowerment throughout

*"The technical support from the Human Rights Adviser was key in using the recommendations from the Human Rights mechanisms to prioritize areas of focus in the preparation of the CCA and the Cooperation Framework. Particularly relevant was the convening role to support a wide consultation with civil society organizations outlining the groups that are being left behind in the country"*  
Mireia Villar Forner, RC Uruguay.

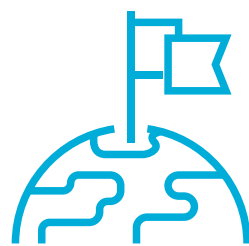
the Cooperation Framework cycle, and particularly in facilitating the integration of human rights standards and the recommendations of human rights mechanisms in CCAs, strategic prioritisation and joint programming with human rights at the core of the UNDS' development offer.

2



**In Jordan**, the HRA worked in cooperation with the Peace and Development Adviser (PDA) to design a methodology and workplan for the revision of the CCA and development of the Cooperation Framework in accordance with the new UNSDG guidance. This approach ensured the comprehensive integration of human rights considerations using various strategic entry points including the SDGs, LNOB, the Secretary-General's prevention agenda, Human Rights up Front and the humanitarian-peace-development nexus. Working across three different UNCT Results Groups, the HRA supported diagnostic analysis of groups left behind (drawing on the LNOB Guide), as well as the integration of human rights issues and indicators in political and economic context and risk factor analysis, rule of law considerations and nexus-related assessments and collective outcomes. The close links between the SDGs and the recommendations of the human rights mechanisms, in particular Jordan's third cycle UPR, were also utilized to strengthen the UNCT's formulation of joint activities, outputs, outcomes, and indicators. These targeted efforts were complemented by the ongoing support provided by the HRA to UNCT entities' in integrating the HRBA into their activities and projects, which contributes to the understanding of the positive use of human rights in support of their mandate, and by extension also in the Cooperation Framework.

13 UNDAF For the Republic of Belarus 2016-2020. Accessed at <https://ims.undg.org/downloadFile/a50112781cd95446dbc2f31c861036f7a838f3fa7a860f6a9fd4dc31edefd99f18> May 2020.



### Support to the building and strengthening of national capacities and institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights

HRAs contributed to strengthening national capacities and institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights in 2019, leveraging the connectivity between human rights and the 2030 Agenda. HRAs' leadership in convening, facilitating and supporting capacity building have been highly appreciated by national partners, and contributed to enhanced understanding of strategic entry points by the UN team on the ground. This has enabled UNCTs to provide coherent technical assistance to State institutions in line with international human rights standards and the SDGs, and to support civil society to engage strategically on the rights-related aspects of development, including states' pledge to leave no one behind and reach the furthest behind first.

#### **The 2019 Census in Kenya counted people who were never counted before**

With the support of the HRA and UNCT, the Census in Kenya captured for the first time information on some of the groups left furthest behind. This was achieved through sustained, strategic engagement with key partners as part of the UNCT's efforts to strengthen Kenya's capacity to generate disaggregated data to inform SDG planning, programming and monitoring.<sup>14</sup> The HRA and her team were instrumental in the

conclusion of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) and the Kenyan National Human Rights Commission Institution (KNCHR) to mainstream a human rights-based approach to the collection of data. Through this partnership, and with the support of the HRA, UNFPA, UNICEF and other members of the UN Working Group on Census in Kenya, some 28 groups considered to have been left behind with respect to data generation were identified. This significant milestone laid the foundation for ensuring these groups are progressively included in national statistics. The potential of this partnership in shaping the implementation of the SDGs in Kenya from a human rights lens was illustrated when the HRA team and the UN Working Group on Census engaged in the preparation of the Kenya Population and Housing Census. Through this collaboration, the UNCT influenced the development and inclusion of questions – in particular on disability, persons with albinism, intersex people, indigenous peoples and stateless persons – which were subsequently factored into the census questionnaire. The HRA and her team provided technical support in all phases of the census undertaking, from preparation and design to piloting and monitoring of the field process.

<sup>14</sup> Kenya United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2018-2022. Accessed 18 May 2020 at: <https://ims.undg.org/downloadFile/db76db6cdee4041dde800b10ef79d506c3065ed7c154669926f910c38c146845>

### Advice on integrating human rights in the humanitarian response and post-crisis recovery under the direction of the RC/ Humanitarian Coordinator

HRAs deployed in countries with humanitarian situations and/or post-crisis recovery played an important role in supporting cross-pillar coherence and strengthened results of the UN teams through the integration of human rights standards and principles in humanitarian responses and post-crisis recovery under the direction of the RC/Humanitarian Coordinator. The HRAs also supported the UN teams to implement the Human Rights up Front framework and prevention agenda, including through provision of regular early warning and human rights-based analyses to inform coordinated and timely UN action to prevent atrocities and serious rights violations.

#### **Human rights integrated into the UN humanitarian response in Burkina Faso**

In 2019, the RC in Burkina Faso urgently requested human rights advisory capacity to support the UNCT and HCT in the context of a double crisis: a fast-evolving protection and humanitarian emergency and a security crisis. The HRA demonstrated the added value of human rights approach in a nexus and prevention environment, ensuring coherent UN system wide support to Government priorities to promote and protect human rights through collaboration with UN Agencies, development and humanitarian partners. Human rights expertise in the UN team contributed to enhancing trust with all partners, strengthening protection beyond humanitarian response, engaging Civil Society Organizations in development and humanitarian responses, and maximizing the use of international human rights mechanisms to inform

and strengthen analysis and actions on the ground. UNSDG-HRM Fund support was sought in October 2019 to take over from the OHCHR rapid response deployment to ensure that human rights gains were not lost, and continued support throughout 2020. This also enhanced the in-situ support from the OHCHR Regional Office for West Africa in Dakar. Specific outputs from the HRA included: facilitating discussions jointly with UNDP, with HR Ministry and partners to approve a National Plan of Action for the implementation of recommendations of human rights mechanisms to better address the root causes of conflict and instability; delivery of regular Early Warning analyses on conflict related situations to enhance the UN's prevention capacity; engagement of human rights defenders with the Committee Against

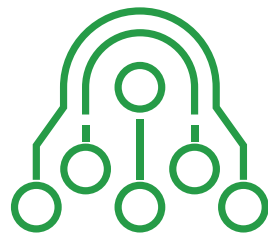
OCHA / Giles Clarke



Torture; development of plans for establishment of a human rights protection network with the National Human Rights Commission; and support to the development of guidelines for a protection strategy.



5



**Support to the UN and national partners in their engagement with international human rights mechanisms and the use of the mechanisms' recommendations in the development of national human rights and development plans**

HRAs' expertise and skills enabled RCs and UNCTs to strengthen their engagement with human rights mechanisms and support national efforts to ensure integration of the work of these mechanisms in national processes that contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. HRAs' work also increased understanding and engagement of governments, civil society organisations and other partners in the work of the human rights mechanisms including UPR, treaty bodies and special procedures, and supported institutional and structural reforms to implement and monitor recommendations from human rights mechanisms.

**SDG implementation efforts in Argentina enhanced through strengthened human rights capacities and institutions**

In **Argentina**, the UNCT recognizes the importance of strengthening the capacity of State institutions to monitor and report on the implementation of human rights recommendations and link them with the SDGs; a strategy that contributes to the realization of both agendas in an integrated and mutually reinforcing manner. In 2019, the HRA's technical expertise was

crucial in supporting a number of UNCT initiatives under this strategy. This included training for provincial officials of the Human Rights Federal Council and provincial SDG focal points on how to recognize the fundamental principles of social and economic rights through the application of the OHCHR methodology for human rights indicators to their mandates, and on integrating UPR recommendations into local public policies. Additionally, training on follow up to UPR recommendations resulted in the national Ombudsperson's office (NHRI) developing a list of indicators for monitoring the UPR recommendations relating to the rights to housing, health and education. With support from the HRA, the UNCT also collaborated with the National Council of Social Policies Coordination - in charge of the 2030 Agenda – to conduct diagnostic studies on the rights of indigenous peoples, rights of older persons and gender in the context of SDG implementation. These studies were an important tool for leaders and policy makers to accelerate SDGs considering these vulnerable groups in the upcoming 2020 strategic SDG and human rights programming.

Refer to Annex 3 for detailed results of HRAs that were temporarily funded through other sources in 2019

*"The substantive issues raised in UPR reviews often mirror the recommendations issued by the Special Procedures and Treaty Bodies, as well as by my Office. Together, they form a cross-section of critical human rights gaps at the country level, which, if addressed, will build more resilient societies, and sustain development and peace. There is great potential for better and more focused use of human rights recommendations in system-wide action across the UN; such concerted action is supportive of the Secretary General's emphasis on prevention, as well as the 2030 Agenda."*

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, at the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly in New York, 15 October 2019

## 4. COHERENT AND STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT WITH UN HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS

The Human Rights Task Team and Fund Secretariat once again supported UNCTs' strategic engagement with UN human rights mechanisms in 2019, by sending a letter by the Task Team Co-Chairs to each RC/UNCT with a country-specific overview of upcoming reviews by treaty bodies, the UPR and forthcoming visits of Special Procedures mandate holders, thus facilitating

UNCT strategic planning and coherent engagement. This was the fifth year of this initiative, and it was again recognized as strategic by RCs.

### Feedback from RCs on Letters on Opportunities to Engage with UN Human Rights Mechanisms

*"I thank you very much for the attached letter and document. Without any doubt, this is useful information and guidance, in particular in view of our upcoming new Cooperation Framework with the Government."*

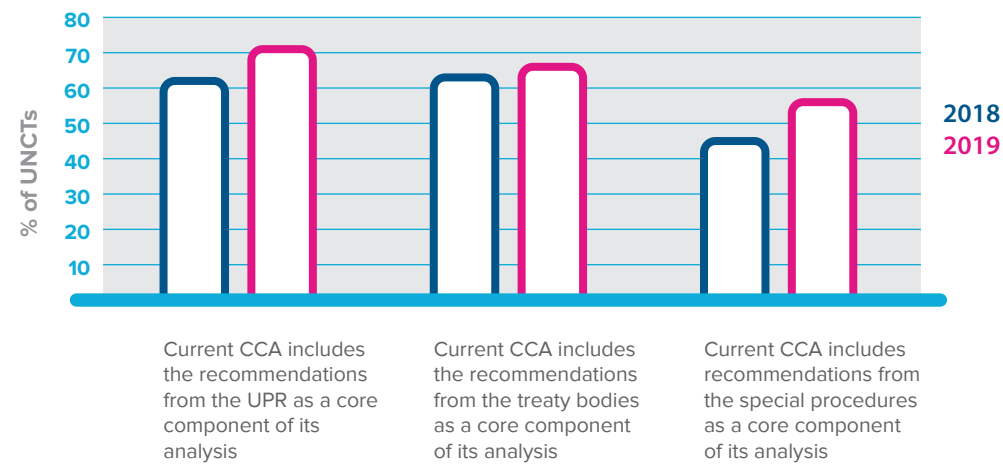
Birgit Gerstenberg, RC for El Salvador and Belize

*"Thank you very much for sharing and it is indeed useful information. We continue to count on the Human Rights Task Team for support with the normative agenda in Cabo Verde and stand by also to contribute to the human rights agenda at a global level."*

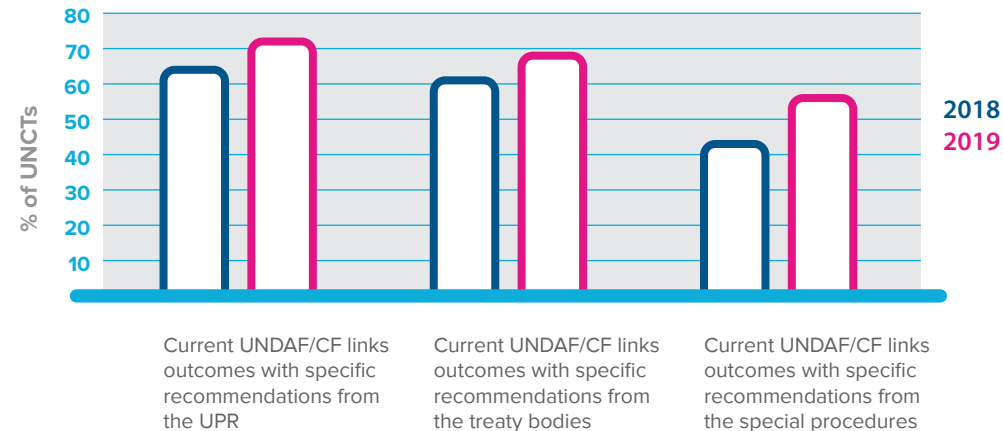
Ana Patricia Graca, RC for Cabo Verde

Efforts to strengthen the engagement with the human rights mechanisms through clearer elaboration of interlinkages in UNSDG guidance and other support to UNCTs appears to be showing results. A comparison undertaken by the Fund Secretariat of annual data collected by DCO on the integration of the recommendations from UN human rights mechanisms in the CCAs and the UNDAF/Cooperation Framework during 2018 and 2019 indicates that UNCTs are increasingly using the recommendations of the UPR, Treaty Bodies and Special Procedures in these processes. While UNDAFs/Cooperation Frameworks are not renewed annually and hence significant changes should not be expected year to year, this data shows a positive trend.

