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# WORKING TOGETHER ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE TIME OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

2020 Consolidated Annual Progress Report of the UNSDG Human Rights Mainstreaming Fund



# Report of the Administrative Agent of the UNSDG Human Rights Mainstreaming Multi-Donor Trust Fund (UNSDG-HRM)

1 January 2020 – 31 December 2020

**Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office**  
Bureau of Management Services  
United Nations Development Programme GATEWAY:  
<http://mptf.undp.org>

This annual report on the activities implemented under the United Nations Sustainable Development Group Human Rights Mainstreaming Fund (the UNSDG-HRM Fund) 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 2020. 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.

## PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS



Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights



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



United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

## CONTRIBUTORS



DENMARK, Government of



FINLAND, Government of



GERMANY, Government of



IRISH AID



NORWAY, Government of



SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2020 was a tragic and difficult year for people across the world. The COVID-19 pandemic had a devastating impact on individuals and families, undermined progress across the globe in implementing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, reversed socio-economic gains, magnified pre-existing forms of discrimination and inequalities, and jeopardized the application of the principle of leaving no one behind. COVID-19 brought into stark relief the urgency of human rights for sustainable development.

The United Nations (UN) Secretary-General emphasized at the outset of the pandemic the fundamental importance for the UN of putting human rights at the centre of all its work. This was outlined in the Secretary-General's [Policy Brief on Human Rights and COVID-19 – We Are All in This Together](#),

and reinforced by numerous Policy Briefs on particular populations in vulnerable situations, including women and persons with disabilities. [The UN Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID 19](#) further stressed that the integration of international norms and standards in the design and implementation of socio-economic responses is critical to ensuring that all responses to COVID-19 and its impacts are implemented with a sense of humanity and the protection of human rights and dignity of all people, without discrimination.

The investments of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group Human Rights Mainstreaming Multi-Donor Trust Fund (UNSDG-HRM Fund) proved to be of significant value in supporting Resident Coordinators (RCs) and United Nations country

teams (UNCTs) to integrate human rights into the UN's COVID-19 response and to provide to Member States and other stakeholders timely support to “ensure that all human rights are respected, protected and fulfilled while combating the pandemic and that their responses to the COVID-19 pandemic respect and are in full compliance with their obligations under international law” (GA/RES/74/306). Investments of the UNSDG-HRM Fund since 2011 to strengthen system-wide, norms-based policies and guidance, and structures and capacities to support RC leadership and joined-up action at country level that puts people as rights holders as the centre of development work helped prepare countries and the UN development system (UNDS) to respond to a simultaneous humanitarian, health and human rights crisis. Support to the integration and application of the human rights-based approach (HRBA) and more recently to the elaboration of the methodology for operationalizing the principle of leaving no one behind (LNOB), and the expanded human rights advisory capacities available to RCs and UNCTs, enabled the UNDS to design and implement responses that focused attention on the most vulnerable groups and applied a human rights lens in identifying some of the structural issues that need to be addressed as part of building forward better.

In 2020, the UNSDG-HRM Fund enabled expanded access to advisory capacity for RCs and UNCTs through the deployment of Human Rights Advisers (HRAs). HRAs in all 43 countries of deployment, working under the leadership of RCs and together with UNCTs, supported national efforts addressing the human rights dimensions of the COVID-19 crisis and the responses from the outset, focusing on the marginalized and vulnerable in society. This included advice to RCs and UNCTs on advocacy for human rights-based COVID-19 responses, and the integration of human rights, LNOB and gender equality and women's empowerment into humanitarian and socio-economic impact analyses and response plans. The Surge Initiative also expanded UNCTs' access to specialized human rights expertise and advice, focusing especially on economic and social rights. This proved particularly timely given the huge economic impacts of the pandemic and the opportunities

presented to put in place policy frameworks that are anchored in human rights to create more equitable and resilient communities. The piloting of the Operational Guide on LNOB for UNCTs (LNOB Guide) also directly contributed to stronger UNCT support to national partners for inclusive COVID-19 response. Non-pilot countries also used the LNOB Guide to inform the design of COVID-19 impact assessments and responses, as well as ongoing efforts to develop joint programmes, CCAs and UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (Cooperation Frameworks).

The Participating UN Organizations of the UNSDG-HRM Fund adapted, re-focused and, where necessary, re-designed interventions to respond to the dramatically changed environment. The UNSDG-HRM Fund's direct contributions towards the COVID-19 response are evident in the achievements described in this report, which demonstrate the ability of the UNDS to provide human rights-based development support to governments and other stakeholders in an increasingly unstable world.

In the context of the Decade of Action to deliver the 2030 Agenda and the UNDS repositioning, the achievements of the UNSDG-HRM Fund to strengthen the policies, guidance and support structures available to RCs and UNCTs to integrate human rights and the principle of leaving no one behind in their work were a vital contribution towards delivering on Member States' expectations for support in this area. Indeed, in the resolution on the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review in late 2020, Member States recognized the United Nations' contribution to the promotion of all human rights for sustainable development. They further “called upon all entities of the United Nations development system, in accordance with their respective mandates, to assist Governments upon their request and in consultation with them, in their efforts to respect and fulfil their human rights obligations and commitments under international law, as a critical tool to operationalize the pledge to leave no one behind” (A/RES/75/233). The UNSDG-HRM Fund will be a valuable source of support for comprehensive and systematic inter-agency efforts to respond to this request from Member States.

The past investments and achievements of the UNSDG-HRM Fund have also provided a strong foundation for the UNDS to be ready to take forward relevant actions under the UN Secretary General's 2020 [Call to Action on Human Rights](#) (Call to Action), building on results at policy and operational level to support countries to implement the 2030 Agenda in accordance with international law. Moreover, many activities implemented with support of the UNSDG-HRM Fund in 2020 contributed to implementing the vision of the Call to Action. The three areas of the Call to Action where the UNSDG-HRM Fund activities have been the most relevant are: Rights at the core of sustainable development (1); Rights in times of crisis (2); and Public participation and civic space (4). At the country level, HRAs' support to and collaboration with UNCTs and (where relevant) Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs) also contributed to implement other areas of the Call to Action, including gender equality and the rights of women, and the rights of future generations, especially climate justice.

However, there were also some indications in 2020 that the integration of human rights in development work faces challenges, and that in certain

circumstances there is a risk that principles such as a human rights-based approach are not fully applied. For example, the review of the *Human Rights Review of UNCT COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response Plans* conducted by the UNDSG Task Team on LNOB and Human Rights (Human Rights Task Team) found that while 70 per cent of the socio-economic response plans developed by October 2020 included a human rights analysis, evidence of the human rights-based approach across each of the five pillars of UN action was present in only 32 per cent of the response plans. These results indicate that while the provision of guidance and related resources at global level are important, additional support is essential to ensure full translation of the LNOB principle and HRBA on the ground. Also, in recent years there has been a downward trend in some key HRBA activities at country level, such as HRBA trainings for UNCTs. These mixed indicators, showing progress in some areas and regression in others, require further reflection and attention.

Support to RCs and UNCTs to put people and rights at the centre of our work is necessary now more than ever. The opportunity to build forward to a



more equal and sustainable world and implement a New Social Contract can only be realized through human rights. The UNSDG-HRM Fund is strategically well-positioned to support UNSDG initiatives to address capacity and training needs going forward, particularly under the multi-year results framework that is being developed in 2021.

The UNSDG-HRM Fund Steering Committee also commissioned the first independent evaluation of the UNSDG-HRM Fund in 2020<sup>1</sup>. The evaluation sought to enhance understanding of the UNSDG-HRM Fund's achievements towards institutionalizing the mainstreaming of human rights into UN operational activities for development since it was established in 2011, and to provide recommendations to strengthen the Fund's impact going forward, particularly in the context of the UNDS repositioning and other changes in the operating environment. Under the guidance of a Reference Group comprising several UN entities and donors, the evaluation team collected and analysed information from key stakeholders including the Steering Committee members, donors, Human Rights Task Team members as well as RCs, HRAs and other country level partners including governments and civil society organizations (CSO). The key recommendations of the evaluation resonate with the overall direction of the UNSDG-HRM Fund, as reflected in the decisions of the Steering Committee taken prior to the completion of the evaluation. The Steering Committee will implement its Management Response through an ambitious workplan, starting with an intensive strategic planning phase in April 2021. These planning processes will provide the opportunity for the Steering Committee to consider how to address outstanding needs and further align the work of the UNSDG-HRM Fund with recent mandates and opportunities including the 2020 QCPR resolution and the Call to Action. The feedback from RCs and HRAs collected through the evaluation, and analysis of other indicators of progress and gaps will provide valuable reflection points for the UNSDG-HRM Fund's Steering Committee and partners for shaping the future priorities of the Fund.

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## PROGRESS HIGHLIGHTS

The UNSDG-HRM Fund was a critical resource to the UNSDG in 2020, supporting the UNDS coordinated response to the COVID-19 crisis as well as 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 RCs and UNCTs have access to the human rights capacities they need, and are supported by the requisite policies, tools and guidance to put people at the centre of the COVID-19 response. In 2020, the activities supported by the UNSDG-HRM Fund also focused on supporting UNCTs to apply the guiding principles of human rights, LNOB and gender equality and women's empowerment in the development of new Cooperation Frameworks.

Through strategic use of the UNSDG-HRM Fund resources and entities' own contributions to Fund-supported initiatives, the UNSDG delivered the following key results in 2020:

- 1. Policy Coherence - human rights reflected in the UNDS reform implementation** – for example, integrating human rights and LNOB in the guidance and messaging for UNCTs on COVID-19 socio-economic responses, including through the development of the Checklist for a Human Rights Based Approach to Socio-Economic Country Responses to COVID-19 and its operationalization through support provided by the Surge Initiative, the piloting and wide dissemination of the UNSDG Operational Guide on LNOB for UNCTs (LNOB Guide), the revision of the UNSDG Common Learning Package on HRBA to update and integrate the programming principles of LNOB and gender equality and women's empowerment, and the conceptualization of an e-learning course.

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<sup>1</sup> The full evaluation report and Steering Committee Management Response are available at: <http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/HRM00>

2. **Strengthened RC and UNCT capacities to lead on human rights at the country level** – ongoing efforts to facilitate RC exchange on human rights leadership at the country level (implemented without direct contribution from the UNSDG-HRM Fund in 2020), supported by the human rights technical and strategic advice of HRAs (a key element of the RC and UNCT leadership strategy) and further bolstered through additional remote expertise on economic and social rights by the Surge Initiative.
3. **Human rights more systematically promoted and integrated into UNCT support to 2030 Agenda through deployment of dedicated, in-country human rights capacity in Resident Coordinator Offices** – Human Rights Advisers – deployed in 43 countries by the end of 2020 – enabled 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.
4. **The operationalization of economic and social rights through a more systematic integration of these rights into development analysis, strategies and planning instruments** – including through the support of the Surge Initiative for expanded advisory support to RCs and UNCTs and seed funding for catalytic activities.

5. **Coherent and strategic engagement with UN human rights mechanisms** – including through contributions to UN policy guidance, generation of analytics on UNCT engagement with the mechanisms and the provision of country-specific information to RCs and UNCTs on opportunities to engage with human rights mechanisms.

There were also several important operational achievements within the UNSDG-HRM Fund in 2020. The Steering Committee stepped up resource mobilization efforts for transitional funding needs in 2021 including reaching out to potential new donors. Simultaneously, the Steering Committee commissioned the independent evaluation of the UNSDG-HRM Fund, which was completed in January 2021.

As of 31 December 2020, the cumulative amount transferred to Participating UN Organizations from the UNSDG-HRM Fund was US\$ 28,276,759 with a balance of US\$ 2,738,373 remaining in the UNSDG-HRM Fund account (the majority of which was received in late 2020) for 2021 programming. Notwithstanding the many operational challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the UNSDG-HRM Fund and its support structures demonstrated adaptability during the year to maximise delivery and results. While the overall delivery rate for approved proposals in 2020 was 68%, this rate was impacted by approval and transfer in late 2020 of funding for HRA salaries in 2021.





## SDG ACHIEVEMENTS

*“When we take a human rights-based approach to development, the outcomes are more sustainable, powerful and effective. This is why human rights permeate the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals [SDGs] are underpinned by economic, civil, cultural, political and social rights, as well as the right to development.”*

**The Highest Aspiration:  
A Call to Action for Human Rights, UN 2020**

The UNSDG-HRM Fund supports the inter-agency efforts of the UNSDG to integrate human rights and the application of the HRBA in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and across all SDGs.<sup>2</sup> COVID-19 has further underscored the urgency of human rights to sustainable development, and of the importance for the UN of putting human rights at the centre of all its work – as outlined in the Secretary-General’s [Policy Brief on Human Rights and COVID-19 – We Are All in This Together](#).