### UNCTs INCREASINGLY REPORTING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS ARE A CORE COMPONENT OF CCAs



### UNCTs INCREASINGLY REPORTING UNDAF/COOPERATION FRAMEWORK OUTCOMES ARE LINKED WITH SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FROM HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS



Data in the above 2 figures from the DCO Information Management System (IMS), reporting by 131 UNCTs on actions in 2018 and 2019.

The Fund Secretariat and several members of the Human Rights Task Team participated 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. The Fund Secretariat presented analytics from the IMS showing overall positive trends in reporting by UNCTs on engagement with and use of the recommendations of the various mechanisms, which

was complemented presentations from agencies, funds and programmes. These dialogues facilitate enhanced understanding by the human rights mechanisms of the entry points for supporting and leveraging their work through the UNCTs and of the pertinent changes under the UNDS reforms. Similarly, the experiences shared by the Special Procedures and Treaty Body Chairpersons inform future efforts of the Human Rights Task Team to strengthen UNCTs' engagement with the mechanisms.

### ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE FUND - LESSONS LEARNED

The achievements of the UNSDG-HRM Fund in 2019 demonstrate what can be accomplished through well-coordinated and concerted system-wide efforts to mainstream human rights in the work of the UNDS and its support to countries. Coherence in HQ policies and guidance to the field – such as the inclusion of the HRBA as a Guiding Principle in the Cooperation Framework Guidance – is key to supporting sustained and systematic integration of human rights in development operations. 2019 also demonstrated the value of having system-wide policies, tools and capacities readily available to RCs/UNCTs in an increasingly unstable world. The agreed common understanding of an HRBA and the UNSDG approach to operationalizing the principle of LNOB (including the LNOB Guide) informed the development of the Cooperation Framework Guidance and Companion Package, which will enable strengthened support to UNCTs in taking an integrated approach to HRBA, LNOB and gender equality and women's empowerment. HRAs were in demand from countries in a variety of development and humanitarian settings, with positive impacts on RCs' and UNCTs' results on human rights mainstreaming. Expanding deployment of HRAs to meet demand and ensuring sustainability and predictable funding remains a priority for creating a stronger, more effective support for the integration of human rights in the work of RCs and UNCTs. Going forward, results will be further strengthened through continued human rights leadership and corresponding political support on the centrality of human rights as well as the system-wide responsibility to move forward the human rights agenda. Investments in ensuring policy coherence on key and emerging human rights issues combined with systematic human rights leadership support for RCs and capacity building for UNCTs on the HRBA will be essential. The 2030 Agenda, Cooperation Framework Guidance 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. Scaling up the implementation of the RC human rights leadership support will be critical in this regard, as will additional support to ensure that expanded RCOs and new generation UNCTs have the knowledge and skills required to integrate human rights in their work.

# Fund operational performance

## ENSURING SUSTAINABILITY AND CONTINUED OPERATION OF THE UNSDG-HRM FUND THROUGHOUT THE UNDS REFORM AND TRANSITION OF FINANCING MECHANISMS

The Steering Committee, with the Support of the Fund Secretariat, navigated several significant transitions during 2019, successfully safeguarding the sustainability the UNSDG-HRM Fund and the programmes that it has supported in the new UNDS context. In 2019, the Steering Committee oversaw the implementation of the first year of a 2-year provisional workplan designed in late 2018 for optimal allocation of available funds for 2019-2020. In view of the funding shortage for the HRA programme and unmet demand for HRAs from the field, the Fund Secretariat and OHCHR worked closely to provide DCO and the DTF donors with information on the HRA funding needs, resulting in the allocation of USD 4.3 million from the DTF towards HRA costs in 2019 before its planned closure. The Fund Secretariat ensured timely sharing of information regarding the availability of resources from the DTF with the Steering Committee as the situation evolved, enabling the development of a strategy for combined support to the UNSDG human rights mainstreaming priorities from these two sources during the transition of the funding mechanisms.

In late 2019, following interest from several donors in expanding their support to the integration of human rights in the repositioned UNDS, the Fund Secretariat convened the Steering Committee and consulted with the Executive Office of the Secretary General with regard to Human Rights up Front to develop a scaled up workplan for 2020 commensurate with the ambition and vision for the repositioned UNDS. The Steering Committee also agreed on several key deliverables for 2020 that will lay the foundations for the continuation of the UNSDG-HRM Fund as the primary funding mechanism for the UNSDG's inter-agency human rights mainstreaming work to at least 2024. Through this swift action, an additional USD 7.4 million was contributed to the UNSDG-HRM Fund by Sweden, Norway, Finland and Denmark.<sup>15</sup> The Fund Secretariat provided critical coordination and administrative support to the Steering Committee and liaised with the donors and the MPTFO to secure the contributions before the end of the year.

<sup>15</sup> Denmark funds received in 2020.

## TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Throughout 2019 the Fund Secretariat worked closely with the Participating UN Organisations of the UNSDG-HRM Fund, the Human Rights Task Team, DCO and other UN entities to ensure institutional linkages and information sharing, thus promoting the transparency of the Fund within the UNSDG. The Fund Secretariat also provided secretariat support to the Human Rights Task Team throughout the year, which included strategic, coordination and substantive support to the initiatives of the Human Rights Task Team requiring funding from the UNSDG-HRM Fund.

Following the restructure of the UNSDG coordination architecture in 2018, and in order to enable effective operation of the UNSDG-HRM Fund in this context, the [Terms of Reference](#) were revised in 2019 with updated language and a revised governance structure. The change vested the authority of the Steering Committee with the Participating UN Organisations of the UNSDG-HRM Fund and removed the Resource Management Committee as a (now) redundant intermediary body. The Human Rights Task Team retains the policy and priority setting role, with all proposals under the UNSDG-HRM Fund to be consistent with the vision and strategic priorities of the UNSDG and workplans of the Human Rights Task Team.

In 2019, the Steering Committee, with the support of the Fund Secretariat, reviewed and approved funding proposals in a timely manner. The Steering Committee agreed in early 2019 on a workplan for 2019 and 2020 that would enable the best use of the available resources across the two-year period and thereby manage the risk to ongoing projects of a funding gap across the biennium. With the positive development in late 2019 of additional funds for 2020, the Steering Committee developed a revised workplan and budget for 2020 in line with the vision and priorities set by the Human Rights Task Team. The decisions to conduct an evaluation of the UNSDG-HRM Fund in 2020 and to develop a multi-year results framework for 2021-2024 will further strengthen the accountability and impact of the UNSDG-HRM Fund going forward.

The Fund Secretariat also provided updates to donors and other partners on the progress in mainstreaming human rights in the repositioned UNDS throughout the year, including through responding to queries on the UNSDG-HRM Fund from donors and other parts of the UN system.

# Conclusion – way forward

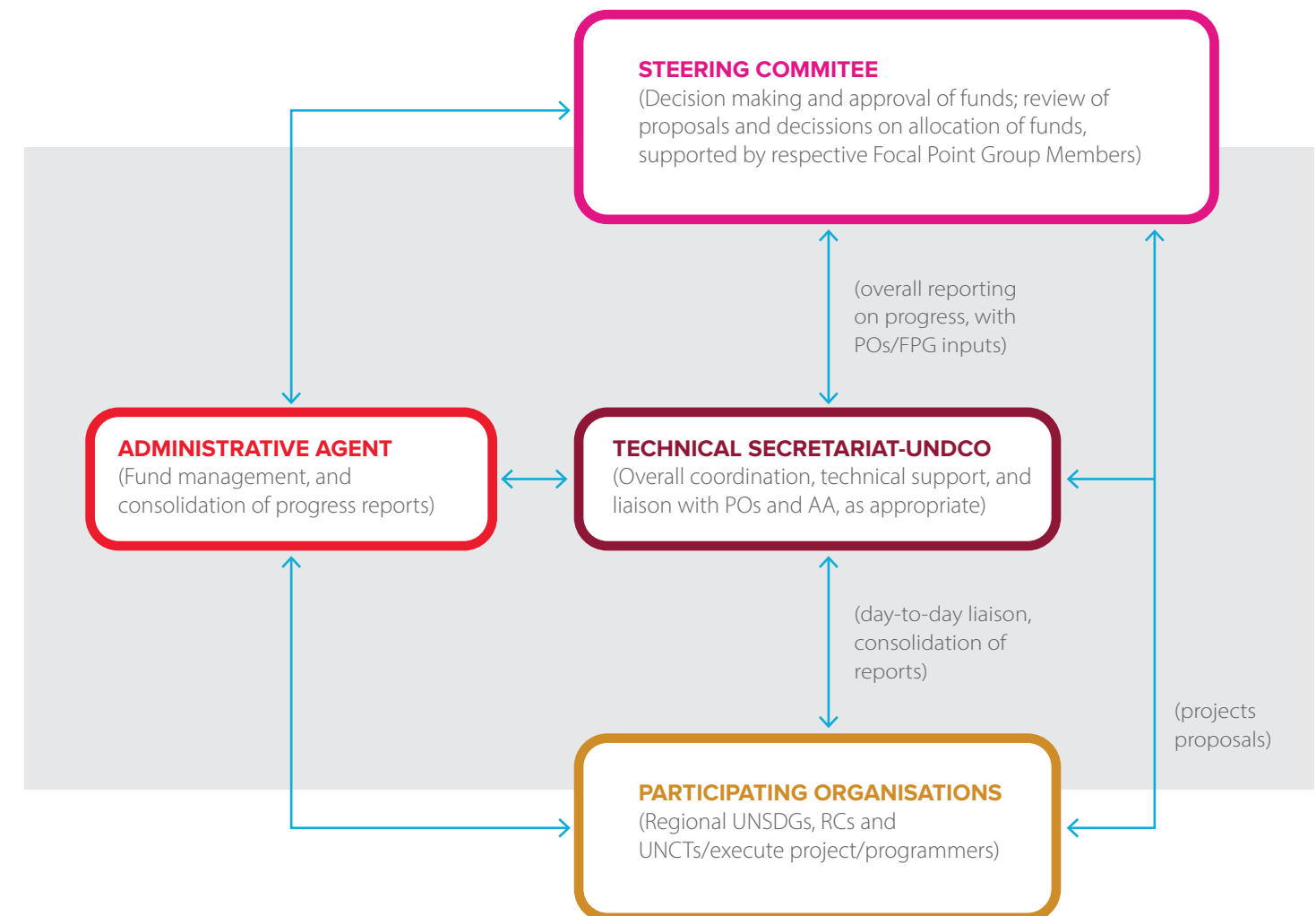
The world is changing at an unprecedented pace, with challenges at local, national and global levels threatening hard-won gains in human rights and development and undermining progress towards the 2030 Agenda. The repositioning of the UNDS is opening up opportunities for new and expanded support to mainstreaming human rights in development policies, frameworks and tools, and in operational activities on the ground exactly when the world needs it the most. The results of the support in 2019 illustrate the impact that can be achieved through modest funding for this important area of work, and with the continued commitment of the UNSDG and the Human Rights Task Team to the importance of inter-agency engagement and support for human rights at policy and country level. Through future support, the UNSDG-HRM Fund will continue to strengthen the integration of human rights in the UN's work at the country level; ensuring that human rights are a core component of RCs and UNCTs as the UNDS reforms take root, supporting RCs and UNCTs with enhanced human rights capacities, and ensuring the needed policies and support structures are in place.