Through relatively modest funds provided to its work by the UNSDG-HRM Fund and the collaborative engagement of UNSDG entities, the Human Rights

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

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>3</sup>

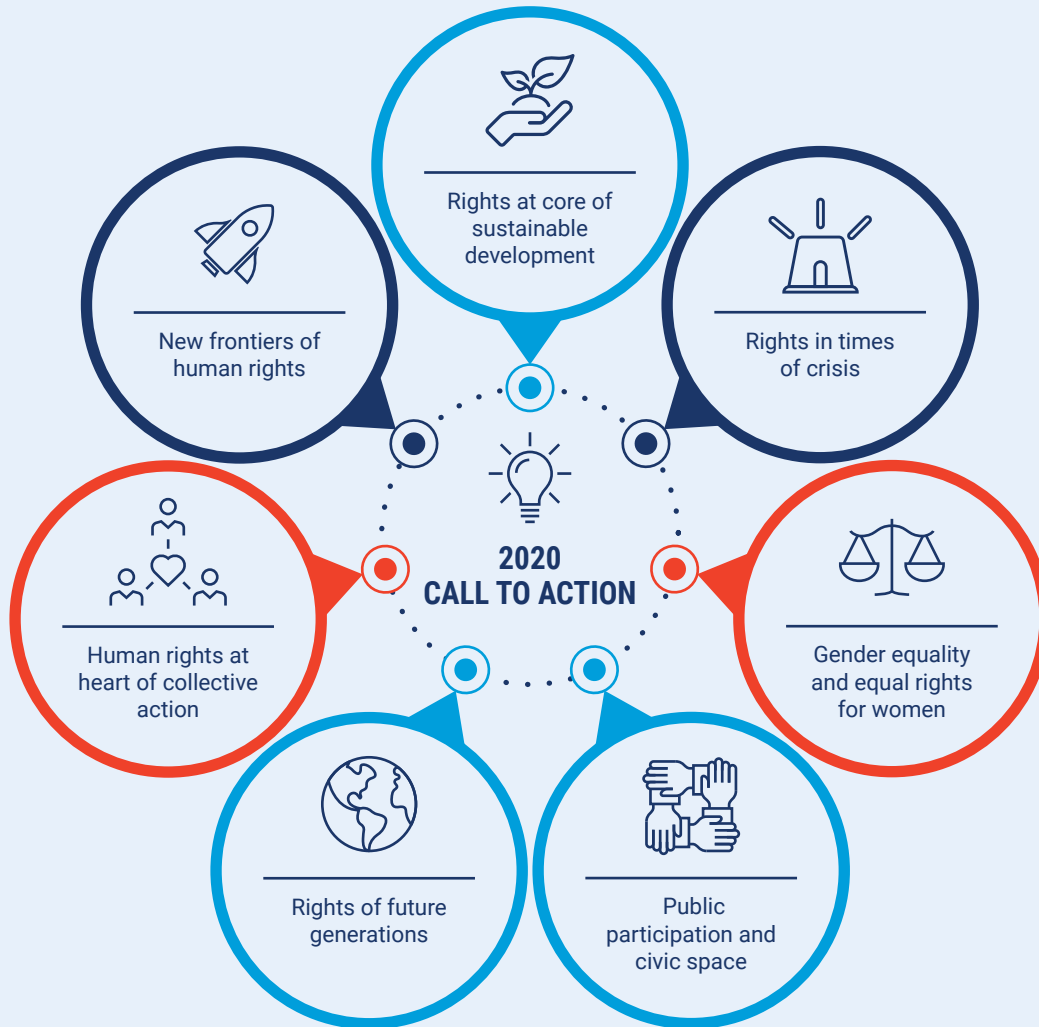
These investments have helped prepare countries and the UNDS for the emerging local, national and megatrends that are threatening hard-won human rights and development gains. In the context of the COVID-19 crisis, previous results in building capacities in UNCTs and national partners to address inequalities and discrimination through a human rights-based approach have proven to be of significant value.



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<sup>3</sup> The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, para 18.

## 2020 CALL TO ACTION



The interventions supported through the UNSDG-HRM Fund have taken on even greater importance in the context of the UNDS repositioning. 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 a critical source of funding to the UNSDG's inter-agency initiatives 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 RCs who stand up for international norms and standards and the values of the UN Charter.

The support of the UNSDG-HRM Fund is also critical in the context of the implementation of the Call to Action, launched by the Secretary-General in February 2020. The Call to Action seeks transformative change and emphasizes that human rights underpins the work of the UN across the 3 pillars of development, peace and security, and human rights. It includes a specific focus area on putting human rights at the core of sustainable development, for which support to RCs/HCs and UNCTs will be essential. Our ultimate goal is concrete impact and change – in the short, medium and longer term – for people. We are driven by the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and are building on the key milestones over the past decades.

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 provide an indication of the concerted and collective efforts across the UN system in ensuring human rights are at the core of our work at all levels. For example, with reference to the 7 areas of the Call to Action:

### Rights at the core of sustainable development

- HRA deployments, which provide in-country advisory capacity to RCs, UNCTs and Member States to ensure that human rights principles inform the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including through advice on integration of human rights, gender equality and LNOB in UN analysis, programming and advocacy, and strengthening strategic engagement with human rights mechanisms.
- Knowledge products supported by the UNSDG-HRM Fund, including on the HRBA and operationalization of LNOB, have informed the development of UN guidance and tools on COVID-19 socio-economic response, Common Country Analyses (CCAs) and Cooperation Frameworks, which have been rolled out with the full engagement of the UNSDG shaping the work of UNCTs together with partners.
- Provision of specialized expertise at the regional and national level to advise UNCTs on reinforcing economic, social and other rights outcomes through the development and implementation of UN COVID-19 socio-economic impact assessments and response plans and new CCAs and Cooperation Frameworks. In 2020, this included support to over 100 UNCTs as well as contributions to the *Human Rights Review of UNCT COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response Plans* which will inform strengthened support to UNCTs in integrating the HRBA in COVID-19 response and recovery in 2021.
- Reinforcing partnerships between economists in the Resident Coordinator Offices and human

rights specialists at the country level in the context of COVID-19 socio-economic responses and recovery.

- A project launched in early 2021 under the leadership of OHCHR and UNDP is expected to further enhance RC and UNCT strategic engagement with the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and other human rights mechanisms (global and regional) and with National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow-up (NMRFs) and National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) to achieve the SDGs.

### Rights in times of crisis

- HRA deployments, which are an invaluable resource for RCs and UNCTs in times of crisis, including through their contributions to early warning, human rights and prevention analysis and strategic planning, and rights-based advocacy. In humanitarian contexts, HRAs provide valuable support to RC/HCs and country teams in the integration of human rights in humanitarian responses.
- Financial support for the deployment of light teams, while not feasible in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, remains part of the UNSDG-HRM Fund's workplan for 2021, thus enabling UN readiness to provide this additional support to countries when needed.

### Public participation and Civic Space

- HRAs' expertise has enabled RCs and UNCTs to advocate and programme more effectively on the rights to freedoms of opinion and expression, assembly and association. HRAs have also supported RCs and UNCTs in the development of partnerships with CSOs, including through creation of inclusive decision-making mechanisms and strengthening their capacity to engage effectively on rights issues and with the human rights mechanisms.

Examples of the support provided by HRAs which are relevant to specific thematic areas of the Call to Action can be found in the Achievements section of this report.

*“We are strengthening United Nations leadership on human rights on the ground and have already seen a concrete impact with our country teams engaging with Governments and societies on a wide range of human rights issues – and with success. For instance, Resident Coordinators in a number of countries have established dialogues to bring in the voices and views of civil society in discussions over new measures that might risk civic space and create undue burdens on non-governmental organizations.”*

**United Nations Secretary-General,  
General Assembly Briefing on the Call to Action  
for Human Rights, February 2021**

In 2020, Member States conducted the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review of UN system operational activities (QCPR). The new QCPR resolution (A/RES/75/233) will guide the work of the UNDS in 2021-2024. Under the 2012 and 2016 QCPR resolutions, the UNDS demonstrated commitment and capacity to provide the support requested by Member States on normative and operational coherence. With the support of the UNSDG-HRM Fund, amongst others, this included stronger integration of human rights and the HRBA in development policies and guidance, stronger capacities at the country level to leverage the human rights framework for progress on development issues, and increased capacity to operationalize the principles of the HRBA, LNOB and gender equality and women’s empowerment in development work through integrated approaches. Recognizing these results, and reflecting on the need for increased support to countries to put people and human rights at the centre of development, the 2020 QCPR, for this first time in this resolution, explicitly calls upon the UNDS to assist Governments in this area.

## **QUADRENNIAL COMPREHENSIVE POLICY REVIEW (QCPR) FOR 2021-2024**

27. Calls upon the entities of the United Nations development system, in the context of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic: (a) To achieve and work towards building back better and a sustainable inclusive and resilient recovery which is people-centred, gender-sensitive and respects human rights, has a particular focus on the poorest, most vulnerable and those furthest behind and protects the planet, achieves prosperity and universal health coverage by 2030;...
28. Recognizes the United Nations contribution to the promotion of all human rights for sustainable development, calls upon all entities of the United Nations development system, in accordance with their respective mandates, to assist Governments upon their request and in consultation with them, in their efforts to respect and fulfil their human rights obligations and commitments under international law, as a critical tool to operationalize the pledge to leave no one behind;

In 2021, the UNSDG-HRM Fund will be reviewing its future plans and the needs of RCs and UNCTs to deliver on these new mandates and priorities. With the continued partnership of Member States and in particular the contributors to the UNSDG-HRM Fund, the Fund will provide support for critical and catalytic initiatives to enable the UNDS to maximise the effective use of human rights in development.

## KEY STRATEGIC PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES OF THE UNSDG-HRM FUND

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



## ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE UNSDG-HRM FUND

*“As a former Resident Coordinator ... it becomes evident quite quickly that you need to tackle head on issues of equity and vulnerability; not only through improving the access to basic essential social services, economic opportunities and social protection of the disadvantaged, effectively dismantling the structures maintaining the discrimination and exclusion barriers; but also by empowering the discriminated to claim their rights, and increasing accountability and effective democratic governance by those in power.”*

Robert Piper, Assistant Secretary-General for Development Coordination, 51<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Board of the Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights (VFTC), 2020

The UNSDG-HRM Fund supported the UNSDG to deliver inspiring results in 2020 in integrating human rights into global policies and guidance, and strengthening strategic, joined-up actions by UNCTs to support Member States, NHRIs and key stakeholders in progressing towards the 2030 Agenda, addressing the urgent human rights issues created, revealed or exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and contributing to the priority areas outlined in the Call to Action.

The Steering Committee strategically managed the resources of the UNSDG-HRM Fund to maximize the impact and stability of planned initiatives, and where necessary re-focusing or re-designing these initiatives to enable delivery in a radically changed operating environment and ensure responsiveness to countries' human rights and development needs in the context of the pandemic. The independent evaluation of the UNSDG-HRM Fund was also an important investment by the Steering Committee and partners in the future sustainability and impact of the Fund.

## 1. POLICY COHERENCE - HUMAN RIGHTS REFLECTED IN THE UNDS REFORM IMPLEMENTATION AND COVID-19 RESPONSE

In 2020, with the support of the UNSDG-HRM Fund, the UNSDG and the Human Rights Task Team continued to support the RCs and UNCTs in integrating human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment and the principle of leaving no one behind in analysis, programming and advocacy at the country, regional and global levels.

The piloting of the interim draft of the [UNSDG Operational Guide on Leaving No One Behind for UNCTs](#) (LNOB Guide) continued in Nepal and Cameroon in 2020 (Tunisia completed its pilot in 2019). The LNOB Guide contributes to development system coherence and advocacy for application of the guiding principles of HRBA, LNOB and gender equality and women's empowerment, 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 utility of the LNOB Guide has been affirmed by the pilot countries and

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



At the intersection of factors, people face multiple, reinforcing sources of deprivation and inequalities, making them more likely to be left behind



#### DISCRIMINATION:

**on the basis of assumed or ascribed identity or status**  
Consider: SDG outcomes & opportunities by sex, age, disability & social groups (as specified in the 2030 Agenda); evidence and recommendations from International human rights mechanisms, National Human Rights Institutions



#### GEOGRAPHY:

**isolation, risk or exclusion due to location; includes environmental degradation, transport, technology**  
Consider: SDG outcomes & opportunities broken down by sub-national locality; inequities in mobility related to transport & internet access



#### VULNERABILITY TO SHOCKS:

**includes conflict, climate, environmental**  
Consider: places or populations that endure more frequent and/or severe setbacks due to natural or environmental disasters, violence, crime or conflict, economic or other shocks



#### GOVERNANCE:

**laws, policies, institutions, voice & participation (includes informal and traditional governing systems)**  
Consider: impact of laws, policies, taxes, budgets, formal and traditional practices by sub-population and locality (i.e. distributional impacts); ability to participate in government and decision-making; civic space



#### SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS:

**multidimensional poverty; inequalities**  
Consider: multidimensional poverty of women, men and children; Gini coefficient; Inequalities-weighted Human Development Index; SDG outcomes and opportunities by income (and/or Multidimensional Poverty Index) quintile; sources on informal and vulnerable employment (see: [www.ilo.org/ilostat/](http://www.ilo.org/ilostat/))

Source: Assessing the evidence of who is left behind and to what degree (Step 1).  
Excerpt from: UNSDG Operational Guide on Leaving No One Behind for UNCTs (2019).



other UNCTs engaged in strategic planning processes including the CCA and Cooperation Framework, as well as in the development of COVID-19 socio-economic response plans and related campaign and community engagement materials.

Concretely, **in Cameroon**, aside from providing feedback on the LNOB Guide, the pilot resulted in key policy and programming wins. These are:

- Strengthening the right to equality and non-discrimination in Pillar 2 (Human Capital Development and Wellbeing) of the National Development Strategy (SDN30): the Strategy specifically references the integration of all social categories hitherto on the fringes of the system, through the reduction of social inequalities, taking measures to protect against all forms of vulnerability;
- The LNOB Report prepared under the pilot of the LNOB Guide shed light on exclusions and the multidimensional explanatory factors thereof. This report was used by UN experts in Cameroon in undertaking the CCA. Further, in line with the LNOB Guide approach, the UNCT consulted with 39 CSOs representing vulnerable groups identified from LNOB desk review analysis to inform the CCA. The key messages from the consultation were reflected in the CCA document. The CCA also incorporates LNOB principles in its Chapter 4 which addresses issues related to inequality, exclusion (social, health, education) and discrimination.
- Both the Cameroon LNOB Report and the LNOB Guide were useful in the elaboration the new Cooperation Framework between the UN and the Government of Cameroon which was nearing completion at the time of writing this report – and whose strategic priorities focus on people identified as being left behind.
- A special LNOB Report on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in Cameroon was also generated by UN Cameroon. The report highlighted the groups that were disproportionately affected, especially persons with disabilities.

- A short video on LNOB was produced by UN Cameroon to sensitize people on the plight of those left behind while amplifying the voices of the ones left behind. The video is available online <https://vimeo.com/530061344> (in EN and FR, with English captions)

**In Nepal**, the pilot was implemented by the UNCT during the initial response to COVID-19, providing guidance on an approach to ensuring that the needs of the furthest behind and most vulnerable were at the centre of the UN Framework for Responding to the Socio-Economic Impacts of COVID-19 in Nepal (the SERP). In addition to valuable substantive feedback on the LNOB Guide, the pilot contributed to several critical advances in the UNCT's development operations. Under the guidance of the LNOB Pilot Task Team (RCO, UNDP, ILO, and UN Women) the pilot contributed to results in a number of areas, as outlined below:

- The UNCT Nepal carried out consultations with 35 different groups (1,197 participants) identified as left behind and others as disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 pandemic. The 35 groups included women, gender and sexual minorities, indigenous peoples, Dalits, ex-bonded labourers, religious and ethnic minorities, and persons with disabilities as well as some constituency groups (e.g. civil society, teachers, private sector). While the purpose of the consultations was to identify the challenges faced by those who have been left farthest behind as well as the solutions that they were seeing (idea harvesting), an equal priority was placed upon the opportunity for UN agencies to enhance their own capacity by participating in the consultations and receiving firsthand information rather depending on analyses provided by consultants. The consultation results informed the SERP development, including the design of a robust strategy for ongoing engagement of communities for the implementation and monitoring of the SERP.
- The LNOB assessment carried out for the application of the LNOB Guide to the SERP was also extended to the CCA in 2021. The collaborative approach adopted by the UN agencies has resulted

in a renewed understanding of the structural barriers faced by vulnerable groups—both traditional and newly made—to enjoy a fair share in development outcomes. The UNCT leadership in the consultation with vulnerable groups in Nepal contributed to strengthening and initiating partnerships with the groups that have been left behind as well as identifying areas of strategic partnership in the emerging context. These new strategic areas include collaboration with and empowerment of those left behind to ensure their meaningful participation in the process of institutionalization of federalism; ensuring experiences of those left behind are captured in national surveys such as the National Census of 2021, and ensuring their concerns are taken into account in designing the strategy for Nepal's graduation from classification as a Least Developed Country.