The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the social, economic and environmental issues that were not being adequately addressed, and consequently left us ill-prepared to respond to the pandemic's impacts, resulting in a humanitarian, human rights and development crisis. Human rights can and must guide COVID-19 response and recovery. In providing effective support to countries' response and recovery, UNCTs – working in close coordination with other parts of the UN system – will need the resources and capacity to integrate human rights standards and principles, and to operationalise the principles of the HRBA, LNOB and gender equality and women's empowerment. This will be crucial to ensuring that international human rights are at the centre of all COVID-19 responses, and that the socio-economic response refocuses action on addressing the inequalities and underlying human rights concerns that have left us vulnerable to the pandemic and greatly exacerbated its effects with a view to building a more inclusive and sustainable world including for future generations.

In responding to the challenges the world faces today, new and old, the UNSDG-HRM Fund in 2020 and beyond will help to ensure that UNDS support to countries' implementation of the 2030 Agenda is grounded unequivocally in that for which the UN, by its Charter, stands: freedom from fear and freedom from want for all, without discrimination.

## Annex 1 Governance Structure of the UNSDG-HRM Fund

This section outlines the roles and processes and describes how they contributed to the overall governance and accountability of the UNDG-HRM Fund in 2019.



## STEERING COMMITTEE

The UNSDG-HRM MDTF is managed by a Steering Committee comprised of representatives at senior, decision-making level from up to six Participating Organisations which have signed the MOU, with OHCHR to serve as the Chair. The Steering Committee sets the strategic direction of the MDTF, reviews funding proposals and approves allocations. The Administrative Agent is an ex-officio member of the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee members is supported by technical level Focal Points nominated by their respective Steering Committee representatives.

## TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT (FUND SECRETARIAT)

The UN Development Coordination Office, in its capacity as the UNSDG secretariat, hosts the UNSDG coordination mechanisms including the Human Rights Task Team, with the strategic and substantive work carried out by the UNSDG entities leading on specific components/tasks. In addition, DCO provides advice on UNSDG policies and guidelines, and ensures institutional linkages with other UNSDG Results Groups and Teams. DCO is responsible for leading the coordination of, support to, and communication with, Resident Coordinators/UNCTs and Regional UNSDG Teams on behalf of the Human Rights Task Team. For this purpose, appropriate technical capacities have been established in DCO as the host of the Fund Secretariat. The technical staff provide overall coordination and facilitation support to the UNSDG-HRM, Participating UN Organizations, and the Administrative Agent. In addition to the substantive support, the Fund Secretariat has a number of specific responsibilities in relation to the support to the Steering Committee and management of the UNSDG-HRM Fund, as outlined in the Terms of Reference.

## PARTICIPATING UN ORGANIZATIONS

UN Organizations that participate in the UNDG-HRM Fund sign a standard MOU with the Administrative Agent, and operate under its financial regulations, rules and policies and assumes full financial and programmatic accountability for the funds disbursed to it by the Administrative Agent and for the implementation of the project, and provides financial and narrative progress reports to the Administrative Agent on its activities, as described in the MOU. Participating UN Organizations assume full programmatic and financial accountability for funds transferred to them. They are responsible for the following duties:

- Submit proposals to the UNSDG-HRM Steering Committee, through the Fund Secretariat, for review and subsequent consideration by the Steering Committee;
- Design, implement and oversee projects;
- Establish a separate ledger account for the receipt and administration of the funds disbursed to it by the Administrative Agent; and,
- Provide narrative and financial progress reports as outlined in the MOU.

## ADMINISTRATIVE AGENT/MULTI-PARTNER TRUST FUND OFFICE (MPTF OFFICE)

The role of the MPTF Office, as the Administrative Agent for the UNDG-HRM Fund, includes the receipt, administration and management of contributions from donors, disbursement of funds to Participating UN Organizations in accordance with decisions of the Steering Committee, and consolidation and dissemination of progress reports to the donors. Through the MPTF Office GATEWAY, a public website on all MPTFs administered by the MPTF Office, it ensures full transparency of the operations of the UNDG-HRM Fund.

# Annex 2 Strategic Framework of the UNSDG-HRM Fund and Terms of Reference of the Human Rights Task Team

## STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The UNSDG-HRM Fund was designed to support the overall objective of the UNSDG to institutionalize human rights as a central part of the UN's development work. This work has been taken forward through the standing UNSDG human rights mainstreaming structures as they have evolved over time, through strengthening system-wide coherence and collaboration on human rights mainstreaming and providing policy and operational support to Resident Coordinators, Regional UNSDG Teams and UN Country Teams (UNCTs) in integrating human rights principles and international standards into the work of the UN and in supporting national partners implement human rights obligations. In 2018, the UNSDG Task Team on Leaving No One Behind, Human Rights and the Normative Agenda was established under the Strategic Results Group on SDG Implementation, carrying on the long-standing functions of previous UNDG mechanisms for human rights mainstreaming.

The overall objective of these UNSDG inter-agency human rights mainstreaming coordination mechanisms has been to strengthen system-wide coherence and collaboration and to provide catalytic support for RCs, Regional UNSDG Teams and UNCTs and their national partners in mainstreaming human rights including on the following priorities outlined by the Human Rights Working Group:

- a** — Ensure policy coherence on human rights mainstreaming and on normative

and operational linkages across the UN development system

- b** — Support the UNDG in providing system-wide human rights expertise to Member States, anchored in strong human rights leadership by RCs and UNCTs with relevant capacity and support structures
- c** — Support the UN development system effectively deliver its human rights responsibilities and demands under the Human Rights up Front initiative.

The Human Rights Task Team is the primary inter-agency policy and programme support coordination mechanism for the UNDS on human rights mainstreaming. It sets the overall vision and strategic priorities of the UNSDG and of the UNSDG-HRM Fund in terms of the UNSDG's overall effort to ensure the integration of human rights in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Co-Chaired by Assistant Secretary-Generals from OHCHR, UNESCO and WHO, this team comprises over 20 UNSDG entities. The vision and mission of the Human Rights Task Team are set out below, together with the three focus areas agreed for 2018-2019.

The main objectives and primary components of the UNSDG-HRM Fund and relationship with the Human Rights Task Team are set out in more detail in section 2.1 of the [Terms of Reference](#) of the Fund.

UNSDG TASK TEAM ON LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND,  
HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE NORMATIVE AGENDA  
TERMS OF REFERENCE

**VISION**

The UNDS places the people as rights-holders at the heart of its development efforts, working to promote, respect and protect their inherent dignity and human rights within the development context and seeking their empowerment as active partners in and for more sustainable, equitable and resilient development. The UNDS support to countries' implementation of the 2030 Agenda will be grounded unequivocally in that for which the UN, by its very Charter, stands: freedom from fear and want for all, without discrimination.

**MISSION**

Through development and provision of policy, guidance, good practices, communications and other operational support, the **Team on LNOB, Human Rights and the Normative Agenda** enables the UNDS to leverage its unique role as custodian of global norms, convening power, technical expertise and operational capacity as it provides normative and evidence-based development assistance to Member States in their implementation of the 2030 Agenda and their commitment to leave no one behind, ensuring respect, protection and promotion of the human rights and equality, including gender equality, imperatives embedded in the 2030 Agenda.

**FOCUS AREAS**

Within the framework of its vision and mission, the Team will spearhead provision of strategic deliverables, building also on the work of the *UNSDG Human Rights Working Group and the UNSDG Results Group: Give Voice to Common Values and Norms*. The Team will also seek synergies with other Results Groups and Teams to avoid duplication of effort and maximize the use of resources.

The following focus areas have been identified in which action by the Team can significantly enhance the UNDS' ability to fulfill its responsibilities ensuring adherence to key principles of human rights.

1. — **Serve as the primary policy forum** (on leaving no one behind, human rights and the normative agenda) in support of the UNDS' normative and evidenced-based "thought leadership", strengthening related policy coherence across the UNDS using an integrated approach, including for the purpose of consistent and coherent advocacy and messaging at country, regional and global levels.
2. — **Through advocacy and technical support** for relevant capacity and empowerment structures for the field, help anchor strong, system-wide human rights and evidence-based expertise in the leadership of RCs and UNCTs, specifically as they engage national development actors.
3. — **Support other teams of the Strategic Results Group on SDG Implementation and other UNSDG Strategic Results Groups** to integrate norms, standards and principles, including leave no one behind, human rights and gender equality, in their work and to speak as one voice on these issues.

Annex 3  
The Human Rights Adviser Programme In  
2019 – Overview And Achievements

*Much has changed since the repositioning of the UN development system. Yet, one thing remains as valid as ever: Human Right Advisers are an invaluable resource in helping RCs and the UN system put people as rights-holders at the centre of our work. This is what we're all about. Human Rights Advisers help us find solutions to truly leave no one behind and become proactive in addressing some of the long-standing roadblocks to sustainable development. The Human Rights Adviser programme and UNSDG-HRM Fund that supports it provide a significant contribution to our efforts to support national development priorities.*

Robert Piper, Assistant Secretary-General for Development Coordination, DCO.

OVERVIEW OF THE HRA PROGRAMME IN 2019

The HRA programme is a crucial asset in the reformed UNDS. Human Rights Advisers (HRAs) deployed under the 2012 UNSDG Strategy<sup>16</sup> provide catalytic country-level expertise that enables Resident Coordinators (RCs) and UN Country Teams (UNCTs) to put human rights at the center of their support to countries, bringing to the fore the values and norms enshrined in the UN Charter for a UN offer that responds to the increasing challenges that countries are facing in reaching their goals for peace and prosperity for all.

2019 was a watershed year for UN Development System (UNDS), the first full year of efforts to fundamentally transform the UNDS under the reforms set in motion by the Member States. As the UNDS reforms were rolled out, the unique expertise and skillset of HRAs enabled newly empowered and independent RCs and UNCTs in 37 countries to better engage with and support the commitment to implement the 2030 Agenda in accordance with international law. Further strengthening the programme is a priority for the UNSDG as a key component of its support to RCs and UNCTs to embody the vision of the UNDS reforms and work with national stakeholders to strengthen their own capacities for implementing human rights and ensuring that no one is left behind in development efforts. The UN Secretary-General's Call to Action

<sup>16</sup> UNSDG Strategy for the Deployment of Human Rights Advisers to RCs and UNCTs (2012)

on Human Rights<sup>17</sup> also emphasizes the need to ensure that the work of RCs and UNCTs is informed by a human rights risk and opportunity analysis, including gender specific analysis, and refers to the expansion of the presence of HRAs in UNCTs in this regard.

In 2020 and beyond, HRAs will also play a key role in supporting countries to respond to the immediate and longer-term impacts of COVID-19 - a health, humanitarian and human rights crisis. At the time of writing, the world was facing an unprecedented test, **combating the COVID-19 pandemic**. Hundreds of thousands of people were falling seriously ill, thousands losing their lives with the disease spreading exponentially in many countries causing socio-economic devastation in all regions. HRAs in all countries of deployment, were working under leadership of RCs and together with UN agencies on the ground, supporting national efforts addressing the human rights dimensions of the crisis and the responses from the outset of the crisis, focusing on the most vulnerable. Lessons learned and practices relevant from the experience of a number of HRAs during the national efforts to address Ebola for example are also being reviewed and applied. Some early illustrations of HRAs' roles include: support provided to the RC's leadership to draw a baseline which has informed the COVID-19 early recovery plans as well as strategic lines of action for the new Cooperation Framework (Uruguay) and integration of human rights into humanitarian or socio-economic impact analyses relating to the crisis (Bangladesh and Montenegro). The integration of international norms and standards in the design and implementation of socio-economic responses is as critical as ever.

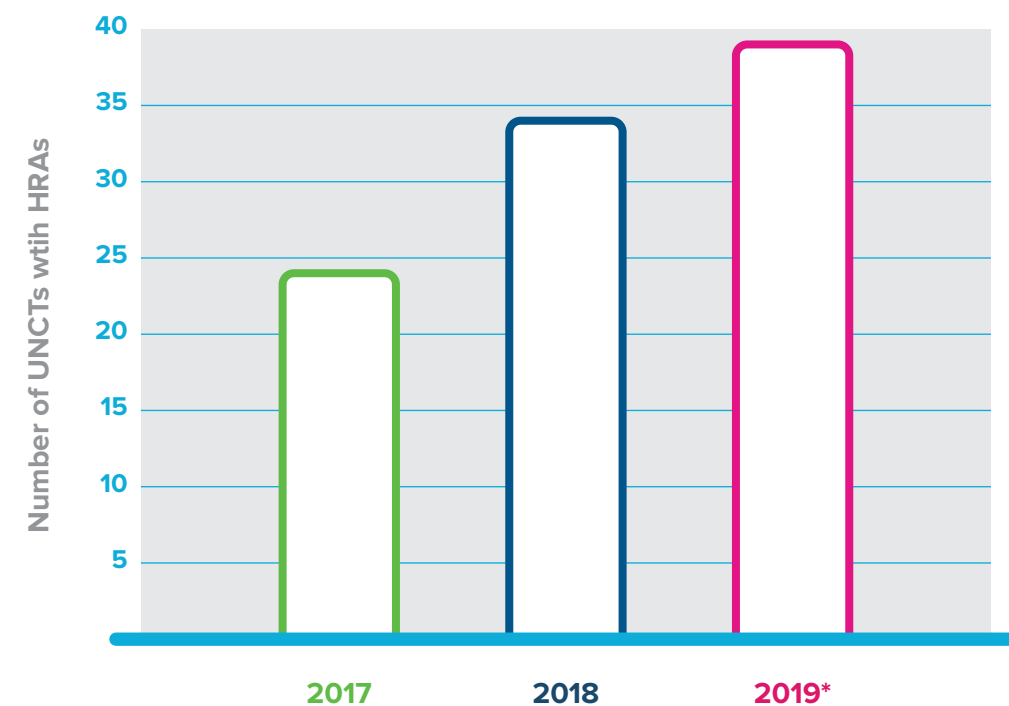
### STATUS AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE HRA PROGRAMME IN 2019

In 2019, HRAs worked in concert with the new core staff in the RCO and other advisory capacities such as Peace and Development Advisors (PDAs) to guide and support the leadership of RCs and catalyze the joint contributions of the UNCT to implement transformative programmes and advocacy for achieving the 2030 Agenda. The additional guidance of the UNSDG Task Team on Leaving No One Behind, Human Rights and the Normative Agenda (Human Rights Task Team) enabled HRAs to ensure a coherent approach across the UNCT in the integration of human rights and the application the Guiding Principles of the Cooperation Framework. Drawing on the institutional support and expertise of OHCHR, HRAs also increased the strategic engagement with international and regional human rights mechanisms by UNCTs, governments, CSOs, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and other national stakeholders. The technical engagement of HRAs also strengthened UNCTs' effort to implement UN system-wide strategies on gender equality, youth, disability inclusion and indigenous persons – populations universally left behind that have been highlighted by the UN system as essential to achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

<sup>17</sup> The Highest Aspiration – A Call to Action on Human Rights. (2020) United Nations.

The continued expansion of the HRA programme in 2019 ensured further progress towards meeting the demand for human rights advisory capacity at country level. With 39 HRA deployments secured by the end of the year with funding from multiple sources<sup>18</sup>, this represents a 15% increase on 2018 and at 60% increase compared to the size of the programme in 2017.

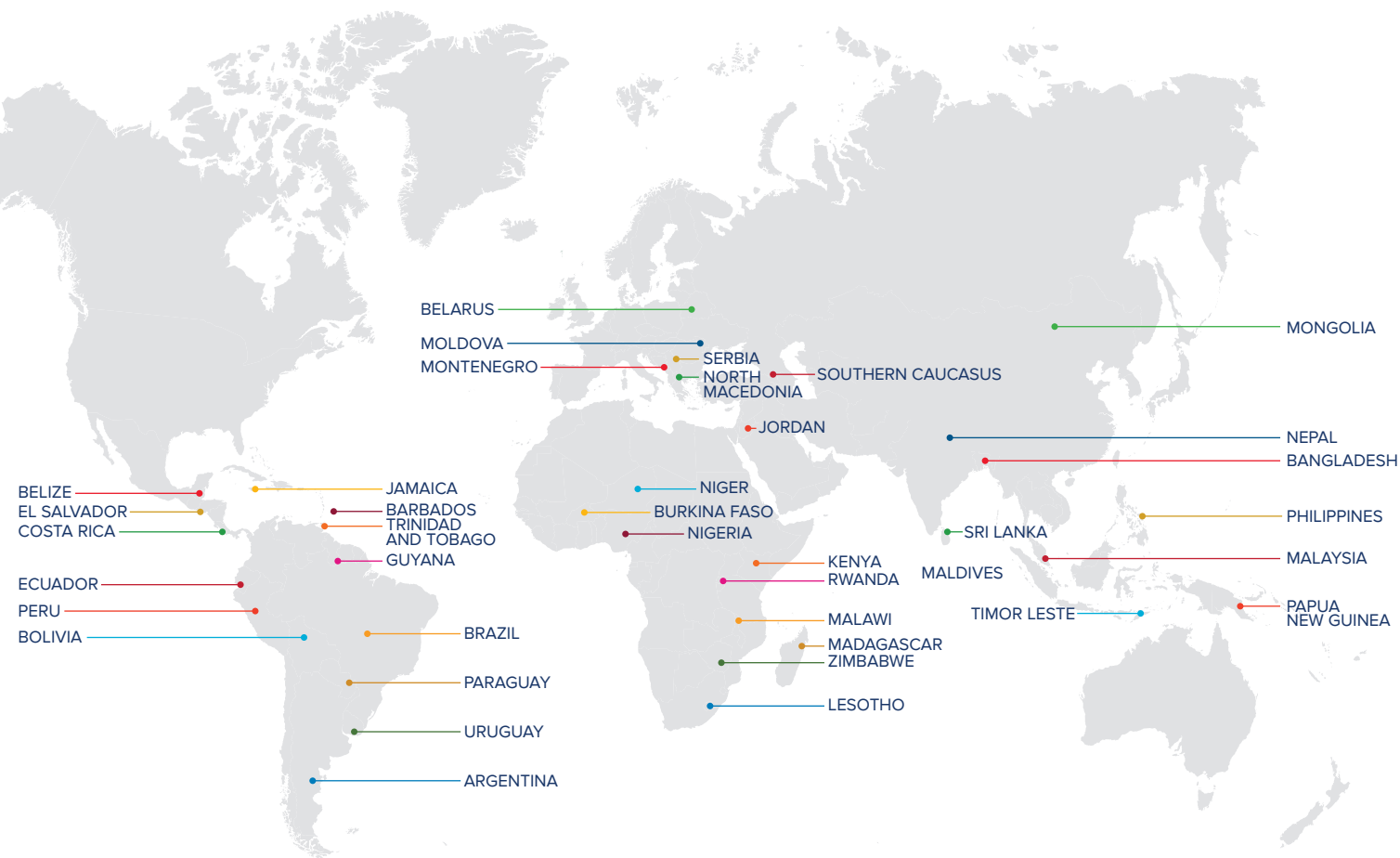
### CONTINUED SCALE UP OF THE HRA PROGRAMME



\* Number of UNCTs with HRAs secured (deployed or recruitments finalized)

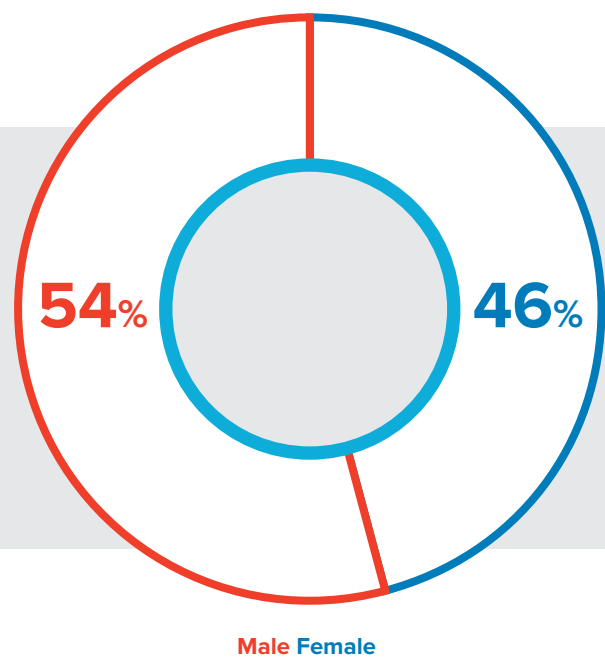
<sup>18</sup> Funding sources are described further in the Consolidated Annual Progress Report of Activities Implemented under the UNSDG Human Rights Mainstreaming (UNSDG-HRM) Fund 2019.

# HRA DEPLOYMENTS SECURED IN 2019

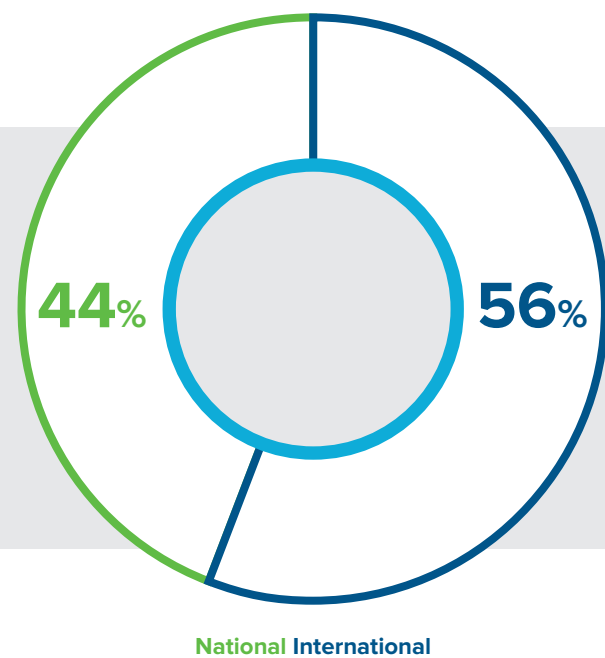


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GENDER BREAKDOWN OF 2019 HRA PROGRAMME



INTERNATIONAL/NATIONAL PROFILE OF THE 2019 HRA PROGRAMME



## STRENGTHENED HRA PROGRAMME AND COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Since 2012, HRAs have been deployed under the [UNSDG Strategy on Deployment of HRAs to RCs and UNCTs](#) (HRA Strategy) under a common Terms of Reference with the RC as the first reporting officer. OHCHR has the overall responsibility and oversight for the deployment of HRAs under the HRA Strategy, and provides substantive support, training and backstopping. This includes valuable institutional and policy support, linkages to the thematic expertise as well as the international Human Rights Mechanisms, and in some cases additional staff deployed by OHCHR to work with the HRA to further expand the support to the RC/UNCT and national partners. The Human Rights Task Team and DCO also provide guidance and support to HRAs and engage with HRAs to ensure that their country experience informs the policy-practice loop.