Throughout the pilots, UNSDG entities and the Fund Secretariat provided strategic guidance and technical inputs to the RCs and UNCTs to address gaps, and facilitated cross-country exchange to share ideas and experiences. The valuable insights and feedback on the Guide generated through the pilots informed the update and finalisation of the Guide, which was initiated by the Human Rights Task Team in 2020 and was at the final endorsement stage at the time of preparation of this report.

A parallel effort of the UNSDG-HRM Fund towards UNSDG policy coherence was the support to **the Regional Training of Trainers on HRBA, LNOB and Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment** (led by UN Women), which built on work supported by the UNSDG-HRM Fund in 2019 to update the **UNSDG Common Learning Package on the Human Rights Based Approach** (led by OHCHR). In 2020, UN Women, working in close collaboration with UNFPA, OHCHR, and UNICEF took forward the work of the Human Rights Task Team to strengthen the capacities of field colleagues to implement the HRBA, LNOB and gender equality and women's empowerment in development programming. The initiative will result in a cadre of UN staff (20 staff per region) trained on the HRBA, LNOB and gender equality policy content and related methodologies to be ready to support the work of UNCTs, particularly in the development

and implementation of CCAs and Cooperation Frameworks. In 2020, the project completed the mapping of related training materials and a draft learning package consisting of topical modules plus special sessions related to COVID-19 response and other emergencies was developed. In response to the COVID-19 travel restrictions, the Training of Trainers course was re-designed for online delivery and a collaboration with the UN System Staff College (UNSSC) was forged to develop the e-learning, thus enhancing complementarity with the e-learning developed by the UNSSC and DCO on CCAs and Cooperation Frameworks. A helpdesk will be setup to accompany the trainees from the different regions.

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

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted directly on the planned continuation of the RC human rights leadership dialogues in 2020. Due to travel restrictions it was not feasible to implement this project in accordance with the original design. Despite these challenges, UNSDG entities engaged through remote platforms with RCs on leadership issues relating to human rights – for example, through the launch and dissemination of the Secretary-General's Policy Brief on Human Rights in COVID-19. The Fund Secretariat also supported DCO-facilitated opportunities for RC engagement and experience-sharing, such as the dedicated session on LNOB at the Global RC retreat.

Throughout 2020 the vision for a UN leadership anchored in human rights and positioning human rights strategically at country level was advanced through deployment of HRAs to support UNCTs and RCs. HRAs provide expertise and advice to enhance coherence through stronger integration of human rights norms and standards into country level activities, and support the leadership of RCs and UNCTs, especially as they engage national actors. In 2020, additional expert advisory support on economic and social rights, including from macroeconomic specialists, was delivered through the OHCHR Surge Initiative.

The Fund Secretariat also contributed to strengthened RC leadership on LNOB and rights-based approaches through support to the roll out of three inclusion-related accountability scorecards for UNCTs under UN system-wide strategies on youth, gender equality and disability inclusion. These strategies and scorecards are roadmaps for UNCTs on joint action and provide strengthened accountability and incentives for enhanced efforts. In many countries, HRAs played a key role in supporting RC leadership on the importance of implementation of these strategies which are critical entry points for advancing comprehensive, human rights-based approaches that address UN programming and operations.

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

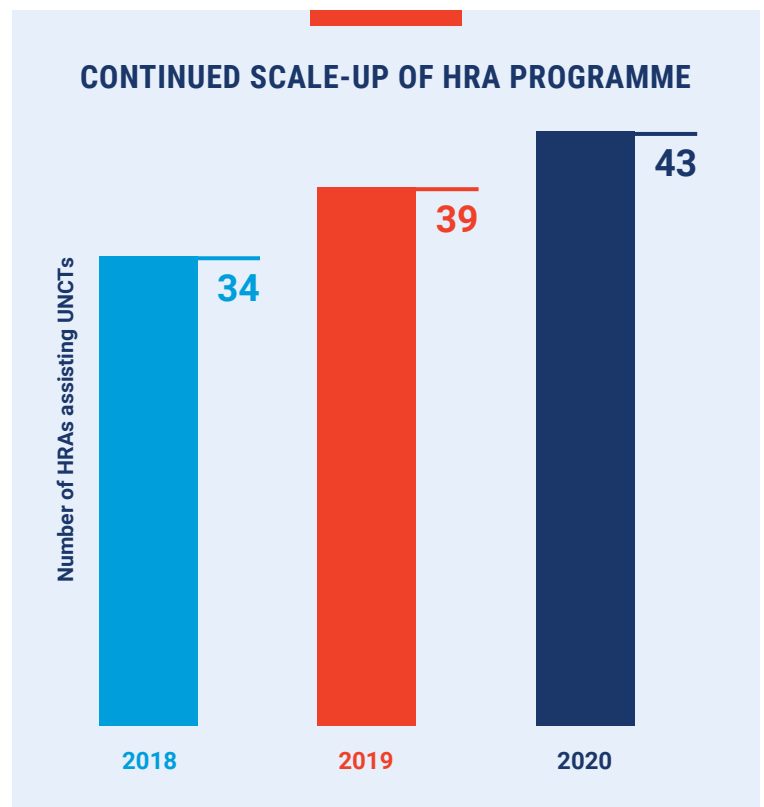
As the COVID-19 crisis hit, the unique expertise and skillset of HRAs enabled newly empowered and independent RCs and UNCTs in 43 countries to support national efforts to address the human rights dimensions of the crisis and to continue providing support to countries to implement the 2030 Agenda in accordance with international law.

HRAs supported RCs and UNCTs in implementing their human rights responsibilities, including integrating human rights in COVID-19 socio-economic impact assessments and response plans, as well as CCAs and Cooperation Frameworks. Under the leadership of the RCs, HRAs also supported governments, NHRIs, National Statistics Offices, CSOs 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 COVID-19 planning and funding proposals, Joint SDG Fund and UN system-wide strategies on gender equality, youth and disability inclusion - for more coherent and collaborative action on human rights.

#### Overview of HRA Programme in 2020

Scaling up and strengthening the HRA programme is a key component of the UNSDG's support to RCs and UNCTs to embody the vision of the UNDS repositioning 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 [Call to Action](#) also emphasizes the need to ensure that the work of RCs and UNCTs is informed by a human rights risk and opportunity analysis, and refers specifically to the expansion of the presence of HRAs in UNCTs. The expansion of the programme since its inception reflects the value placed on these capacities by RCs and UNCTs, as well as the increasing recognition and support from partners and donors. The demand for HRAs is expected to further increase as UNCTs respond to the Call to Action and Member States' request for support in the 2020 QCPR.

HRAs are valued assets where they are deployed, providing critical human rights support to enhance coherence through stronger integration of human rights into advocacy, analysis, programmes and policy support to deliver on the promise of the 2030 Agenda and leave no one behind. HRAs also

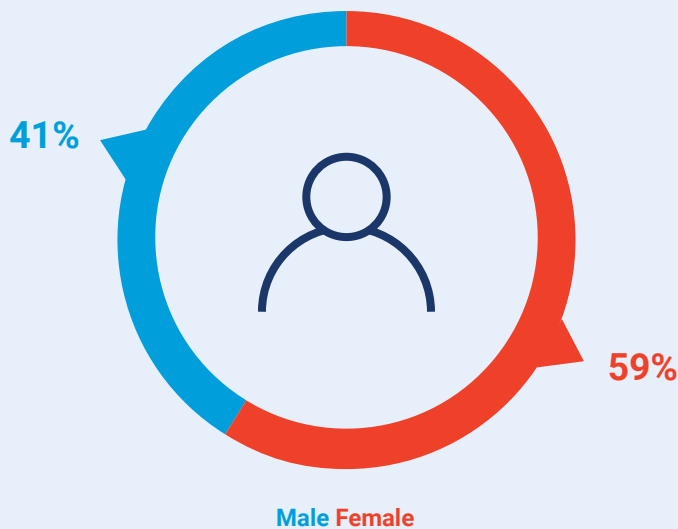


## 43 HUMAN RIGHTS ADVISER DEPLOYMENTS SECURED BY END OF 2020

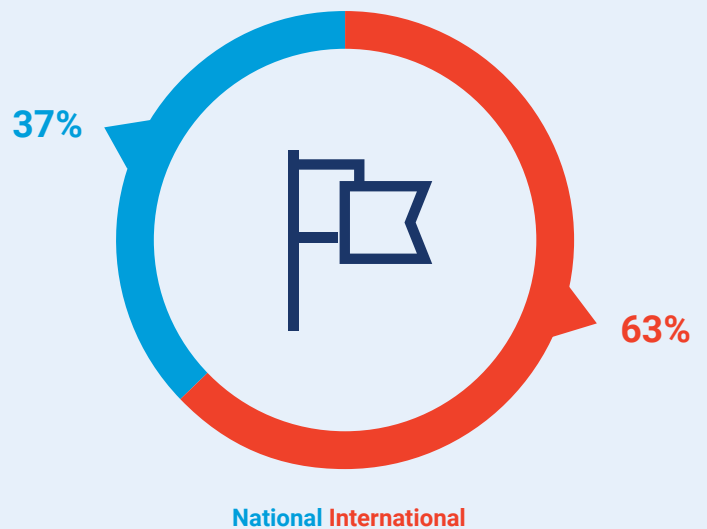


Note: At the end of December 2020, the following countries had ongoing recruitment and/or the HRA has just arrived: Burundi, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dominican Republic, Guinea Bissau, Lesotho, and Malaysia.

### 2020 HRA PROFILE BY SEX



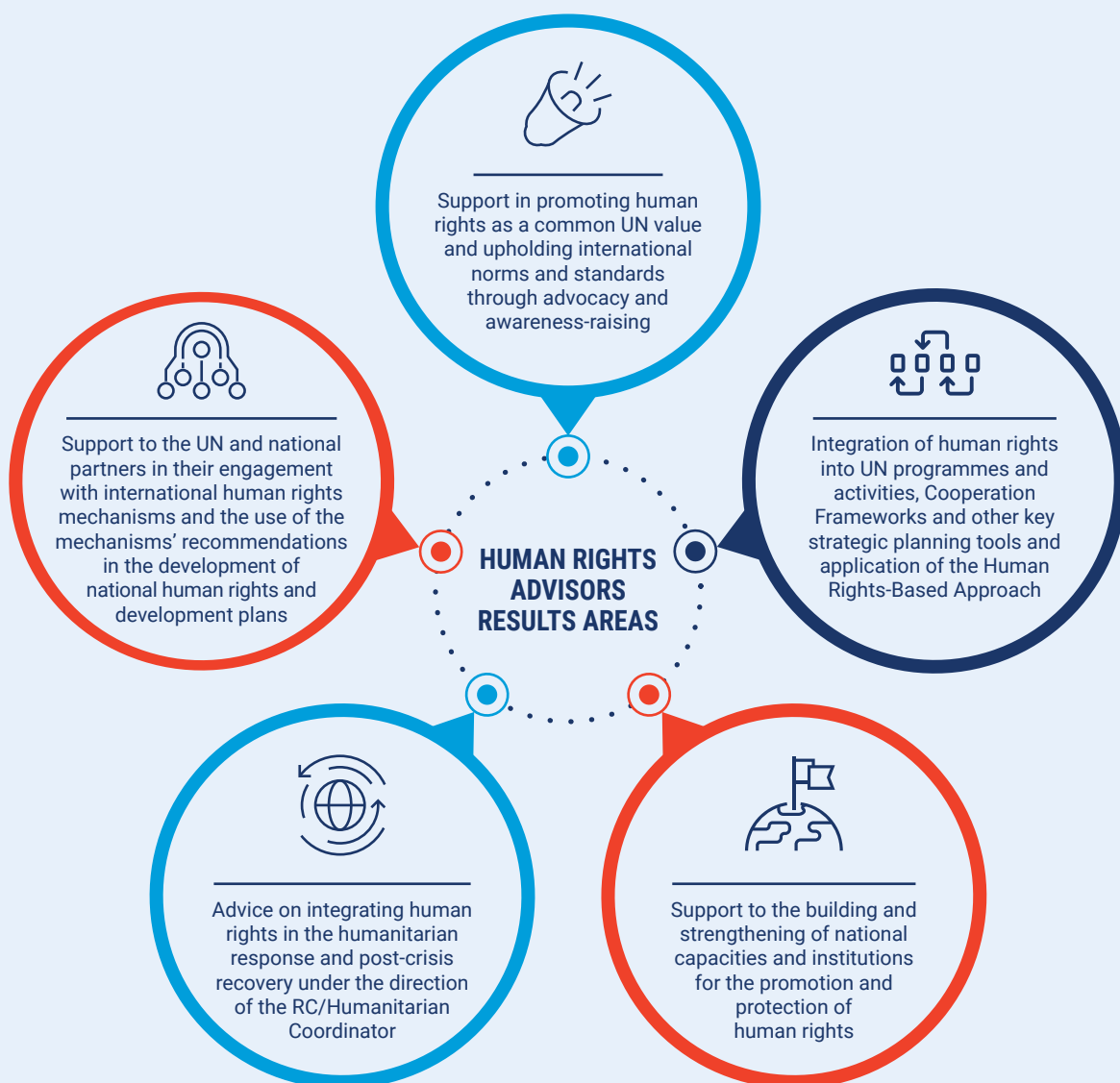
### 2020 HRA PROFILE BY CATEGORY



increase the strategic engagement with international and regional human rights mechanisms by UNCTs, governments, CSOs, NHRIs and other national stakeholders. OHCHR, as the overall manager of the HRA programme, provides valuable institutional and policy support, linkages to the thematic expertise of OHCHR and the human rights mechanisms, and in some cases additional resources to work with the HRA to further expand the support to the RC, UNCT and national partners.