OHCHR conducted systematic assessments throughout 2019 to inform strategic decisions taken in consultation with DCO and partner UNSDG agencies aimed at strengthening the sustainability of the programme, the predictability of resources, and optimal operationalization in the context of UNDS reforms. For example, building on the 2016 OHCHR evaluation of the HRA programme, as well as regular exchanges with RCs and UNCTs, the deployment of national

OHCHR



HRAs has been expanded in situations where the criteria are met. Sound strategic planning and communication with partners has enabled an increase in the number of deployments, responding to the demand for greater human rights expertise to enhance the capacities of RCOs and UNCTs to provide coherent and joint support to national partners to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

Building the community of practice amongst the HRA cohort further strengthens their ability to identify and apply new strategies and innovative actions at country level. All HRAs participated in the 2019 Annual Meeting of Human Rights Presences organized by OHCHR, sharing good practices and experiences on the integration of human rights on the ground. HRAs participated in technical and strategic discussions with OHCHR field presences and HQ colleagues, forging strengthened networks for continued institutional support from OHCHR and engagement with the UN human rights bodies and mechanisms. They also benefited from dedicated sessions for HRAs, designed to strengthen the HRA network and facilitate exchange of experiences relating to their unique role. Particularly relevant were the briefings on the UNDS reforms and opportunities to share experiences in supporting UNCTs with the previous UNDAF processes including lessons learned to contribute to the implementation of the guidance for the new Cooperation Frameworks and the updating of the HRBA Common Learning Package.



**RESULTS OF HRAs IN 2019**

**Support in promoting human rights as a common UN value and upholding international norms and standards through advocacy and awareness-raising**

In 2019, HRAs across the world provided technical advice to RCs and UNCTs to ensure awareness and leadership around critical human rights issues and concerns, and in many cases helped to open cooperation avenues for UNCTs with key ministries and state institutions to address them. Advocacy and support to the domestication and ratification of

international and regional human rights treaties and to align laws and policies with international human rights standards, is a key role RCs undertake with the support from HRAs. The technical support from HRAs regarding the rights of marginalized groups facilitated the development and adoption of unified strategies to address challenges and gaps in line with international standards and provide more effective support to efforts to leave no one behind. Specific issues addressed by HRAs included those regarding the situation of migrants, human rights situations of persons with disabilities and of persons with albinism; situation of minorities such as the Roma; indigenous peoples; afro-descendants; LGBTI; and people leaving with HIV; people in custody; people who use drugs; human rights defenders; reproductive health issues; gender based violence and stereotyping, justice, violence and insecurity; the use of death penalty and the space for civil society and journalists to operate.

In **Papua New Guinea** with the technical assistance of the HRA, the RC advocated at the highest levels of the Government for the rights of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. In November, the RC wrote to the Deputy Prime Minister raising concerns around the legality of the detention of 47 men with negative refugee status determination decisions who were being held in the Bomana Immigration Centre in Port Moresby. The letter followed strategic meetings with the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, with technical support and coordination from relevant UN partners, including OHCHR, UNHCR and IOM. The HRA also provided support to civil society organizations and Human Rights Defenders advocating for the rights of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in line with international human rights standards. The Government released all 47 asylum seekers from detention in January 2020.

In **Nigeria**, the President signed into law the Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities

(Prohibition) Act, which domesticated the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). This came about following advocacy that was undertaken by the RC, UN, its partners and stakeholders. To prepare the grounds for this achievement, the HRA organized a workshop on the CRPD in 2018, which brought together relevant stakeholders and government representatives. Furthermore, in response to recommendations issued through three cycles of the Universal Periodic Review, the President signed into law the Corrections Service Act (2019), which overhauled the Nigerian penitentiary system and brought it in line with current global practices that emphasize rehabilitation and establish mechanisms for non-custodial sentences. The HRA facilitated the engagement of civil society in advocacy for the reforms and provided technical support to the Presidential Committee on Prisons Reform and Decongestion which led advocacy on presidential assent to the bill. The HRA also co-sponsored capacity building activities for the implementation of the Act.

In **Jamaica**, the RC presented a memo to the Parliament and key government ministries in order to highlight key issues of concern to the UNCT and putting forward recommendations for law reform including abolishing outdated definitions of sexual intercourse and rape, including marital rape, ending the criminalization of HIV transmission, and establishing a gender neutral definition of sexual offences. This was based on a comprehensive UNCT review of four parliamentary acts, namely, the Sexual Offences Act, the Child Care and Protection Act, the Domestic Violence Act and the Offences against the Person Act which was led by the HRA in cooperation with members of the UN Theme Group on Gender and Human Rights and the UN Theme Group on HIV/AIDS.

Strengthening the protection and empowerment of civil society actors is key to transformational governance that promotes democratic participation, human rights

and inclusive development in **Kenya**.<sup>19</sup> In 2019, the HRA supported extensive advocacy by the UNCT on law reform under the protection of civic space component in the UNDAF. The draft Policy on Public Participation was endorsed by the Attorney General and is currently awaiting adoption by Cabinet. This Policy complies with the Human Rights Council's Guidelines on the effective implementation of the right to participate in public affairs as a result of the expert inputs provided by the HRA and her team.

In **Brazil**, the HRA has played a key role in the UNCT's efforts to support effective and strengthened participatory governance models for sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystem services.<sup>20</sup> The HRA supported close partnership with indigenous organizations, which have been among the main stakeholders combating climate change and deforestation. Working with the UN Thematic Group on Gender Race and Ethnicity and at the request of the RC, UNFPA, UN Women and PAHO/WHO, the HRA coordinated efforts to build the capacity of primary national indigenous networks and the NGO Rede de Cooperação Amazônica (Amazon Cooperation Network) for 30 indigenous leaders. As a result, these critical development actors have more in-depth knowledge and capacity to identify UPR recommendations related to the rights of indigenous peoples and assess their status of implementation. They also have enhanced knowledge of UN human rights mechanisms, the main international platforms for indigenous and environmental action, and the linkages between human rights, sustainable development and climate change. This strategy is complemented by the UNCT's work on protecting environmental human rights defenders and civic space.

19 Kenya UN Development Assistance Framework 2018-2020, p.30. Accessed 18 May 2020 at: <https://ims.undg.org/downloadFile/db76db6cdee4041dde800b10ef79d506c3065ed7c154669926f910c38c146845>

20 UN Sustainable Development Partnership Framework Brazil 2017-2021. Accessed 18 May 2020 at: <https://ims.undg.org/downloadFile/d4a263e402d3f8358369d73edd1137ad434b2060081a3e32e926b9e1459e99bf>

21 UNDAF For the Republic of Belarus 2016-2020. Accessed 18 May 2020 at <https://ims.undg.org/downloadFile/a50112781cd95446dbc2f31c861036f7a838f3fa7a860f6a9fd4dc31edefd99f>

At the request of the RC, the HRA coordinates the UNCT subgroup on human rights defenders, which follows the situation of human rights defenders in the country and provides a forum for ongoing analysis and coordination among UN agencies working on the issue across their respective mandates. In this context, the HRA supports UNEP's environmental defenders strategy and UN Women's initiative "Connecting women, defending rights" which aims to support women human rights defenders in the country, strengthening the coherence and impact of the programmes.

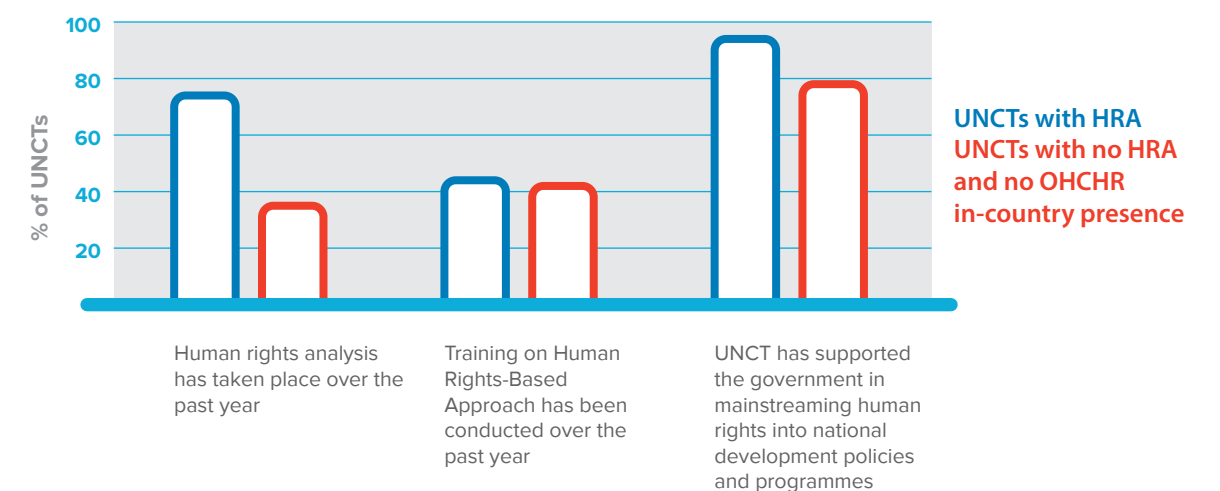
Stronger systems for ensuring the life safety of children and adults is a priority for development progress in **Belarus**<sup>21</sup>, particularly in response to the concerning levels of drug use among children and adults. Throughout 2019, the HRA in Belarus supported coordinated RC and UNCT advocacy to bring drug policy and legislation in line with international human rights standards, removing some of the structural factors that result in compounding human rights violations that put people who use drugs and their families at risk of being left behind. Under a UNCT advocacy strategy on drug policy that was used systematically during the reporting period, the RC – with technical and legal advice from the HRA – sent two formal communications to the Parliament, met with civil society representatives and convened a joint UN briefing for the diplomatic community to enhance common, rights-based messaging and coordination of efforts. Following advocacy that was undertaken by the UN and civil society, drug offenders were included in the Amnesty Law and as a result the terms of imprisonment were reduced by 1 and 2 years for adults and minors respectively.

## Integration of human rights into UN programmes and activities, CCAs/ Cooperation Frameworks and other key strategic planning tools and application of HRBA

In 2019, the Cooperation Framework took centre stage as the primary UN instrument for planning and implementation of UN development activities at country level in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The Cooperation Framework Guidance requires effective integration of human rights to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda. HRAs' technical expertise has been recognized in strengthening the UNCTs' capacity to apply the Guiding Principles on HRBA, LNOB and gender equality and women's empowerment throughout the Cooperation Framework cycle, and particularly in integrating human rights into the CCA and facilitating collaborative UNCT joint programming with human rights at the core. Supporting RCs and UNCTs in preparing for and developing new CCAs and/or Cooperation Frameworks was a priority for HRAs in all countries of deployment, and in particular in: **Argentina, Azerbaijan (from the HRA in Georgia), Bangladesh, Belarus, Burkina Faso, El Salvador, Georgia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Republic of North Macedonia, Serbia and Timor Leste.**

Data from the DCO Information Management System (IMS) on reporting by UNCTs of selected human rights mainstreaming activities in 2019 (see figure below) illustrates that UNCTs that had an HRA were able to undertake a much higher number of human rights analyses and mainstreaming activities compared to UNCTs that did not have an HRA or with OHCHR in-country presence.

### UNCTs WITH HRAs DEMONSTRATE STRONGER RESULTS ON KEY HRBA INDICATORS



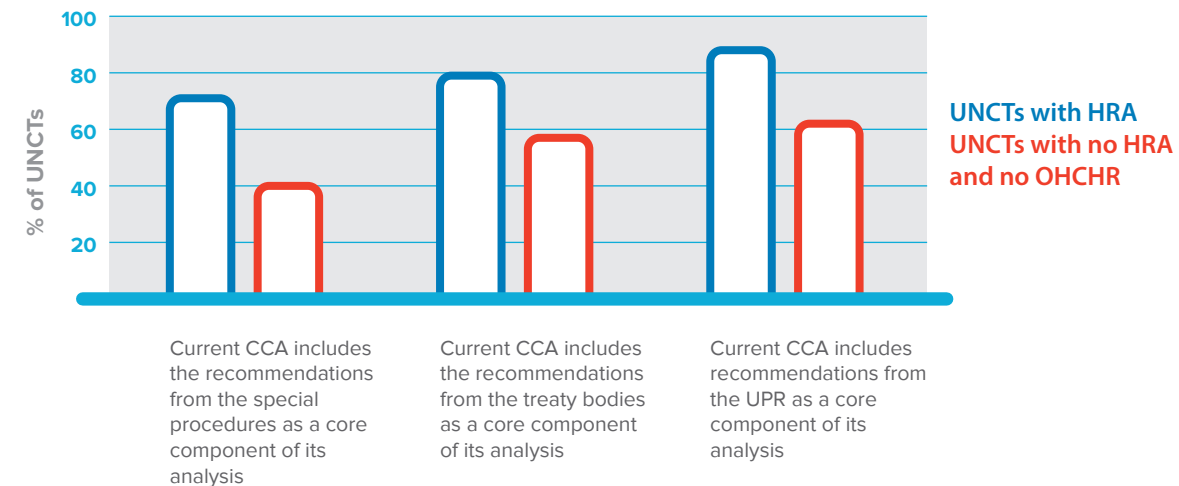
Data drawn from 2019 UNCT reporting in DCO Information Management System (IMS) reporting by 131 UNCTs on actions in 2019.

In **Jordan**, the HRA worked in cooperation with the Peace and Development Adviser (PDA) to design a methodology and workplan for the revision of the CCA and development of the Cooperation Framework in accordance with the new guidance that ensured the comprehensive integration of human rights considerations using various strategic entry points including the SDGs, LNOB, the Secretary-General's prevention agenda, Human Rights up Front and the humanitarian-peace-development nexus. Working across three different UNCT Results Groups, the HRA supported diagnostic analysis of groups left behind (drawing on the UNSDG Operational Guide on LNOB for UNCTs), as well as the integration of human rights issues and indicators in political and economic context and risk factor analysis, rule of law considerations and nexus-related assessments and collective outcomes. The close links between the SDGs and the recommendations of the human rights mechanisms, in particular Jordan's third cycle UPR, were also utilized to strengthen the UNCT's formulation of joint activities, outputs, outcomes, and indicators. These efforts were complemented by the ongoing support provided by the HRA to UNCT entities in integrating the HRBA into their activities and projects, which contributes to the understanding of the positive use of human rights in support of their mandate, and by extension also in the Cooperation Framework.

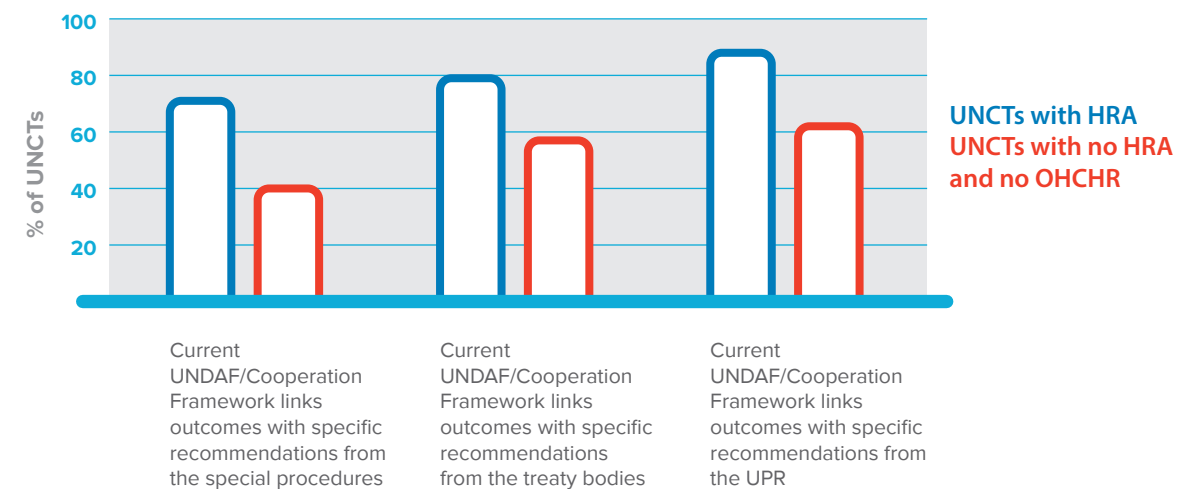
HRAs' responsiveness in leveraging their skills for enhanced UNDS capacities at country level was clearly demonstrated in 2019. On several occasions HRAs supported other UNCTs in the region which is highly appreciated by the requesting teams. For example, the HRA in **Southern Caucasus based in Georgia** actively participated in the formulation of the Common Country Analysis (CCA) for **Azerbaijan**, providing inputs related to the human rights situation in the country and the concluding observations issued by various international human rights mechanisms and ensuring that a human rights-based approach (HRBA) was applied in the process of the preparation of the CCA.

HRAs also collaborated across countries in the integration of the HRBA in the context of their new Cooperation Frameworks. HRAs from **Argentina** and **Uruguay** spearheaded a joint effort to support the UNCTs to implement the Guiding Principles on HRBA, LNOB and gender equality and women's empowerment, using the UNSDG Operational Guide on LNOB for UNCTs as a key resource to support the UNCTs' reflection on their LNOB strategies and identification of possible areas of joint future cooperation to address common issues impacting on the most marginalized groups. In a two-day meeting supported by regional and HQ experts from DCO, OHCHR, UN Women and UNDP, RCOs, Heads of Agencies and senior programme colleagues from both countries discussed and exchanged on how to approach and put into practice the LNOB mandate in High and High-Middle Income Countries.

### UNCTs WITH HRAs REPORT STRONGER USE OF HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS RECOMMENDATIONS IN CCAs



### UNCTs WITH HRAs REPORT STRONGER USE OF HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS RECOMMENDATIONS IN UNDAF/CFs



Data in above 2 figures drawn from 2019 UNCT reporting in DCO Information Management System (IMS) reporting by 131 UNCTs on actions in 2019

Through 2019, HRAs were also actively engaged by the RC and the respective UNCTs in developing concept notes for potential projects under the Joint SDG Fund window on Social Protection and Leaving No One Behind, helping to ensure a coherent and transformative proposal that addressed inequalities and exclusion. In a context of significant competition, several proposals that benefited from the leadership, technical and coordination support of HRAs were approved, including **Argentina** and **Bangladesh**.

### RIGHTS-BASED SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR FEMALE TEA GARDEN WORKERS IN BANGLADESH

Social protection of the communities in commercial tea gardens – approximately 360,000 workers (64 percent of whom are women and girls) and their families -- is a long standing and complex issue. These are some of the most left behind people in Bangladesh, experiencing multidimensional poverty and multiple discriminations, deprivations, marginalization and exclusion, which may continue across generations. With the support from the HRA and National Human Rights Officer, a joint programme was developed under the Joint SDG Fund to strengthen social protection for female tea garden workers and their families in Sylhet Division. The HRA led a programme formulation mission that engaged with stakeholders on the ground, coordinated, on behalf of RCO, the final programme design by the task team and supported the RC and Heads of Agencies in their engagement with the Government to obtain support. Through this joint programme of the Government of Bangladesh and four UN agencies, tea garden workers and their families will gradually enjoy better access to national social protection coverage, local services, decent work, and less discrimination. Building on existing Government and private sector efforts and agency programmes, this partnership-focused initiative aims to progressively improve the coordination of social safety nets and enhance regulation of service provision by tea garden owners who perform functions as direct duty bearers for basic social services, notably health and education. As a result of this programme, the women, their families, as well as the trade unions who represent them will be more empowered and participate in the development of their communities so they can claim labour rights and social protection. Tea garden workers are identified in the CCA (finalized in February 2020) as one of the vulnerable groups in Bangladesh.

### Support to building and strengthening of national capacities and institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights

HRAs contributed to strengthening national capacities and institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights in 2019, leveraging the connectivity between human rights and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. HRAs' leadership in convening, facilitating and supporting capacity building have been highly appreciated by national partners, and contributed to enhanced understanding of strategic entry points by the UN teams on the ground. This has enabled UNCTs to provide coherent technical assistance to State institutions in line with international human rights standards and the SDGs, and to support civil society to engage strategically on the rights-related aspects of development, including states' pledge to leave no one behind and reach the furthest behind first.

### THE 2019 CENSUS IN KENYA COUNTED PEOPLE WHO WERE NEVER COUNTED BEFORE

With the support of the HRA and UNCT, the Census in Kenya captured for the first time information on some of the groups left furthest behind. This was achieved through sustained, strategic engagement with key partners aimed at strengthening Kenya's capacity to generate disaggregated data to inform SDG planning, programming and monitoring. The HRA and her team were instrumental in the conclusion of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) and the Kenyan National Human Rights Commission Institution (KNC HR) to mainstream a human rights-based approach to the collection of data. Through this partnership, and with the support of the HRA, UNFPA, UNICEF and other members of the UN Working Group on Census in Kenya, some 28 groups left behind with respect to data generation were identified. This laid the foundation for ensuring these groups are progressively included in national statistics.

The potential of this partnership in shaping the implementation of the SDGs in Kenya from a human rights lens was illustrated when the HRA team and the UN Working Group on Census engaged in the preparation of the Kenya Population and Housing Census. Through this collaboration, the UNCT influenced the development and inclusion of questions – in particular on disability, persons with albinism, intersex people, indigenous peoples and stateless persons – which were subsequently factored into the census questionnaire. The HRA and her team provided technical support in all phases of the census undertaking, from preparation and design to piloting and monitoring of the field process.

In **Georgia**, the UNCT is working towards ensuring that all people– including children, minority groups, persons with disabilities, vulnerable women, migrants, internally displaced persons and persons in need of international protection - have increased access to justice in accordance with national strategies and international human rights standards.<sup>22</sup> In May 2019, the Office of the State Inspector was established in Georgia, following five years of advocacy efforts and technical support from the UN under the support from the HRA and the team before the executive and legislative branches in co-operation with the national human rights institution (NHRI) and NGOs. The Office of the State Inspector has been designated as the independent institution responsible for the investigation of serious human rights abuses allegedly committed

<sup>22</sup> 2016-2020 UN Partnership for Sustainable Development Georgia. Accessed 18 May 2020 at: <https://ims.undg.org/downloadFile/f65993dd6fc8497f784cf004b344bc0409e43a840e71f8ada6d9fd47f75c461>.

by law enforcement agencies and has also taken over responsibility for the functioning of personal data protection.

### MALAWI – SUPPORTING EARLY WARNING MECHANISMS IN THE ELECTORAL CONTEXT

In Malawi, widespread protests triggered by election-related issues descended into violent civil unrest from October 2019 as Malawians expressed their anger towards being marginalised and excluded from services and opportunities. The HRA worked with UN Agencies and Development Partners to develop a prevention strategy to address the most urgent gaps in human rights protection informed by a human rights-based analysis of the root causes of the unrest. Central to this analysis was the data in the UN Malawi Prevention Platform, an incident data collection platform developed jointly between the RCO, OHCHR, and UNDP. A key component of the prevention strategy supporting increased capacity of the Malawi Police Service to manage violent demonstrations and strengthening their internal standards and mechanisms to manage internal misconduct. The HRA collaborated with UNDP to deploy the UN Standing Police Capacity to provide urgent capacity building and design an ongoing programme of engagement with the police in accordance with the Prevention Strategy. In addition, the HRA examined avenues to build civil society capacity and diversity, as well as to address deeply entrenched tensions between religious and ethnic communities. Following serious allegations of sexual violence and rape committed by the Malawi Police Service, the HRA provided technical advice to the two independent inquiries into the matter. Her interventions focused both on addressing the individual allegations as well as identifying the structural deficiencies that allowed the incidents to occur to be addressed through advocacy and programming.