As advisory capacity within the Resident Coordinator Offices, HRAs customize their engagements and actions with the UNCT to the specific development challenges and opportunities within the country. Results in all of the 5 areas (see diagram below) are routinely seen in all countries of deployment. In terms of the thematic areas of the Call to Action, HRAs particularly contributed to moving forward action in the thematic areas of rights at the core of sustainable development, rights in times of crisis and civic space.

## KEY HRA RESULTS AREAS



In 2020, OHCHR led efforts to strengthen the capacity and provide for continuous learning through sharing of experiences across regions. While COVID-19 travel restrictions prevented the implementation of the planned annual Community of Practice meeting, OHCHR conducted online sessions to enable HRAs and RCs to share experiences and expand capacities through learnings from high level experts. For example, RCs and HRAs participated in the 51<sup>st</sup> Session of the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights and of the Voluntary Fund for Financial and Technical Assistance in the implementation of the UPR in November 2020. HRAs also participated in numerous online knowledge-sharing events hosted by OHCHR, DCO and other parts of the UN system, including with other RCO advisory capacities such as Strategic Planners, Peace and Development Advisers (PDAs) and Economists. HRAs also benefitted from a community of practice established by OHCHR on the Yammer platform, which focused on the 2030 Agenda and COVID-19 and human rights responses, for strengthened peer-to-peer support, sharing and documenting of promising practices as well as learning and cross-fertilization. HRAs also received additional advice and support on operationalizing economic and social rights in the context of country development strategies through the Surge Initiative.

In addition to global and regional exchange and capacity building opportunities, HRAs in 13 countries benefit from additional funding support to strengthen human resources capacities and activities towards the human rights priorities of the RC and UNCT.



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

In 2020, HRAs provided technical advice to RCs and UNCTs to build awareness and leadership around critical human rights issues and concerns, and in many cases facilitated opening new cooperation avenues for UNCTs with key ministries and state institutions in response to the identified issues such

as use of the death penalty, space for civil society and journalists to operate, and justice and security. The technical support from HRAs regarding the human rights of marginalized groups – particularly in the context of the COVID-19 crisis - aided the development and adoption of integrated strategies to address challenges and gaps in line with international standards as well as provide support to efforts to leave no one behind. In responding to COVID-19, HRAs supported advocacy efforts in a number of critical areas including health services, food and sanitation, limitations of freedom and expression and movement, the impact of overcrowding in prisons, access to social security, the right to education and non-discrimination.

In **Papua New Guinea**, the UNCT conflict prevention efforts during the Bougainville parliamentary elections, with the aid of community-based human rights monitoring supported by the HRA, contributed to violence-free polls in Bougainville in 2020. The HRA and team and Political Liaison Officer conducted joint human rights sensitization and facilitation for dialogue with political factions in Konnou in south Bougainville, which helped ease tensions and prevented the electoral boycott.

**#agenda for protection**

In **Belarus**, the HRA facilitated the work of the UN Task Force on human rights and vulnerable communities, strengthened engagement of CSOs and ensured their recommendations were included in UN responses to COVID-19. An online platform was established that enabled gathering of experiences on the human rights dimensions of the pandemic, which in turn sharpened the human rights integration in UNCT responses. A guidance note on human rights was produced in the Russian language and widely circulated among the Government and key partners, outlining detailed recommendations on issues such as addressing the needs of vulnerable groups. UNCT partnered with CSOs for a targeted analysis and awareness-raising of the impact of COVID-19 on the rights of persons with disabilities.

**#civic space**

**#Socio-Economic Response Plans**

**#persons with disabilities**

## URUGUAY

In **Uruguay**, the UNCT promoted international standards protecting the right to housing in times of crisis. As part of the technical support on human rights provided by the United Nations to academic institutions, the HRA supported the Strategic Litigation Clinic of the University of the Republic by strengthening understanding of applicable international standards and jurisprudence on the right to adequate housing. The Clinic presented a case involving *amparo* proceedings for immediate protection measures to uphold the right to adequate housing of a family whose house was at the point of collapse. It was the first time that *amparo* proceedings to secure the right to housing had been admitted by an Uruguay court, that the Ministry for Housing, Territorial Planning and the Environment had agreed to provide a house to the claimant's family within 24 hours and that the Ministry of Social Development had agreed to ensure access to essential services as part of the recognition of the human right to adequate housing.

**#inequalities**



© OHCHR photo

***“In a country with the development context and legislative framework of Uruguay, the UN, has the both the opportunity and the responsibility to accompany all efforts, in the State and in Civil Society, to ensure that public policies and judicial decisions support the rights of all individuals. The work of the HRA aims at nothing less that achieving concrete human rights outcomes for all persons in Uruguay.”***

Mireia Villar Forner, RC Uruguay

In the **Maldives**, the RC and the UNCT, with the technical advice of the HRA, engaged with the criminal justice system on issues such as shrinking civic space, threats against human rights defenders, overcrowding of prisons, and the transitional justice bill. Advocacy supported by the HRA highlighted the threats and intimidation faced by human rights defenders and the importance of release of prisoners to avoid COVID-19 outbreaks in prisons due to overcrowding. Mid-level police officers in Maldives were trained on “Human rights and policing in the context of COVID-19” to improve the response of police in relation to key thematic issues, such as gender, migrant workers, detention and the use of force. This training was designed to be replicated by the police themselves across the dispersed territory of the country.

**#civic space**

**#agenda for protection**

HRAs in **Madagascar, Peru, Maldives** and **Argentina** also supported RC and UNCT advocacy regarding the application of human rights standards to prisons, which became increasingly urgent during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**#LNOB**

In **Azerbaijan**, the HRA continued to support the provision of free legal assistance to members of vulnerable groups including those affected by COVID-19 and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. With support from the EU, cooperation was forged with the Ombudsperson and the Bar Association to reinforce its work in Baku and deploy lawyers to other regions (Barda, Imishli, Gabala, Masalli and Sheki). As a result, 982 individuals (486 women, 496 men), consisting of unemployed persons, persons with disabilities, older persons, pensioners and internally displaced

persons received legal assistance during the year. The services demonstrated a clear linkage between political rights (access to justice) and protection of social and economic rights, with a focus on family law, social security, labour and property rights and the rights to health and education. This assistance enabled some individuals to successfully address grievances, especially outside of the capital, and therefore contributed to prevention efforts. This work has encouraged the development of a pro bono culture among private legal professionals and supported the elaboration of a civil legal aid system in the country.

**#agenda for protection**  
**#LNOB**

In **Trinidad and Tobago**, the HRA's work resulted in increased public advocacy by the UN on the detention and deportation of Venezuelan migrants. This critical advocacy was in light of the detention of children and the deportation of persons registered with UNHCR as asylum seekers. The judiciary responded to the advocacy with the protection of the human rights of Venezuelan migrants in Trinidad and Tobago. The Prime Minister subsequently announced that the Government would continue to extend protection to over 16,000 Venezuelans that were registered with the Government to live and work in the country.

**#migrants**

In **Georgia**, the HRA provided capacity-building assistance and expert advice aimed at strengthening the capacity and independence of the Office of the State Inspector (agency responsible for investigating allegations of human rights violations by law enforcement officers), including through legislative amendments and ensuring the separation between investigative and prosecution functions. Major emphasis was placed on effectiveness of investigation and relevant criteria developed by international and region human rights mechanisms. A total of 15 investigators (3 women, 12 men) participated in training on topics such as the right to life, the obligations of State authorities, the effectiveness of investigations and the right to privacy and personal data protection in the context of secret surveillance and communication tapping. Toward the end of the year the State Inspector's Office increased the number of cases of investigation of allegations of human rights abuses by law enforcement officials.

**#maximizing the use of treaty bodies**

In **Nigeria**, the UNCT engaged in successful advocacy to prevent the adoption of laws that did not comply with human rights standards in the context of the government's efforts to respond to an escalation of rape cases during the COVID-19 lock





down. The Nigerian Governors Forum declared a national emergency on rape and one state amended its rape law substituting a previous life sentence for rape with death and castration for males or bilateral salpingectomy for females. Immediately, other states announced their intention to follow suit. With support from the HRA, the UNCT issued a position paper which clarified that the imposition of a death sentence violated Nigeria's obligations under the ICCPR and that castration and bilateral salpingectomy constituted torture and violated Nigeria's obligations under ICCPR, CAT, and Nigerian Anti-Torture Act. The position paper was deemed central to the success in stopping the amendment of legislation at the states' level which did not comply with human rights standards and principles.

**#maximizing the use of treaty bodies**

In **Moldova**, a campaign entitled "Recover better together: Human rights for all," was implemented with support from the RCO and six UN entities with the technical guidance of the HRA. The campaign featured members of people in vulnerable situations, including the Roma community from Transnistria region, who shared their reflections on ways to improve the human rights-based response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The campaign was promoted through 14 videos, six online events, five media op-eds and 15 posts. The Roma community is considered one of the most vulnerable and marginalized in Moldova. This culminated with a high-level event, during which the Ministers of Education and Health, NHRIs, CSOs and UN partners discussed their COVID-19 responses from a human rights perspective. The HRA facilitated the UNCT engagement with the NGO Task Force on COVID-19 and Human Rights (with 56 NGO members) resulted in the development of nine informative guidance notes on COVID-19 and human rights including nine localised human rights indicators. These guidance documents informed the UN Moldova Socio-Economic Response and Recovery Plan. The UN, with support from the HRA and the COVID-19 Multi Partner Trust Fund project partners (UN Women, UNICEF and IOM) collaborated with the NGO Task Force to provide much needed social services for the Roma community in Transnistria region to cope with the pandemic.

**#inequalities**

**#LNOB**

***"Before the pandemic, Roma people had some jobs, some were trading, some were cleaning, but once the pandemic hit, many were left without jobs, and the discrimination against our community has grown even more... We helped the persons with disabilities, elderly and young families with many children from our Roma community. No matter whether this was woman or man, we helped everyone who needed assistance."***

**Vasilisa Avtutova, a volunteer and the Coordinator of the Roma Women Empowerment Subdivision within the Association of Roma from the Transnistria region, 2020**

In **Argentina**, the HRA promoted within the UN environmental results group (UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, FAO and WHO/PAHO) a [position document](#) regarding the wetlands draft law. The document emerged as a result of the fires that occurred at the end of 2020, which have had serious consequences for biodiversity and population, in particular those vulnerable. The objectives of this technical assistance and advocacy work is that the wetlands bill will reflect a sustainable development and human rights approach with effective participation.

**#rights of future generations**

In **Ecuador**, the RCs in South America and the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous people hosted a public discussion on the serious impacts and risks of COVID-19 for indigenous peoples at a regional meeting in August 2020. As a follow up to the 2019 recommendations from the Special Rapporteur, the HRA supported development of an Action Plan, which was designed in consultation with indigenous leaders, indigenous human rights defenders and the direct involvement of Government authorities to harness the UN agencies' expertise on health, education, water and sanitation, food, livelihoods, protection and coordination to the benefit of indigenous peoples. The Action Plan's strategic lines in progress include empowerment of indigenous Amazonian women (in partnership with

UNW and UNDP), empowering local actors to protect indigenous peoples rights in the northern border (in partnership with IOM), indigenous food systems (in partnership with FAO).

**#indigenous peoples**

**#maximizing the use of the special procedures**

### 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 order to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, Socio-Economic Response Plans (SERP) were developed to coherently present the UN's collective offer to the country. HRAs' technical expertise has been recognized in strengthening the UNCTs' capacity to apply the guiding principles of HRBA, LNOB and gender equality and women's empowerment throughout the planning and programming cycle, and particularly in facilitating the integration of human rights standards and the recommendations of human rights mechanisms in analysis, strategic prioritisation and joint programming.

Throughout 2020, HRAs supported RCs and UNCTs in enhancing their comprehensive human rights-based analysis in CCAs and integrating a HRBA throughout the Cooperation Frameworks, in particular for strengthened use of the outcomes of human rights mechanisms, analyzing development challenges with human rights implications and supporting identification of strategic, coordinated, norms-based support and guidance from the UN to countries. This included working in collaboration with the Surge Initiative and OHCHR regional offices, especially on economic and social rights and the particular challenges and needs of disadvantaged and marginalized groups.

For example, in **Argentina, Barbados, Belize, and Trinidad and Tobago**, the HRAs facilitated civil society consultations and drafted human rights-based sectoral analyses with a focus on LNOB. Senior UN staff including Heads of Agencies in **Jamaica**, the

**Bahamas** and **Panama** participated in a joint special human rights-based training led by the HRA based in Jamaica on the implementation of the [UN Human Rights Due Diligence Policy](#)<sup>4</sup> (HRDDP) and Human Rights Up Front (HRUF) for the UNCTs in preparation for the CCAs and Cooperation Frameworks.

**#CCAs and Cooperation Frameworks**

**#civic space**

#### JORDAN

In **Jordan**, the HRA supported an LNOB analysis which was carried out by the UNCT and integrated into the socio-economic response plan, resulting in a SERP that addresses the situation of 'at-risk groups' experiencing marginalization and/or discrimination, requiring specific attention. The section entitled "People Who Must Be Reached," highlights the impact of COVID-19 on women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities, refugees, informal tented settlement inhabitants and host communities, and informal sector workers, migrants and refugees. It includes recommendations by human rights mechanisms, such as the UPR, in its analysis and its interventions.

**#Socio-Economic Response Plans**

**#maximizing the use of the UPR**



<sup>4</sup> United Nations entities support to non-UN security forces must be consistent with the Organization's Purposes and Principles in the Charter and its obligations under international law to respect, promote and encourage respect for international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law.

The RC and UNCT in **Guyana** benefited from the deployment of a national HRA in May 2020, during the five-month electoral crisis with ethnic tensions. The HRA monitored human rights and hate speech in tandem with the political and conflict analysis from the PDA, which informed UN messaging on elections and the UNCT's strategies to implement COVID-19 and humanitarian responses throughout the post-electoral violence.

**#hate speech**

**#Socio-Economic Response Plans**

In **Bolivia**, the HRA supported the UNCT in developing a shared strategy with the UNCTs from Argentina and Paraguay in relation to the "Great American Chaco" - the second largest forest area (first is Amazon rainforest) in South America, and host to a wealth of biodiversity from varied wetlands to drylands. The strategy is designed to promote conflict prevention and peaceful coexistence in the region by conducting an analysis of conflict drivers, risks and threats, as well as of the impact of the spread of COVID-19 on vulnerable populations.