The UNCT in **Madagascar** supports the government to consolidate the rule of law, respect for human rights and the culture of accountability of institutions, including through to strengthening the national mechanism for the promotion and protection / redress of human rights.<sup>23</sup> Following 3 years of technical support from the HRA to strengthen the capacity of members and compliance with the Paris Principles, the Independent National Human Rights Commission (INHRC) was finally accredited with “A” status by Global Alliance of National

<sup>23</sup> UN Development Assistance Framework Madagascar, 2015-2019. Accessed 18 May 2020 at: [https://madagascar.un.org/sites/default/files/2019-11/UNDAF\\_2015-2019-web.pdf](https://madagascar.un.org/sites/default/files/2019-11/UNDAF_2015-2019-web.pdf).

Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) in March 2019. Technical support and guidance from the HRA enabled the INHRC to establish a database and a manual on the handling of complaints, which are now being systematically used by the Commission. Additionally, following the RC’s intensive advocacy supported by the HRA, the 2014 Law establishing the INHRC was amended designating the INHRC as National Preventive Mechanism under the Optional Protocol of the Convention Against Torture, which was ratified by Madagascar in 2017.

In **Serbia**, ensuring that people, especially vulnerable groups, have their human rights protected and have improved access to justice and security is crucial for achieving the SDGs<sup>24</sup>. In that regard, strengthening the independence, impartiality and quality of the judicial system is a focus for the UNCT. In 2019, the HRA successfully promoted the increased use of international human rights law and jurisprudence in court proceedings and decisions. Through support provided to the RC and in coordination with efforts led by OHCHR, UNICEF and UNHCR, the HRA worked in cooperation with the Judicial Academy and external experts to support the implementation of the first national curriculum for the application of international human rights law, including trainings for the judiciary on international human rights standards. The HRA also further enhanced an online database to support the direct application of international human rights law, including in relation to the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights, and to ensure that the database can be easily used by all levels of the judiciary on a daily basis. Four thematic manuals were also published on the rights of persons with disabilities, asylum/migration, the rights of the child and non-discrimination. These were distributed to courts across the country to support the application of international norms and standards in cases involving these populations.

### Advice on integration human rights into the humanitarian response and post-crisis recover under the direction of the RC/HC

HRAs deployed in countries with humanitarian situations and/or post-crisis recovery played an important role in supporting cross-pillar coherence and strengthened results of the UN teams on the ground through the integration of human rights standards and principles in humanitarian responses and post-crisis recovery under the direction of the RC/Humanitarian Coordinator. The HRAs also supported the UN teams to implement the Human Rights up Front framework and prevention agenda, including through provision of regular early warning and human rights-based analyses to inform coordinated and timely UN action to prevent atrocities and serious rights violations.

<sup>24</sup> Development Partnership Framework Serbia 2016-2020. Accessed 18 May 2020 at [https://serbia.un.org/sites/default/files/2019-08/DPF\\_ENG\\_30\\_May\\_2017\\_FINAL\\_SIGNED.pdf](https://serbia.un.org/sites/default/files/2019-08/DPF_ENG_30_May_2017_FINAL_SIGNED.pdf).

## HUMAN RIGHTS INTEGRATED INTO THE UN HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE IN BURKINA FASO

In 2019, the RC in Burkina Faso urgently requested human rights advisory capacity to support the UNCT and HCT in the context of a double crisis: a fast-evolving protection and humanitarian emergency and a security crisis. The HRA demonstrated the added value of human rights approach in a nexus and prevention environment, in particular, ensuring coherent UN system wide support to Government priorities to promote and protect human rights- through collaboration with UN Agencies, development and humanitarian partners. Human rights expertise in the UN team contributed to enhancing trust with all partners, strengthening protection beyond humanitarian response, engaging Civil Society Organizations in development and humanitarian responses, and maximizing the use of international human rights mechanisms



OCHA / Giles Clarke

to inform and strengthen analysis and actions on the ground. UNSDG-HRM support was sought in October 2019 to take over from the OHCHR rapid response deployment to ensure that human rights gains were not lost, and continued support throughout 2020. This effort also enhanced the in-situ support from the OHCHR Regional Office for West Africa in Dakar. Specific outputs from the HRA included: facilitating discussions jointly with UNDP, with HR Ministry and partners to approve a National Plan of Action for the implementation of recommendations of human rights mechanisms to better address the root causes of conflict and instability; delivery of regular Early Warning analyses on conflict related situations to enhance the UN's prevention capacity; engagement of human rights defenders with the Committee Against Torture; development of plans for establishment of a human rights protection network with the National Human Rights Commission; and support to the development of guidelines for a protection strategy.

In **Jordan**, the HRA contributed regularly to the work and discussions of the United Nations Protection Working Group and related structures coordinating the UN response to the refugee crises resulting from the armed conflict in Syria, bringing a **stronger human rights** focus and enhancing coherence between humanitarian and development operations. These contributions cover a range of human rights issues, including prevention of gender-based violence and the integration of the rights of persons with disabilities and older persons. The HRA participated in the negotiation, development and implementation of humanitarian support to the population of the Rukban camp on the border between Syria and Jordan, strengthening the human rights dimensions of the response. The HRA also facilitated the implementation of the recommendations emanating from a visit of the United Nations Victims' Rights Advocate, aimed at strengthening the United Nations prevention and response to sexual exploitation and abuse by providing victims with adequate protection, appropriate assistance, and recourse to justice in line with human rights standards and principles.

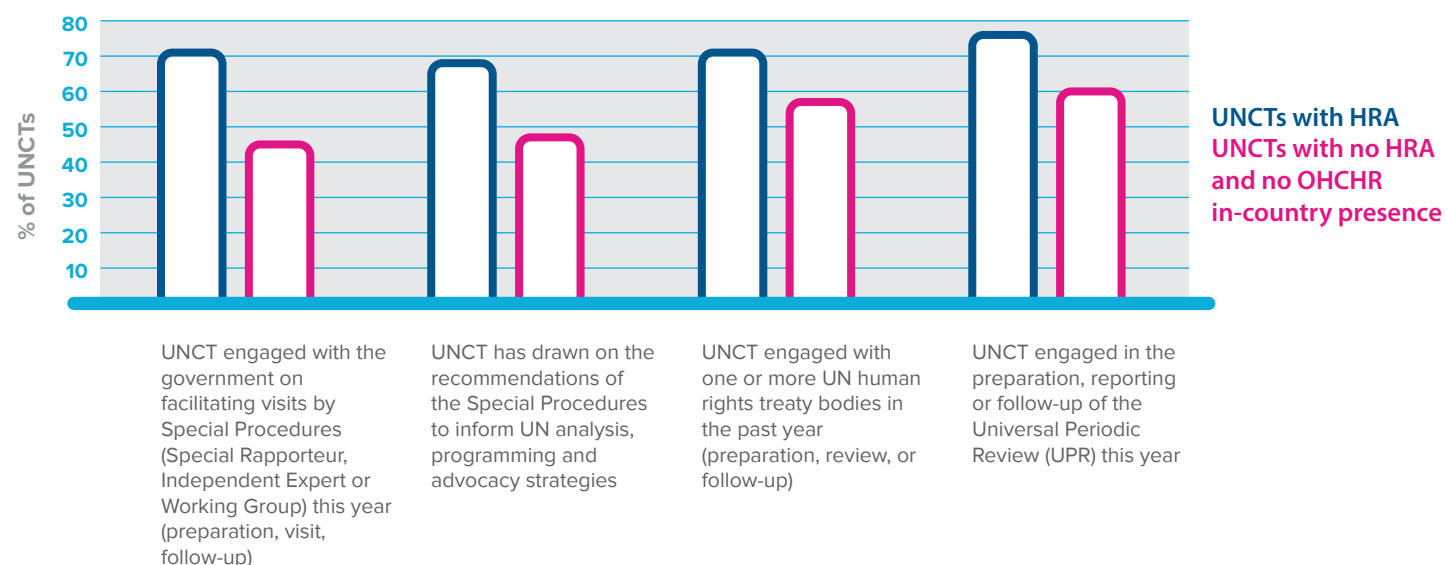
Engagement and cooperation with relevant United Nations human rights mechanisms was an important feature of the work in humanitarian action in **Bangladesh**, contributing to a better understanding in the country of the accountability work being undertaken by the UN system and strengthened application of the UN normative framework. The HRA along with OHCHR's Myanmar team continued to facilitate the engagement with the special procedures and international human rights and accountability mechanisms who visited the country, including the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar, and the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar.

### Support to the UN and national partners in their engagement with international human rights mechanisms and the use of the mechanisms' recommendations to inform national human rights and development plans

HRAs' expertise and skills enabled RCs and UNCTs to strengthen their engagement with human rights mechanisms and support national efforts to ensure integration of the work of these mechanisms in national processes that contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. HRAs' work also increased understanding and engagement of governments, civil society organisations and other partners in the work of the human rights mechanisms including UPR, treaty bodies and special procedures, and supported institutional and structural reforms to implement and monitor recommendations from human rights mechanisms.

Annual reporting by UNCTs in the DCO Information Management System illustrates the increased capacities of UNCTs with direct support from an HRA or OHCHR in-country presence to use these mechanisms to strengthen and inform country efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda.

### STRONGER ENGAGEMENT WITH HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS BY UNCTs WITH HRAs IN 2019



Data drawn from 2019 UNCT reporting in DCO Information Management System (IMS) reporting by 131 UNCTs on actions in 2019

In **Timor Leste**, the UNCT is supporting State institutions to be more responsive, inclusive, accountable and decentralized for improved service delivery and realization of rights, particularly of the most excluded groups.<sup>25</sup> Timor-Leste's first report under the Voluntary National Review (VNR) on the implementation of the SDGs for the High-level Political Forum identifies five priority steps to advance the implementation of the SDGs, one of which is to consider piloting integrated reporting to the various bodies of the UN, including on the human rights treaties, to strengthen follow up on recommendations of human rights mechanisms and ensure maximum impact of reporting efforts. This was achieved through technical assistance in the development of the report provided by the UN with the support of the HRA, which raised the Government's awareness of the benefits of the use of human rights mechanisms to contribute to SDG implementation and monitoring. The Timor Leste VNR report also demonstrates good practice in the use of human rights standards and recommendations in the assessment of the country's progress and gaps towards the SDGs. For example, the VNR report cites the recommendations on LGBTI rights issued through the 2016 UPR and accepted by Timor-Leste, paving the way for increased efforts and accountability at the national level to improve the human rights situation of LGBTI populations in the context of efforts towards sustainable development.

<sup>25</sup> UN Development Assistance Framework for the Democratic Republic of Timor Leste 2015-2019. Accessed 18 May 2020 at: <https://ims.undg.org/downloadFile/f6d62a75b4341d9151d01f0de15cf45a02629c85ea4ce7a4db4bbdbe674d6c4d>.

Supporting **Mongolia's** democratic institutions to deliver services with mutual accountability and greater transparency, leading to a more inclusive society where human rights are promoted, protected and realized is a priority for the UNCT.<sup>26</sup> Through technical advice and coordination, the HRA enhanced national efforts for the implementation of a number of the recommendations received by the State during the second cycle of the UPR, including the establishment of a National Preventive Mechanism for torture prevention (NPM) under the Optional Protocol of the CAT; the adoption of a national action plan on business and human rights; a legal framework to ensure protection of Human Rights Defenders; the setting-up of a national recommendations tracking database; and efforts towards improving the situation of the LGBTI population. With the support from the HRA in collaboration with the Government and the National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia, national stakeholders were convened to facilitate discussion on the need for legal protection of human rights defenders and the preparation of the Human Rights Defender's Bill. The HRA facilitated the engagement of the Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders, who met with decision-makers and provided expert advice on aligning the draft Human Rights Defender's Bill with relevant international human rights standards. The consultation encouraged the Government Cabinet to submit the Bill to the Mongolian Parliament for its adoption into law.