**#agenda for protection**

**#indigenous peoples**

In **Peru**, the HRA supported the UN response to COVID-19, especially in the elaboration, implementation and evaluation of the Peru COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response Plan with a human rights-based approach and highlighting the situation of specific groups such as persons with disabilities, persons deprived of liberty, LGTBIQ+, Afro-Peruvians and indigenous peoples. The UN effort included workshops addressed to youth (who become human rights promoters and public servants) and reached at least 7,000 persons from 20 regions and addressed the COVID 19 impact on human rights especially children, women, persons deprived of liberty, persons with disabilities, indigenous people. The HRA also coordinated the UN response to the government's request for technical support towards the drafting of Legislative Decree No. 1468 to ensure disability inclusion and non-discrimination in the COVID-19 context, including terms focused on addressing structural

gaps that could exacerbate the impact of COVID-19 on persons with disabilities.

**#inequalities**

**#persons with disabilities**

**#Socio-Economic Response Plans**

In the **Philippines**, advocacy from the RC with the support from the HRA contributed to the protection of human rights defenders and journalists through advocacy and outreach to government officials. The RC with the support of the HRA facilitated consultations on human rights with government actors, the NHRI, CSOs and UN agencies on the development of a UN Joint Programme on human rights in line with the Human Rights Council resolution 45/33 of 2020. The Government, the UN and the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines (CHRP) agreed to improve advocacy efforts related to civic space and engagement with human rights defenders as part of the UN Joint Programme on Human Rights. With support from OHCHR and the UNSDG-HRM Fund, the rollout of training will start in 2021.

**#safety of journalists**

**#civic space**

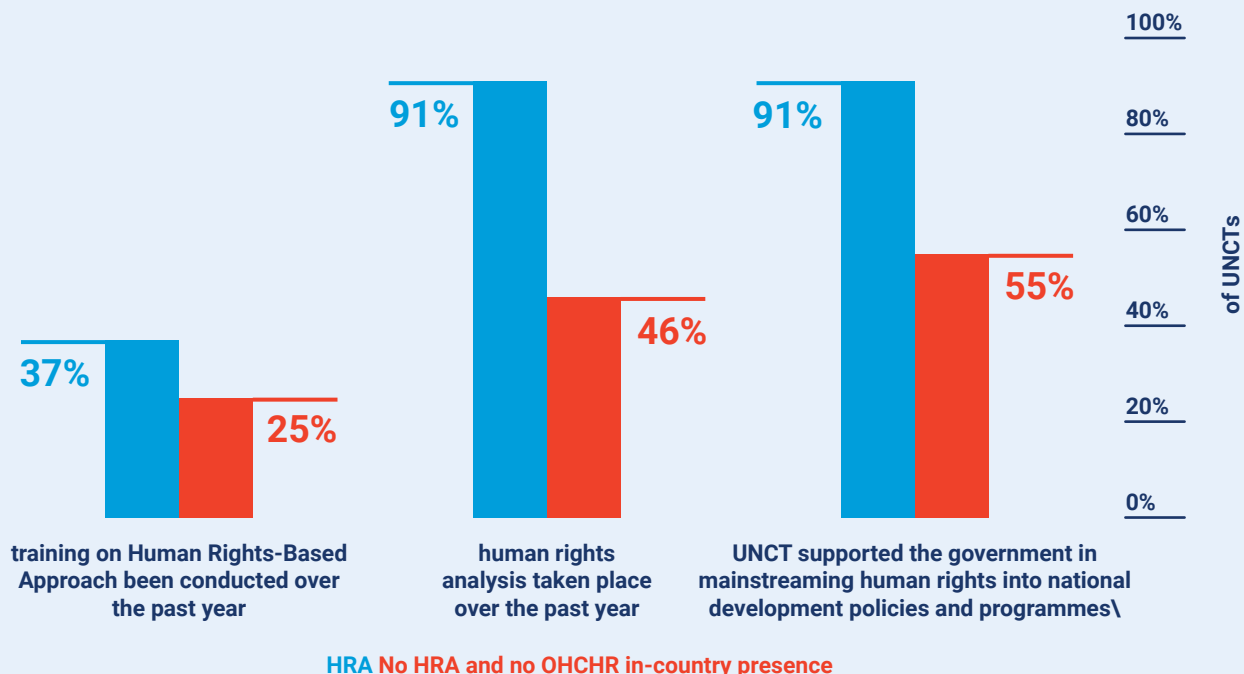
In **Montenegro**, the HRA supported the UNCT in building relations with those at the margins of society. The HRA led the technical support for a UNCT study on social inclusion and leaving no one behind, giving a comprehensive overview of which groups are most left behind in development in Montenegro, and how and why they are facing challenges in exercising fundamental rights. The data and analysis from the study was integrated into the CCA and used in the HRBA training for the next Cooperation Framework.

**#LNOB**

**#CCA and Cooperation Framework**

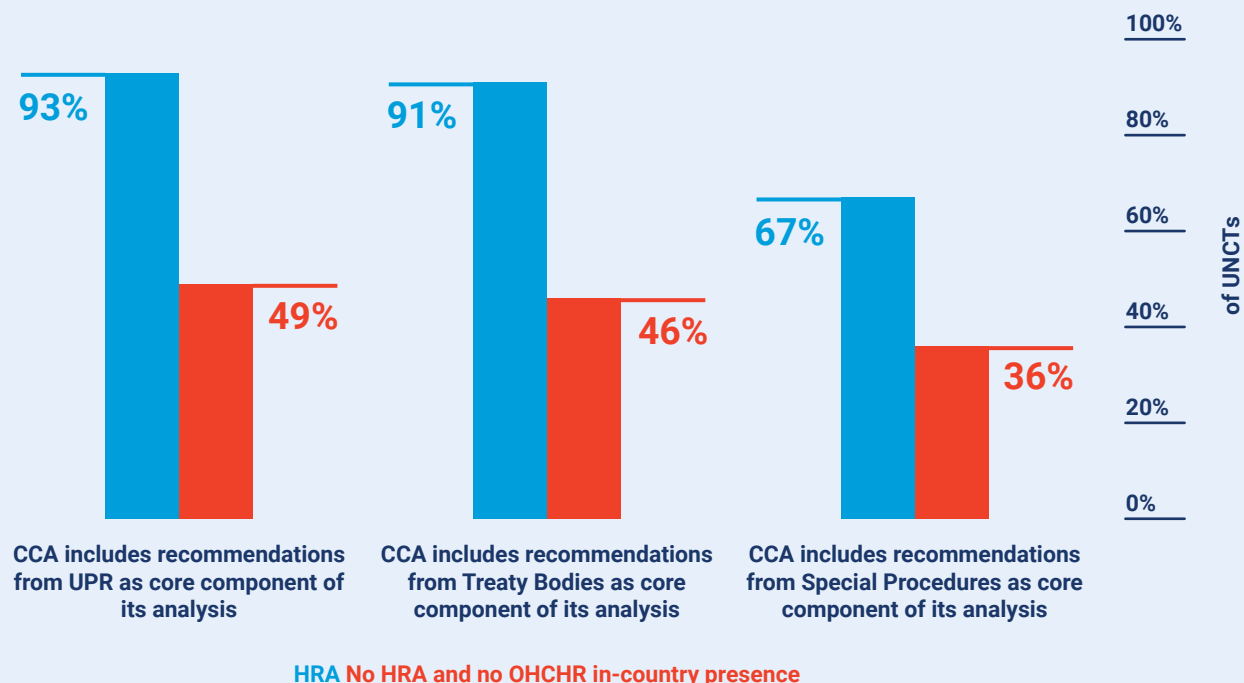
Reporting by UNCTs of selected human rights mainstreaming activities in 2020 (see figures below) illustrates that UNCTs that had an HRA were more likely to undertake a human rights analysis and other mainstreaming activities compared to UNCTs that did not have an HRA or OHCHR in-country presence.

**FIGURE 1.**  
**IN 2020 UNCTs WITH HRAs DEMONSTRATED STRONGER RESULTS ON KEY HRBA INDICATORS**



Source: Development Coordination Office.

**FIGURE 2.**  
**IN 2020 UNCTs WITH HRAs REPORTED STRONGER USE OF HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS' RECOMMENDATIONS IN CCAs**



Source: Development Coordination Office.



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

HRAs continued to strengthen national capacities and institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights in 2020, leveraging the links between human rights and the 2030 Agenda. HRAs' trusted role in convening, facilitating and supporting capacity building have been highly appreciated by national partners, and contributed to enhanced human rights integration by the UN teams on the ground. This enabled UNCTs to provide coherent technical assistance to State institutions aligned with international human rights standards and the SDGs, and to support civil society to engage strategically on the human rights-related aspects of development and states' commitment to leave no one behind and reach the furthest behind first.

For example, in **Argentina**, support was provided during the legislative discussions on the legal abortion bill on applicable international standards. The HRA drafted an analysis of the bill, in order to have an integrated UN advocacy position and also made possible the intervention of UN experts (Chair of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and Working Group on Discrimination Against Women and Girls) during the Senate Commissions debates, which contributed to introducing the human rights standards and obligations throughout the debate. This landmark legislation was adopted in December 2020 following many years of joint action by women, human rights defenders and other stakeholders.

**#GEWE - discriminatory laws**  
**#maximizing the use of treaty bodies**

In **Serbia**, the new national strategy for the Improvement of the Position of Persons with Disabilities was adopted. The UN with support of the HRA had facilitated the consultative process which led to the development of a text that is largely compliant with the standards of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and supported public discussions around the Strategy's action plan.

**#persons with disabilities**  
**#maximizing the use of treaty bodies**

In **Jamaica**, in cooperation with the UN Theme Group on Gender and Human Rights, the HRA conducted a

comprehensive review of proposed amendments to four pieces of legislation, covering sexual offences, childcare and protection, domestic violence and offences against the person. The coordinated engagement of all UN human rights and gender focal points through the UNCT Theme Group on Gender and Human Rights led to advice and training support to the inter-ministerial human rights committee (MoFAFT), National Police College of Jamaica, Judicial Education Institute. Which in turn facilitated the UNCT's contributions to CEDAW, CRPD, CMW and the third cycle UPR of Jamaica. The HRA also supported the development of the capacities of civil society in the areas of non-discrimination and the human rights of LGBTIQ+ persons. In cooperation with UNDP and the United Caribbean Transgender Network, the HRA delivered workshops for CSOs from Jamaica, Barbados, the Bahamas, Belize, the Cayman Islands, Guyana, Saint Lucia, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago working to advance the rights of LGBTIQ+.

**#GEWE - discriminatory laws**  
**#maximizing the use of the UPR**  
**#maximizing the use of treaty bodies**  
**#LGBTIQ+**

In **Costa Rica**, the HRA with the support of the OHCHR Regional Office for Central America assisted the judiciary to move forward with a protocol for investigating human rights violations against human rights defenders. The support involved the Supreme Court of Justice on international obligations in investigations; support for the adoption of a comprehensive protection policy that includes opportunities for participation, early warning, the provision of training to State agents and overall guidelines on crimes committed against human rights defenders.

**#civic space**

In **Paraguay**, the HRA supported the Ministry of Public Defence to develop human rights indicators for access to justice, with the intention of incorporating them into its institutional mission. Technical advice was also provided to the National Preventive Mechanism for developing a monitoring manual within the context of COVID-19, incorporating international human rights standards.

**#inequalities**

## REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

In the **Republic of North Macedonia**, the HRA's expertise reinforced the UNCT work on promoting disability inclusion at national and community levels. The UNCT supported the National Disability Inclusion Strategy Monitoring Framework through a strategic partnership between the Ombudsperson and people with disabilities and their representative organizations (over 20 national umbrella organizations covering all forms of disabilities) in line with the CRPD. The Ombudsperson, with UN support, developed a nationwide survey which highlighted issues on empowerment, awareness raising to eliminate negative stereotypes, stigma and other structural causes of inequalities, advancing accessibility and services, and strengthening the capacity of persons with disabilities to be vocal partners in shaping and implementing inclusive policies and measures. The HRA also contributed to integrating a human rights perspective in the [UN joint programme 'Working bottom up – building a local model for deinstitutionalization'](#), which was instrumental in giving effect to the achievement in 2020 under the [National Deinstitutionalization Strategy – no children in institutions](#). All 180 children previously placed in institutions, of which 20 had disabilities, now live with foster families or in small groups homes. And the 482 adults with disabilities that lived in institutions for a long time, 319 of which now live independently, some with support services. The new [Cooperation Framework for the Republic of North Macedonia](#) (2021-2025) identifies continued UN support to the authorities in the implementation of human

rights mechanisms' recommendations relating to persons with disabilities (amongst others) as an area of action towards the goal that people in North Macedonia benefit from improved rule of law; evidence-based, anticipatory and gender-sensitive policies; greater social cohesion; and effective service delivery by transparent, accountable and responsive institutions.

**#persons with disabilities**

**#maximizing the use of treaty bodies**

***“We continue to support North Macedonia with building a truly inclusive society, where everyone sees the person – not the disability – and where every person can pursue her/his rights with dignity.***

***To sustain a real transformative change and accelerate inclusive development, the human rights approach to disability inclusion needs to be consistently and systematically embraced. UN North Macedonia's priority is to leverage systemic reforms through disability-specific and disability mainstreamed interventions across all sectors and in close partnership and consultation with persons with disabilities.”***

**Rossana Dudziak, RC North Macedonia**

In **Timor-Leste**, the HRA and the UNCT continued to support the country's efforts towards ratification of the CRPD and alignment of national policies to CRPD, as well as assisting local organizations of persons with disabilities. Through a series of advocacy events led by the Association of Persons

with Disabilities in Timor-Leste (ADTL) - the Minister of Public Works was convinced to issue a regulation that all building construction, public and private, needs to accommodate persons with disabilities. To promote more inclusive and accessible information, the Government of Timor-Leste and ADTL signed an

agreement on the use of sign language during specific nationally televised events. The HRA also continued to provide support through the multi-year human rights training programme for the national army, with added components on states of emergency in light of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Much remains to be done in a country that emerged from violent conflict less than 20 years ago and where impunity continues to be rife and investment in the police is low.

**#persons with disabilities**

**#agenda for protection**

In **Bangladesh**, the RC with the support of the HRA and advocacy efforts in Geneva is assisting the government in reviewing the controversial Digital Security Act with a view to ensuring its compliance with international standards. Michelle Bachelet, High Commissioner for Human Rights, noted in 2021 that: "Various UN human rights bodies have long raised concerns about the ill-defined, overly broad provisions of the [Bangladesh] Digital Security Act that have been used to punish criticism of the Government". Another key area supported by the HRA is the social protection of women tea garden workers and their families in Sylhet Division. The Joint UN programme on this issue, which commenced with support from the Joint SDG Fund in 2019, delivered some key results in 2020. Through enhanced bargaining and negotiation skills and awareness of their rights to development, health, education, information, and decent work hours, women tea garden workers were able to negotiate higher wages and ensure basic benefits in the biennium collective agreement 2019-2020. Women trained to hold gender talks in their communities regularly discussed gender stereotypes, working towards changing social norms. Women workers are also more aware about sexual and reproductive health and accessing social protection for pregnant women. An extensive review of existing legal and policy frameworks have been completed to strengthen the evidence base on inequalities and systemic drivers of exclusion, and this is complemented by a strategic framework that will allow the Bangladesh Tea Association (BTA) and government to generate gender disaggregated data and monitor the situation of the tea garden workers particularly health, education and working environment.

**#new frontiers**

**#GEWE**

In **Belize**, the HRA with RCO support has been providing advisory services and technical support to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Immigration (MFAFTI) to follow-up the recommendations of the third cycle of the UPR. Belize accepted 10 UPR recommendations relating to the establishment of a NHRI in compliance with the Paris Principles. The support included consultation sessions with stakeholders from CSOs and state agencies to inform the proposal for the configuration of an NHRI model for the government's approval.

**#maximizing the use of the UPR**

***"Establishing a national human rights institution is of great benefit not only for accountability reasons, but also for strengthening the human rights education and training of public servants, heighten human rights awareness of the general public and supporting the government's policies on several topics, such as poverty reduction and sustainable development. It can change life of the people."***

**Birgit Gerstenberg, RC Belize and El Salvador**

### **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 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.

In **Argentina**, the technical support from the HRA has been pivotal for the overall UN and national partner efforts to respond to health and social crisis in the province of Salta that affected indigenous children and women. As a result, an emergency strategy to tackle the crisis was put in place and provided support to provincial government to address it. This plan (supported by UNICEF, WHO, PAHO and OHCHR) has elements for coordination of interventions for a synergistic implementation, promoting inter-ministerial and inter-sector dialogues. UN System commitment to tackle discrimination and inequality faced by indigenous communities in Salta has created willingness and involvement of other actors to contribute and support indigenous communities in the context of this crisis. National and provincial authorities political will and openness to recognize the health and social crisis and to work with UN system, CSOs, IFIs, and other actors to address it has also increased.

**#indigenous peoples**  
**#inequalities**

In **Brazil**, the HRA supported the UNCT engagements with the Black movement and the initiatives to address racism and racial discrimination in the context of COVID-19 and for prevention of racial profiling. The HRA participated in an external commission of the Federal Chamber of Deputies to discuss the impact of the pandemic on Black and Quilombola populations.

**#racial discrimination**

In **Madagascar**, the technical support from the HRA contributed to the government's measures to decrease the number of people in detention, thereby reducing the potentially devastating impact of COVID-19 in overcrowded prisons was undertaken. At the peak of the first wave of COVID-19, the difficult conditions in overcrowded prisons required urgent action to avoid having prisons become the epicenter of COVID-19 victims. The President issued a decree, on 24 June, granting presidential pardon and release of 1,695 detainees, involving 89 juveniles and 55 women inmates from 82 prisons across the country.

**#inequalities**  
**#LNOB**

***“Human rights being a core pillar of the UN Charter and as it cuts across all the Leave No One Behind aspects of the work of the UNCT, this achievement was timely as no other UN Agency would have handled the technicalities the way it was handled with OHCHR support and it could have been a blow to the face of the entire UN System in Madagascar amidst the State of Health Emergency.”***

**Issa Sanogo, RC Madagascar**

In **Malawi**, the HRA with the PDA provided key human rights technical advice and early warning analysis of trends to the RC and UNCT to address human rights root causes and prevent civil unrest. In consultation with UN agencies, the Malawi Prevention Platform expanded its data collection to include civil unrest caused by economic and governance grievances, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Through this process the RC ensured that human rights were integrated into the UNCT response to the mass protests in 2020, which contributed to a strategic and targeted UN response that helped to calm civil unrest. Following an increase in reported violence between Muslim and Christian communities in the south of the country, the HRA collaborated with the UNCT and the Public Advisory Committee (PAC) - a CSO of inter-faith leaders - to hold a series of workshops with Muslim and Christian leaders on international human rights standards relating to education, non-discrimination and freedom of religion or belief. The HRA also worked with the UNCT to implement the UN Human Rights Due Diligence Policy to ensure a common response to serious human rights violations committed by Malawian security forces.

**#mass protests**  
**#Human Rights Due Diligence Policy**

In **Zimbabwe**, technical support to the UNCT and the Humanitarian Country Team resulted in the integration of human rights and protection concepts into the response and contingency plans of the UNCT to support the public health measures to contain the pandemic impacts. Measures included



the Addendum to the Zimbabwe Humanitarian Response Plan 2020 (on COVID-19); the Global Protection Cluster Contingency Plan and Guidance on COVID-19; and the Framework for Integrated Policy Analysis and Support for the Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19. A checklist of international human rights standards served to inform the preparation of COVID-19 responses in Zimbabwe, was made available in accessible formats for persons with disabilities. With support from the HRA, guidance was developed on ensuring that COVID-19 responses in Zimbabwe address the needs and human rights of older persons and are implemented in compliance with human rights standards.

[Communications materials on “reaching those left](#)

[behind” were developed for disability inclusion and made available in English and Ndebele versions.](#)

[#older persons](#)

[#persons with disabilities](#)

In **Sri Lanka**, the HRA supported the UNCT in the preparation of the CCA and a related Conflict Risk Assessment. In addition, the HRA led the UNCT implementation of the HRDDP by conducting a General and Preliminary HRDDP Risk Assessment, developing implementation SOPs and designing a Task Force to ensure the consistent application of the policy in all UN activities.

[#Human Rights Due Diligence Policy](#)

[#CCA](#)

## BURKINA FASO

In **Burkina Faso**, the support of the HRA made it possible for the RC/HC to engage confidently in a strategic and political dialogue with government at the highest level, i.e., President and the Prime Minister, and with key Ministries responsible for protection (Justice and Human Rights, Humanitarian Affairs and Security), and raise the imperative for government to protect civilians, especially women and children, and to uphold the rights of people impacted by the ongoing armed conflict. Together with the RC, OCHA, UNICEF and other entities the HRA supported the Humanitarian Country Team in developing its strategy and workplan on Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), establishment of protection mechanisms for children in armed conflict, and advocacy efforts for the domestication of the Kampala Convention<sup>5</sup> to ensure better legal protection of the rights of internally displaced persons in the world’s fastest growing displacement crisis in 2020. Some of the outcomes of the high-level engagements are: UNCT members and humanitarian actors,

who are part of the Protection Cluster and Gender Based Violence working group, scaled up interventions including reaching close to a quarter of a million men, women and young girls in conflict affected localities through awareness campaigns, strengthening referral systems (legal, psychosocial and health), use of mobile health clinics for increased access to health and psychosocial services; and an agreed government protocol to ensure that children suspected to be associated with armed groups or apprehended during military operations are handed over to child protection services and be treated as victims. This Protocol is expected to be formally signed in May 2021 and will be accompanied by an action plan. While the UNCT Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDPP) Task Force creation is pending, the HRA facilitated training sessions on the HRDDP with 11 Heads of agencies and leading the process to develop the terms of reference for the Task Force.

[#agenda for protection](#)

[#Human Rights Due Diligence Policy](#)

<sup>5</sup> African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa.

In **Serbia**, the HRA partnered with the Prime Minister's Team for Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit (SIPRU) to support the identification of people living in substandard settlements across the country. The Mapping of Roma Substandard Settlements started off as a pre-requisite for humanitarian assistance and distribution of emergency items. It quickly turned into a more comprehensive exercise covering 170,000

residents in 702 settlements. In this partnership between local Roma-led mechanisms, CSOs, the UN and the line Ministries, the mapping has generated a wealth of new data that is now used for planning purposes. The data is officially published and will be updated by the Prime Minister's Office and relevant services, to inform government policy and actions.

**#LNOB**



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## 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, including COVID-19 response and recovery. HRAs' work increased understanding and engagement of governments, CSOs and other partners in the work of the human rights mechanisms such as UPR, treaty bodies and special procedures, and supported institutional and structural reforms to implement and monitor recommendations from human rights mechanisms.

In several countries, including **Montenegro, Serbia, Bangladesh, Peru** and the **Maldives**, HRAs provided specific support to UNCTs and States in their efforts to set up national mechanisms for reporting and follow up (NMRFs) of the observations and recommendations from the international human rights mechanisms in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, helping countries to leverage the synergies between their development and human rights efforts.

In the **Philippines**, the HRA continued to support capacity development of the NHRI and CSOs to engage with human rights mechanisms. In 2020 CSOs and the NHRI submitted information to the Special Procedures.

**#maximizing the use of the special procedures**

In **Ecuador**, with sustained technical assistance from the HRA, the national mechanism to follow up recommendations (SIDERECHOS) was used to compile the UPR mid-term voluntary report and will also be used for the CEDAW report. This work contributes to the Ecuador [Cooperation Framework 2019-2022](#), specifically the UNCT's commitment to provide technical assistance for the implementation and monitoring of human rights instruments through regulations and public policy.

**#maximizing the use of treaty bodies**

**#maximizing the use of the UPR**

In **Brazil**, the HRA supported the establishment of the UPR Parliamentary Observatory, a UPR follow up mechanism functioning in the Brazilian House of Representatives (Câmara dos Deputados).

**#maximizing the use of the UPR**

In **Nepal**, HRA technical assistance to support victims of the conflict in preparing their first-ever submission to the UPR resulted in highlighting the stalled transitional justice process and demands for a victim-centric approach to amend the transitional justice law. During the third cycle of the UPR, several States recommended that Nepal revise its legislation on its commissions on truth and reconciliation and on the investigation of disappeared persons, in line with the victims' demands and consistent with international law.

**#maximizing the use of the UPR**

In **Niger**, the HRA supported the government and CSOs to develop quality reports for human rights mechanisms. Two interim reports on the implementation of priority recommendations relating to CEDAW and ICESCR, as well as the national report for the third cycle UPR of Niger, were prepared and validated. The HRA provided guidance to the CSO network *Collectif des Organisations de Défense des Droits de L'Homme et de la Démocratie* in preparing their alternative report on the implementation of CED and a CSO report for Niger's third UPR cycle. The HRA supported and coordinated the drafting of the UNCT contribution to the UPR. The UNCT supported Niger in the development and implementation of an action plan to follow up on the UPR recommendations, the evaluation of which has shown that of the 167 recommendations received by Niger under the previous cycle, 80% have been fully satisfied.

**#maximizing the use of the UPR**

**#maximizing the use of treaty bodies**

In **Serbia**, with support from the HRA, the government finalized its first UPR mid-term report. Representatives of all government sectors, the NHRI and the judiciary participated in the drafting process of the report. Civil society groups participated as observers, and the UNCT through the HRA facilitated the civil society interactions. A joint UN mid-term

report was prepared and submitted. In addition, the HRA provided technical assistance to expand the use of human rights indicators, in line with recommendations issued by the treaty bodies. The NMRF produced a draft Action Plan for the implementation of UPR recommendations.

**#maximizing the use of the UPR**

**#maximizing the use of treaty bodies**

In **Jamaica**, the HRA provided technical assistance to the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Human Rights to ensure that the third review of Jamaica by the UPR Working Group was successfully conducted. The HRA also engaged with civil society prior to the UPR review process and provided them with guidance and support to prepare quality alternative reports. As a result, a coalition of 27 CSOs submitted the first alternative report on Jamaica to the UPR Working Group. In addition, the HRA provided assistance and support where requested to ensure timely submission of State Party reports to CEDAW, CMW and CRPD.

**#maximizing the use of UPR**

**#maximizing the use of treaty bodies**

***“It is critical that every United Nations Country Team has the capacity, skills and knowledge to embrace and streamline a human rights-based approach across all its programmes. The support of the Human Rights Advisor and the OHCHR has strengthened our ability to live up to our universal promise to leave no one behind on the journey towards the Sustainable Development Goals.”***

**Dr. Garry Conille, RC Jamaica**

Annual reporting by UNCTs illustrates that UNCTs with the expertise of an HRA or OHCHR in-country presence are more likely to use the recommendations of human rights mechanisms to strengthen and inform country efforts to support implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

## PERU

In **Peru**, the HRA provided support to the development of a national policy on Afro-Peruvian persons by the Ministry of Culture. Data on access to work and other issues and recommendations from the CERD and the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent (WGEPAD) was analyzed. A visit to Peru by the WGEPAD was organised in cooperation with CSO, the NHRI and the Ministry of Culture. The HRA also provided technical assistance to the UNCT and led the UN submission of reports to inform the adoption of Peru’s List of Issues. In the country’s reporting to CEDAW, the HRA promoted RC and UNCT participation during the session and facilitated the engagement and submission of reports by CSOs, including the feminist coalition organization.

**#racial discrimination**

**#maximizing the use of the treaty bodies**

**#maximizing the use of the special procedures**

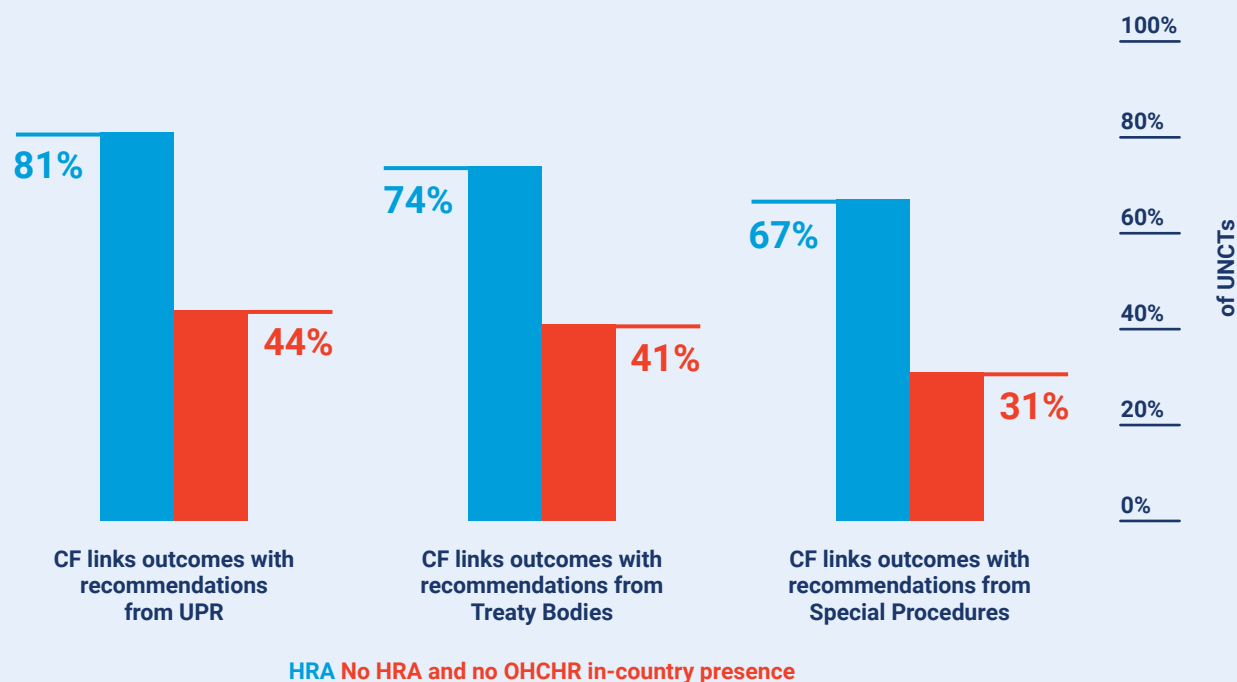
## Strengthened programme management

Through the financial support received for the full-time position of the Manager of the HRA Programme in 2020, OHCHR was able to dedicate additional capacity to the management and implementation of programme. The results achieved through this strengthened support were evident across several areas.