In **Zimbabwe**, the UNCT is working to strengthen key institutions and the legal framework to ensure gender equality and women's rights, and to empower women and girls to effectively participate in social, economic and political spheres.<sup>27</sup> As part of the ongoing technical support to the UNCT and national partners on engaging with human rights mechanisms, the HRA collaborated with UN Women and the UNDAF Gender Results Group to strengthen the engagement of the Zimbabwe Gender Commission, CSOs and the UNCT in the CEDAW reporting process. Following multi-stakeholder training sessions, the Zimbabwe Gender Commission (an independent institution with a constitutional mandate on monitoring gender equality in the country) made a first-ever submission to CEDAW, as did the Zimbabwe Women Lawyers' Association and the Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe (with a membership of 116 organizations). The HRA also provided technical support towards the briefing made by UN Women on behalf of the UNCT at the 75th Pre-Sessional Working Group of CEDAW, and to efforts led by UNDP to provide technical advice to the revision of the National Plan of Action for the implementation of the UPR recommendations and advocating for an inclusive approach to UPR implementation and reporting.

<sup>26</sup> UN Development Assistance Framework Mongolia 2017-2021. Accessed 18 May 2020 at: <https://ims.undg.org/downloadFile/d63ea3089dcceadc3e733c4a3ed571d995545af95faccca6907d91d0bfc8c9da>.

<sup>27</sup> Zimbabwe United Nations Development Framework 2015-2020. Accessed 18 May 2020 at: <https://ims.undg.org/downloadFile/8c21c9a9bb231f37c73110a1e9ffa56ebc150b2336774dd65d4bd85b9c27affe>.

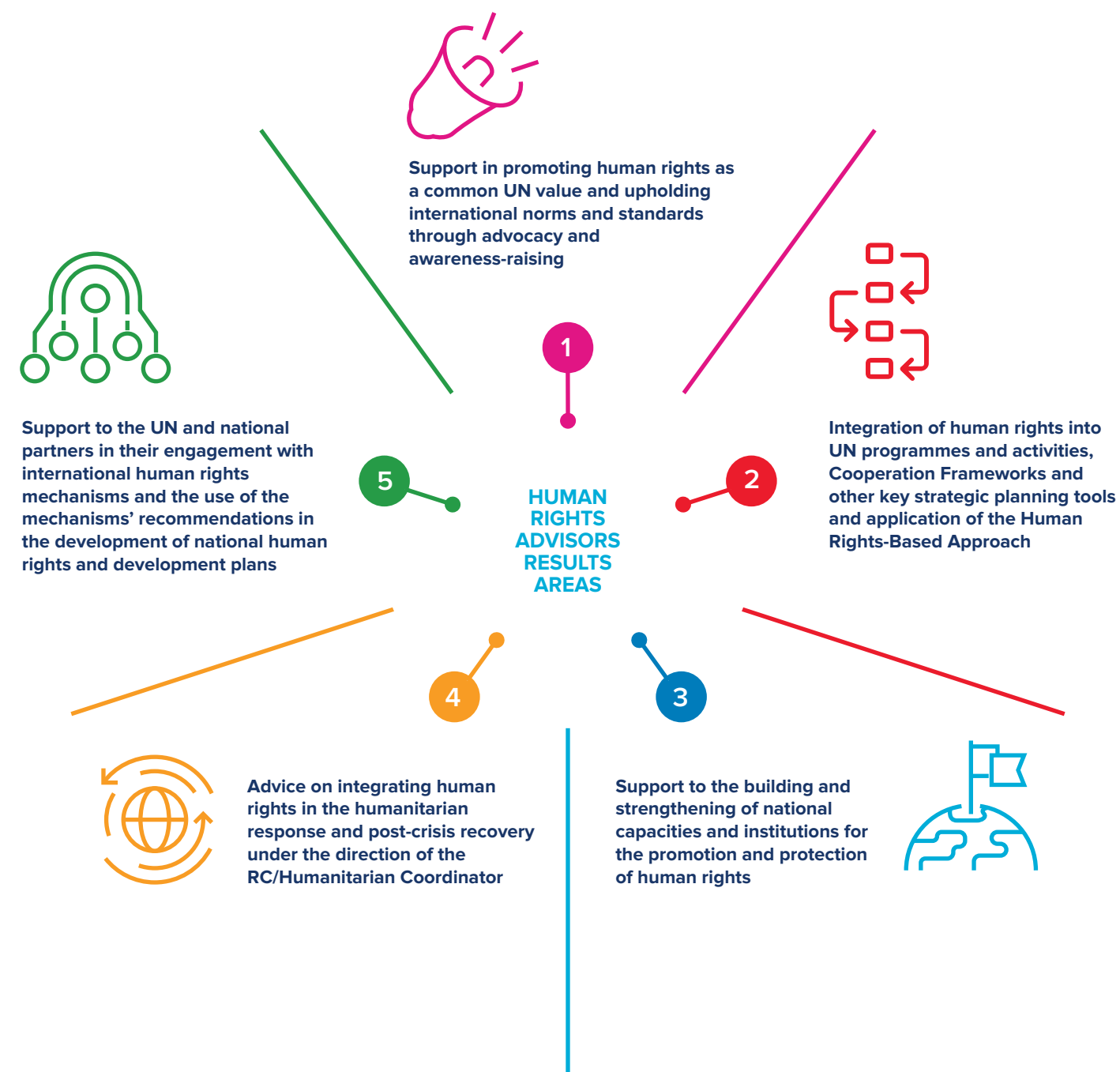
## SUPPORTING PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CRPD IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

Persons with disabilities experience very limited access to services and opportunities in The Republic of North Macedonia, despite ratification of the CRPD in 2011. The UNCT provides support to the National Coordination Body for the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD), in part to ensure it has the necessary resources and skills to effectively perform its duties.<sup>28</sup> The HRA under the leadership of the RC and together with UNDP and UNICEF contributed to the State's capacity to implement the CRPD through assistance to the National Coordination Body for the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (NKT CRPD). The HRA provided advice on practical aspects of coordination, enabling the NKT CRPD to adopt good practices based on international models and experiences. Technical guidance provided to NKT CRPD Secretariat and its members enhanced their understanding of the Convention, while the participatory and transparent working methods adopted strongly contributed to the NKT CRPD's achievements. In 2019, the NKT CRPD undertook several initiatives that had been recommended during the initial CRPD Review of North Macedonia, in August 2018. For example it pushed forward the application of the assessment conducted by the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health in order to improve data on the functioning and disability of individuals at both national and regional levels and took steps to amend legislation on construction with a view to upgrading the national physical accessibility standards and strengthening the oversight of their application.

In **Argentina**, the HRA strengthened the capacity of State institutions to monitor and report on the implementation of human rights recommendations and link them with the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, contributing to the realization of both agendas in an integrated and mutually reinforcing manner. Capacity building initiatives included training for provincial members of the Human Rights Federal Council and provincial SDG focal points on how to recognize the fundamental principles of social and economic rights through the application of the OHCHR methodology for human rights indicators to their mandates, and on integrating UPR recommendations into local public policies. Following training on follow up to UPR recommendations, the national Ombudsperson's office (NHRI) commenced development of a list of indicators for monitoring the UPR recommendations relating to the rights to housing, health and education. With support from the HRA, the UNCT also collaborated with the National Council of Social Policies Coordination - in charge of the 2030 Agenda – to conduct diagnostic studies on the rights of indigenous peoples, rights of older persons and gender in the context

<sup>28</sup> Partnership for Sustainable Development UN Strategy 2016 2020. Accessed 18 May 2020 at: <https://ims.undg.org/downloadFile/5de697525c0c50600f49dbab56cf2d804db61448cb905cefab9774260222d7c8>.

of SDG implementation. These studies were an important tool for leaders and policy makers to accelerate SDGs considering these vulnerable groups in the upcoming 2020 strategic SDG and human rights programming.



## HRA DEPLOYMENTS: A KEY RESOURCE FOR RCs AND UNCTs IN THE FUTURE

UN RCs and UNCTs continue to stress the enormous value of HRA deployments in supporting the repositioning under the UN development system reforms and improving support to States

and partners in achieving the SDGs. We are at a critical juncture to build on the momentum achieved through these efforts by scaling-up the human rights support to RCs and UNCTs at the policy level and through advisory capacity in the field. In the context of the UNDS reforms and the Decade of Action, the UNSDG is working towards the continued expansion of HRA deployments, and further strengthening the substantive and management support elements for the programme. These efforts are complemented by the ongoing work of the Human Rights Task Team to ensure that key policies, tools and guidance support the full integration of human rights into development work.

With the UN development system supporting countries to respond to a development emergency of unprecedented proportions, the UNSDG-HRM Fund is a critical resource for ensuring that UNCTs are able to access the support that they need to apply the HRBA to all these efforts, including through the scale up of HRAs, who have already proven to be extremely valuable resources to RCs/UNCTs in responding to the many human rights dimensions of COVID-19.

## DEFINITIONS

### ALLOCATION

Amount approved by the Steering Committee for a project/programme.

### APPROVED PROJECT/PROGRAMME

A project/programme including budget, etc., that is approved by the Steering Committee for fund allocation purposes.

### CONTRIBUTOR COMMITMENT

Amount(s) committed by a donor to a Fund in a signed Standard Administrative Arrangement with the UNDP Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTF Office), in its capacity as the Administrative Agent. A commitment may be paid or pending payment.

### CONTRIBUTOR DEPOSIT

Cash deposit received by the MPTF Office for the Fund from a contributor in accordance with a signed Standard Administrative Arrangement.

### DELIVERY RATE

The percentage of funds that have been utilized, calculated by comparing expenditures reported by a Participating Organization against the 'net funded amount'.

### INDIRECT SUPPORT COSTS

A general cost that cannot be directly related to any particular programme or activity of the Participating Organizations. UNDG policy establishes a fixed indirect cost rate of 7% of programmable costs.

### NET FUNDED AMOUNT

Amount transferred to a Participating Organization less any refunds transferred back to the MPTF Office by a Participating Organization.

### PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION

A UN Organization or other inter-governmental Organization that is an implementing partner in a Fund, as represented by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the MPTF Office for a particular Fund.

### PROJECT EXPENDITURE

The sum of expenses and/or expenditure reported by all Participating Organizations for a Fund irrespective of which basis of accounting each Participating Organization follows for donor reporting.

### PROJECT FINANCIAL CLOSURE

A project or programme is considered financially closed when all financial obligations of an operationally completed project or programme have been settled, and no further financial charges may be incurred.

### PROJECT OPERATIONAL CLOSURE

A project or programme is considered operationally closed when all programmatic activities for which Participating Organization(s) received funding have been completed.

### PROJECT START DATE

Date of transfer of first instalment from the MPTF Office to the Participating Organization.

### TOTAL APPROVED BUDGET

This represents the cumulative amount of allocations approved by the Steering Committee.

### US DOLLAR AMOUNT

The financial data in the report is recorded in US Dollars and due to rounding off of numbers, the totals may not add up.

## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<b>CAT</b>	United Nations Convention Against Torture
<b>CEB</b>	The United Nations System Chief Executive Board for Coordination
<b>CCA</b>	Common Country Analysis
<b>DCO</b>	Development Coordination Office
<b>HRA</b>	Human Rights Adviser
<b>HRBA</b>	Human Rights-Based Approach
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>MDTF</b>	Multi-Donor Trust Fund
<b>MOU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>MPTF OFFICE</b>	Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office UNDP
<b>OHCHR</b>	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
<b>RC</b>	Resident Coordinator
<b>QCPR</b>	Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNCT</b>	United Nations Country Team
<b>UNDAF</b>	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
<b>UNDG</b>	United Nations Development Group
<b>UNDS</b>	United Nations Development System
<b>UNDOCO</b>	United Nations Development Operations Coordination Office
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNEP</b>	United Nations Environment Programme
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UNSDG</b>	United Nations Sustainable Development Group
<b>UNSSC</b>	United Nations System Staff Colleague
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization



UNITED NATIONS  
SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
GROUP  
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