- **Strategic direction and outreach towards the expansion of the programme:** through expanded outreach, the number of expressions of interest and requests submitted for 2021 increased and additional information was provided to the Steering Committee to enhance understanding of the needs in the regions. The HRA Programme Manager also designed and supported the preparations for the dedicated session at the 51<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Board of the Voluntary Trust Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights (VFTC).

FIGURE 3.

## IN 2020 UNCTs WITH HRAs REPORTED STRONGER USE OF HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS' RECOMMENDATIONS IN UNDAFs/COOPERATION FRAMEWORKS



Source: Development Coordination Office.

- Programmatic implementation including financial and human resources management:** 2020 was the first year in which all HRAs received USD 15,000 for activities. Support was provided throughout the year for allocation and monitoring of use of the funds. Activities implemented and facilitated through these funds included capacity building for State partners' efforts on the alignment of legislation, policies and practices with international standards and recommendations of human rights mechanisms; capacity development to support reporting under the various treaty bodies; support to NHRIs and compliance with the Paris Principles, and campaigns linked to Human Rights Day and other key international human rights days. The HRA Programme Manager also oversaw the operational costs for each HRA deployment to ensure accurate financial needs forecasting and to inform future practice during this transitional phase.
- Reporting and support to resource mobilization:** the HRA Programme Manager plays a key role in consolidating individual HRA reports for timely and

accurate results reporting across the programme and effective knowledge management. Through the end of 2020, the Programme Manager actively supported the UNSDG-HRM Fund evaluation, contributing information and supporting materials to the evaluation team, facilitating the engagement of HRAs, and reviewing evaluation outputs for factual accuracy.

## 4. THE OPERATIONALIZATION OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RIGHTS THROUGH A MORE SYSTEMATIC INTEGRATION OF THESE RIGHTS INTO DEVELOPMENT ANALYSIS, STRATEGIES AND PLANNING INSTRUMENTS

The Surge Initiative was launched just before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and sought to step up country-focused advice to the UNDS to operationalize

## SURGE INITIATIVE BY NUMBERS



2

Since its inception until the end of March 2021, 2 tools were developed for UN Country Teams to strengthen the integration and operationalization of ESCRs, SDGs rights-based macroeconomic analyses in the COVID-19 response and recovery.



4

Since its inception until the end of March 2021, the Surge Initiative contributed to 4 National Development Plans/Programmes.



38

In 2020, the surge Initiative provided guidance and advice to OHCHR field presences and UNCTs on addressing the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 concerning 38 countries, including through 30 UN Country Team (UNCT) COVID-19 socio-economic impact assessments (SEIAs) and socio-economic response plans (SERPs).



26

In 2020, the Surge Initiative provided financial and technical assistance to 26 seeding-change country projects around the world



79

Since its inception until the end of March 2021, the Surge Initiative supported Common Country Analysis and UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework documents and processes concerning 79 countries.



26

Since its inception until the end of March 2021, the Surge Initiative contributed to 26 Regional Monthly Reviews (RMRs).



14

Since its inception until the end of March 2021, the Surge Initiative held consultations with Resident Coordinator Office (RCO) economists in 14 countries.

States' obligations on economic and social rights and to integrate human rights in efforts to accelerate SDG implementation, address inequalities to leave no one behind, promote transformative economies, and increase focus on prevention by making links between economic and social rights and conflicts.

In the context of COVID-19, the Surge Initiative was able to provide critical human rights-based operational advice to UNCTs developing COVID-19 socio-economic emergency responses and recovery processes, thus strengthening the UN's support to countries to address the human rights dimensions of the pandemic. The Surge Initiative is funded from the UNSDG-HRM Fund, as well as OHCHR's own resources.

The Surge Initiative has anchored its work on the UNSDG guidance on Cooperation Frameworks and its Companion Piece on Economic Transformation requiring integration of human rights into country development analysis and programming, and specifically drawing on the wealth of thematic advice from the UN treaty bodies, the special procedures and the UPR, including on tackling extreme poverty, inequalities, marginalisation and social exclusion, and protecting rights in debt-stricken countries. The project **provided catalytic support in over 100 countries**, exceeding several of the project targets including on the number of UNCTs that would receive support in the development of CCAs and Cooperation Frameworks.

While the project is still ongoing, five main axes of work have been identified:

1. Re-imagining economies: Macroeconomics in support of Economic and Social Rights
2. Collecting disaggregated Data to Leave No One Behind
3. Forging Linkages with the IFIs for Inclusive and Equitable Recovery
4. A New Generation of Social Protection and Universal Health Coverage
5. Anchoring human rights analysis and interventions in CCAs and Cooperation Frameworks

#### 4.1 Re-imagining economies: Macroeconomics in support of Economic and Social Rights

The COVID-19 multi-layered crisis placed severe strains on the economy and Government revenues resulting, in many instances, in negative economic growth. The challenge to mobilize resources for social spending in the short and longer term is immense, especially in low- and middle-income countries. Under international human rights law, States are duty-bound to guarantee the minimum essential levels (MEL) of the enjoyment of the rights to health, social protection, nutrition and food security, water and sanitation, housing, and education for all people, even in times of crisis. All States, even developing countries with inadequate resources, are required to mobilize maximum available resources for the progressive realization of these rights, and by introducing targeted programs to assist those most in need.

Working closely with UNCTs and RCO economists, the Surge Team looked at how debt, revenues, budgets and corruption either restricted or freed up fiscal space to provide for social spending on essential economic and social rights, as well as to achieve the SDGs, with special attention to curbing discrimination and inequalities by avoiding further economic burden on already marginalized or vulnerable populations. The Surge initiated country-based studies to calculate MEL of specific economic and social rights (ESR) and suggested domestic resource mobilization strategies. It contributed to UNCTs' analyses and positions of stimulus measures and IFI emergency financing, and contributed to UN efforts to support and guide socio-economic response plans.

For example, in **CAMBODIA** – The Surge Team, within the framework of LNOB and from a gender-sensitive perspective, provided human rights-based macroeconomic inputs into the socio-economic recovery plan, pointing to the need for counter-cyclical measures to ensure MEL for health and social protection, the use of tax policies to generate resources for maximum of available resources (MAR), and highlighted the differential impacts on workers in the informal sector. The Surge conducted analysis of the stimulus measures put in place to address the

impacts of COVID-19 containment measures, the effects of the loss of preferential trading agreement with the EU on government revenue, garment workers and employment, as well as household debt on the enjoyment of ESRs.

#### 4.2 Collecting disaggregated Data to Leave No One Behind

The Surge Initiative identified a priority need to reinforce country capacity for collecting and analysing quantitative and qualitative data, disaggregated by sex and other relevant categories, to measure the fulfilment of and retrogression in ESRs, and to ensure that no one is left behind in the design of COVID-19 responses and longer-term recovery efforts. The Surge Initiative supported joint surveys and UN inter-agency targeted data-collection, collective analyses as well as through reinforced partnerships with community-based organizations. Expanding grassroots organizations' meaningful participation in the design and monitoring of COVID-19 emergency measures proved to be critical to ensure that their perspectives and suggestions for UN and Governments' socio-economic planning and programming are properly reflected. Gender impact assessments - conducted with an intersectional approach to data disaggregation - were an important part of the Surge effort to document the disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 on women and girls and to identify targeted policy solutions.

Working closely with human rights indicators and data experts at OHCHR headquarters, the Surge Team provided necessary support in developing country-tailored indicators to monitor States' responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in line with OHCHR human rights indicators methodologies and guidance on HRBA to data.

For example, in **KENYA** – The Surge Team, in collaboration with the HRA and a network of 24

community-based Social Justice Centres, undertook a human rights assessment to identify the extent of inequality in accessing safe drinking water in informal settlements in Nairobi. Through this project, 184 household surveys were carried out with inter-active questionnaires on mobile phones. Focus group discussions in 24 informal settlements and communities in Nairobi, Kisumu and Coastal regions were conducted. The main findings and recommendations of the study were presented in an [infographic report](#), a [web story](#), and a [short film](#) by the Social Justice Centres. Evidence-based data helped amplify the voices of grassroots networks and joint civil society advocacy on gaps in the enjoyment of the right to water - as the country confronted the emerging COVID-19 crisis and centrality of the right to water for prevention of disease transmission. The findings will enable the UNCT to address identified gaps through the ongoing UN Development Assistance Framework's workplan and the response to COVID-19.

#### 4.3 Forging Linkages with the IFIs for Inclusive and Equitable Recovery

The pandemic led to a massive injection of liquidity by the IFIs to save lives and livelihoods. The IMF alone has mobilized USD 500 billion in rapid emergency financing directed especially to low income countries (48 of the 83 beneficiary countries). In a welcome change from usual practice, the IMF issued rights-enhancing policy advice<sup>6</sup> on the need for counter cyclical policies and encouraging greater investments on social spending.<sup>7</sup>

The reform of the UN Development System envisions a strengthened role for UNCTs to provide evidence-based and integrated policy advice on economic policies to help countries in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This vision relies on reinforcing the partnership with the IFIs to engage on macroeconomic policies, investment

<sup>6</sup> See <https://www.imf.org/-/media/Files/Publications/HowToNotes/2020/English/HTNEA2020002.ashx>.

<sup>7</sup> Please see Economic Transformation, Cooperation Framework Companion Piece, May 2020. See also: A UN Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19, on pages 32, 33 and 27: "... The country response should articulate ... the engagement with the IFIs and with other key partners notably in terms of coherence of policy advice and resource mobilization ... The UNDS will continue to use its convening power, at national, regional and global level, to facilitate dialogue between governments, IFIs, development partners, private sector and other stakeholders with the view to adopting common positions and responses to COVID 19 socio-economic impacts".



in the SDGs, and redressing inequalities.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the Surge Initiative provided advice on leveraging the international human rights framework in ring-fencing and/or expanding social spending to align emergency financing with government obligations to respect, protect and fulfil economic and social rights, with an eye for the progressive realisation of these rights as a critical element of recovery.

For example, in **LEBANON** –The UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN ESCWA) calculates that more than 55 per cent of Lebanon’s population is trapped in poverty and struggling to meet basic needs.<sup>9</sup> UN ESCWA indicates that “extreme poverty has registered a threefold increase from 8 per cent in 2019 to 23 per cent in 2020.”<sup>10</sup> The explosion at the port of Beirut in August 2020 led to further deterioration in the political situation. The Surge Team, with the OHCHR Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa, supported the development of a [UNCT Position Paper to the IMF](#) through a human rights lens. Extensive substantive inputs were provided on social protection, women’s rights and gender equality, the rule of law and democracy, and on environment and climate change. A recommendation on the need to strengthen national human rights mechanisms, including adequate resources for the NHRI, was taken on board by the Lebanon Reform, Recovery, and Reconstruction Framework (3RF) led by the UN system, the World Bank and the European Union.

#### 4.4 A New Generation of Social Protection and Universal Health Coverage

The pandemic underscored the pressing urgency of investing in social protection and universal health coverage as keys for ensuring the enjoyment of all human rights. The ILO’s monitor on social protection responses to COVID-19 counted almost 1,600 social

protection measures in 93 per cent of all countries. As part of ‘building forward better’, UNCTs are moving from emergency support towards prioritizing support to States in the development of human rights-based systems of universal coverage for social protection and essential health services in line with the SDGs. Consensus is growing on the need for universal social protection systems to have an improved balance between contributory and non-contributory schemes, to ensure protection against risks and contingencies, including for those who were unable to contribute formally to a social security system, such as informal workers who are predominantly women, persons with disabilities and migrants.

Against this backdrop and building on the recommendations of UN human rights mechanisms, the Surge Initiative carried out human rights analyses of health and social protection systems in various countries, reviewing policies and programs, including those adopted during the pandemic, to identify gaps in protection and to address persistent and multiple forms of structural discrimination that were further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Initiative is also developing practical methodologies and formulae to operationalize the economic and social rights obligations of minimum essential levels and maximum available resources, with a preliminary focus on the right to health.

For example, in **UKRAINE** –The Surge Initiative provided support in developing detailed human rights recommendations for a UNCT policy paper on social protection, which will be launched at a high-level event hosted by the RC in April 2021.<sup>11</sup> With this paper the UNCT aims to initiate a dialogue with national authorities and contribute to ongoing reform of the pension system. The policy brief put forward a set of comprehensive policy suggestions to remedy low coverage and lack of access for the poorest and

<sup>8</sup> See the [UN Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19](#) in Section IV.4. on “Macroeconomic Response and Multilateral Collaboration.”

<sup>9</sup> United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN ESCWA), [Poverty in Lebanon: Solidarity is vital to address the impact of multiple overlapping shocks](#), 19 August 2020.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> The planned high-level event will be the second Hernán Santa Cruz dialogue, part of a global lecture series launched by OHCHR in October 2020, aiming to raise awareness and stimulating discussions within communities to strengthen the realization of socio-economic rights. The Dialogues is based on the vision and mission of Hernán Santa Cruz, whose important contribution was his successful advocacy for the inclusion of socio-economic rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

socially excluded, and to design a universal social protection system which offers coverage to all, without discrimination. Additional analytical pieces were provided to inform the Government's national human rights action plan and the mid-term UN planning, including a "[Briefing paper on Social Housing in Crimea](#)", and briefing notes on the impact of COVID-19 on persons with disabilities and on the homeless.

#### 4.5 Anchoring human rights analysis and interventions in CCAs and Cooperation Frameworks

The Surge engaged with and advised on CCAs and Cooperation Frameworks in 79 countries, given their central strategic value to develop a UN common understanding on bottlenecks and to identify ways to re-build more inclusive and sustainable socio-economic systems, going forward. The Surge team provided evidence-driven advice on aligning economic and fiscal policies with states' human rights obligations; it worked with UN field presences, including HRAs, to reinforce LNOB analyses, providing suggestions on how to tackle gaps through public expenditure prioritization and domestic resource mobilisation strategies. It also looked into the human rights impacts of economic reforms and austerity policies on marginalised populations; and offered strategies to increase equal access to health, social protection, water and other rights.<sup>12</sup> Surge support has enhanced human rights-based economic capacity for UN multidimensional risk analysis and provided catalytic support to establish platforms for ongoing and integrated joint analysis.

For example, in **COSTA RICA** - The Surge Initiative seeding-change project aimed at establishing an early warning and prevention monitoring system in four prioritized indigenous communities in the South of the country, based on economic and social rights (access to land) with the participation of indigenous leaders, women, and the local and national authorities (government, judiciary, Legislative Assembly and the NHRI). A preliminary assessment was prepared, identifying a road map, including a root-cause analysis of tensions, especially in relation to recurring land disputes between indigenous and non-indigenous communities in the prioritized communities as well

as a risk analysis and preventive measures to protect indigenous rights defenders. The project contributed to the CCA process with the required up-to-date analysis on emerging issues, early warning and prevention including on indigenous peoples and their access to land.

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

The Human Rights Task Team and Fund Secretariat supported UNCTs' strategic engagement with UN human rights mechanisms in 2020 by sending the annual letter by the Human Rights 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 sixth year of this initiative, and it was again recognized as strategic by RCs.

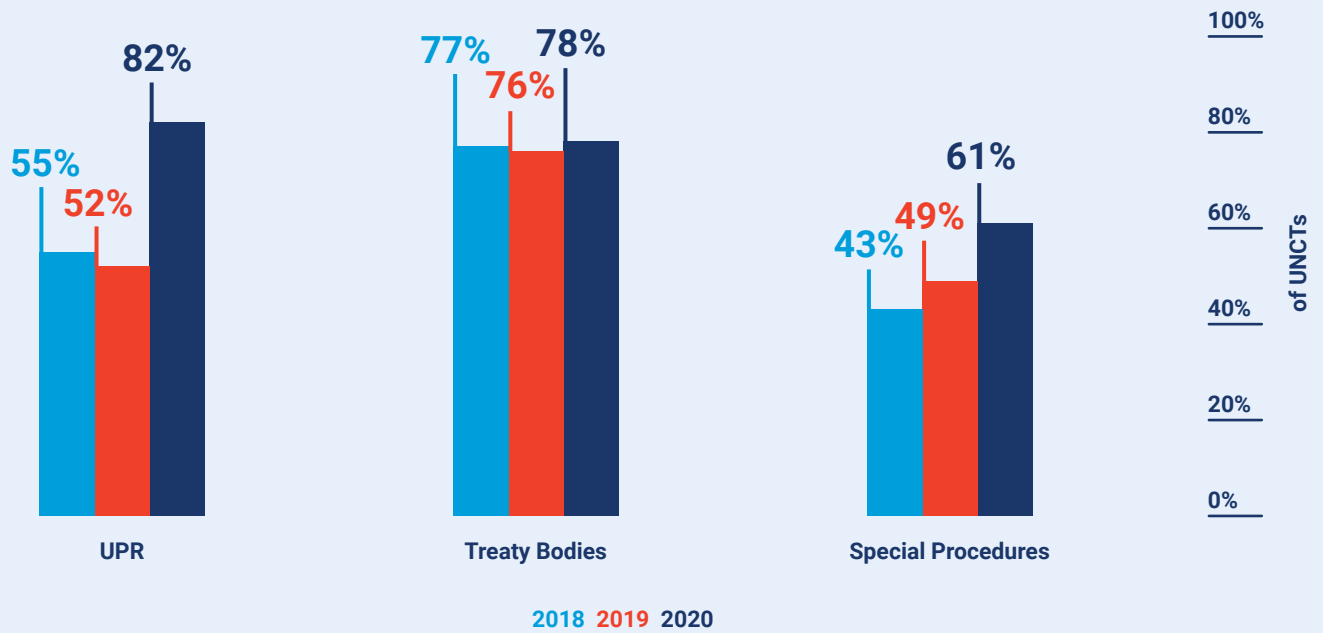
*"Thank you for sharing the letter from the co-leads of the UNSDG Task Team on Leaving No One Behind, Human Rights and the Normative Agenda. The resources have indeed helped us in the past and the UNCT Togo welcomes this new opportunity in 2020."*

**Damien Mama, RC Togo**

Efforts to strengthen the engagement with the UN human rights mechanisms through clearer elaboration of interlinkages in UNSDG guidance and other forms of support to UNCTs, including through HRAs, continue to yield positive results. For example, as shown below, UNCTs are increasingly using the recommendations of the UPR and special procedures in the CCAs and UNDAF/Cooperation Frameworks. The referencing of the recommendations from treaty bodies remained almost at the same level in 3 years.

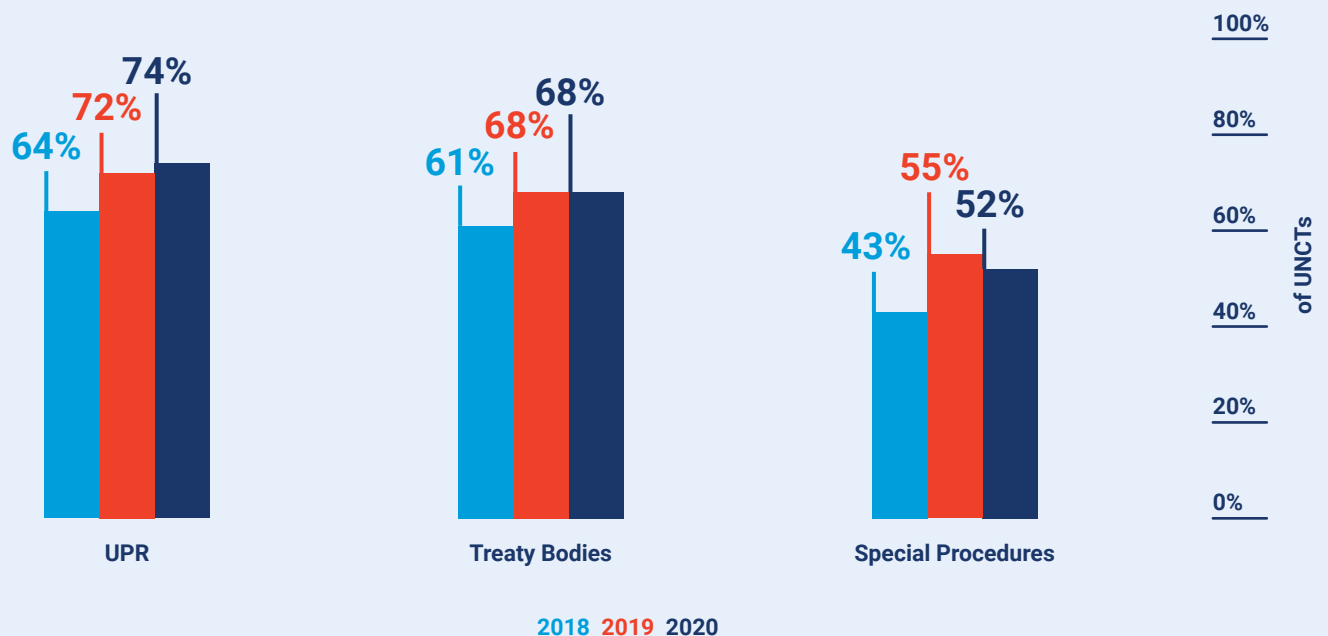
<sup>12</sup> OHCHR Human Rights Based Macro-Economic Guidance – Response to COVID-19 and Related Measures.

**FIGURE 4.**  
**TRENDS IN UNCT REPORTING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS ARE A CORE COMPONENT OF CCAs**



Source: UNSDG Information Management System.

**FIGURE 5.**  
**TRENDS IN UNCT REPORTING THAT UNDAF/COOPERATION FRAMEWORK OUTCOMES ARE LINKED WITH RECOMMENDATIONS FROM HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS**



Source: UNSDG Information Management System.

## ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE UNSDG-HRM FUND – LESSONS LEARNED

The achievements of the UNSDG-HRM Fund in 2020 reflect the relevance and resilience of the Fund in supporting well-coordinated and concerted system-wide efforts to integrate human rights in the work of the UNDS and its support to countries in the context of a global health, humanitarian and human rights crisis. Despite the operational challenges posed by COVID-19 which hindered the implementation of some planned initiatives, others were able to proceed and re-orient to target the support provided to the new situation. The investments of previous years also provided a solid foundation for supporting RCs and UNCTs to respond immediately and directly to the human rights dimensions of the pandemic and response. 2020 clearly demonstrated the value of having system-wide human rights-based policies, tools and capacities readily available to RCs and UNCTs in an increasingly unstable world.

Some key lessons from the 2020 paradox year of challenges and gains for the UNSDG-HRM Fund:

**Value of investing in human rights capacities at country level that can respond to the needs of the RC and UNCTs in a crisis situation.** The work of HRAs in providing advice and technical support to RCs and UNCTs to engage strategically on human rights in line with their responsibilities, and their role as conveners and bridge-builders between the UN and national stakeholders proved critical throughout the difficult times faced by countries in addressing the impact of a global pandemic. Through the timely and targeted advice from HRAs already deployed and working with partners on the ground, RCs and UNCTs were able to identify the specific challenges and obstacles faced by vulnerable groups during the pandemic, harness the pivotal preventive role of human rights analysis, and advocate for approaches in line with international human rights standards and principles. HRAs were in demand from countries in a variety of development and humanitarian settings. Expanding deployment of HRAs and ensuring sustainability and predictability of funding remains a priority for providing stronger, more effective support for the integration of human rights in the work of RCs and UNCTs.

**Added value of human rights and economic specialized expertise.** The tandem work of dedicated human rights and economic expertise filled a gap in channeling specialized macroeconomic advice to UNCTs to support rights-based analysis and strategic planning. This proved particularly timely in 2020, when UNCTs were grappling with the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic and identifying entry points to connect COVID-19 responses with long-term human rights based macroeconomic approaches and sectoral development strategies (e.g. water, housing, education, health, social protection) to support countries in addressing exposed inequalities and build forward better.

**Empowerment of local actors and civil society partnerships:** In many countries, the stark inequalities in the impact of the pandemic catalyzed additional efforts by UNCTs to build bridges with local partners and forge partnerships with civil society actors in implementing human rights-based policy engagements and COVID-19 socio-economic response plans. UNCT analysis and advocacy was enriched by outreach to marginalized and discriminated groups, often facilitated by the HRAs, to better understand which groups are being left behind and why and work together on addressing root causes. Concrete policy gains were achieved in some countries, including for indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, refugees, people in closed settings and women.

**Strengthening human rights awareness and accountability through National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs).** Results of HRA deployments illustrate the value of strengthening NHRIs (whether operating as Commission or Ombudsperson) as a strategic partner in human rights and development. Their engagement and capacity building are critical investments for effective accountability and sustained attention to human rights and vulnerable groups. In 2021, the UNSDG-HRM Fund is supporting an initiative led by UNDP and OHCHR that will promote strengthened engagement of UNCTs with NHRIs and national statistics offices on data capacities at the country level, and strengthen UNCTs' awareness of the challenges facing NHRIs as front-line human rights defenders.



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**Unmet needs of RCs and UNCTs to translate Member State mandates and UN priorities into action:** The Human Rights Task Team review of the COVID-19 socio-economic response plans, annual reporting by UNCTs and feedback from field staff in the UNSDG-HRM Fund evaluation point to outstanding needs for support to enable the full integration of human rights

into UNDS operations, including in times of crisis. Future investments in policy coherence, combined with systematic human rights leadership support for RCs and capacity building for UNCTs on the HRBA and emerging human rights issues will be essential for helping countries to recover from COVID-19 and build more equal and resilient societies in line with

the vision of the 2030 Agenda and enabling RCs and UNCTs to leverage the opportunities outlined in the Call to Action.

**Opportunities for expanded modalities for supporting RCs and UNCTs**

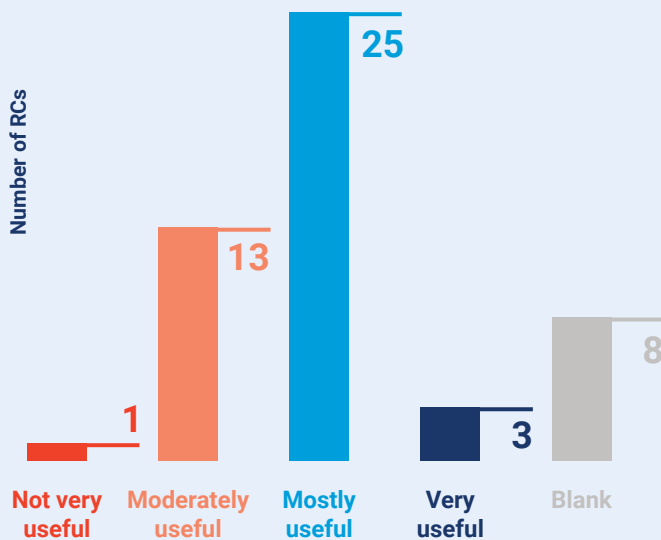
While COVID-19 prevented some activities from moving forward as planned, it also created opportunities to reflect on alternative modalities for providing support to UNCTs, building on the experiences in use of virtual tools and platforms in 2020. In many cases, in-person engagements – whether they are peer-to-peer dialogues, trainings, workshops or advisory support – enable deeper learning and more effective co-creation and network building than remote platforms. However, given the increasing demand for support (from technical to political advocacy) from RCs and UNCTs, initiatives supported by the UNSDG-HRM Fund in the coming years are likely to include additional modalities that are more accessible, flexible and engaging (including in virtual platforms) as a complement to in-person engagements.

The evaluation of the UNSDG-HRM Fund provided additional insights into the investments of the Fund which will be considered in the implementation of the Management Response to the evaluation. As demonstrated in the results outlined above, HRAs have a significant impact on UNCT’s capacities and achievements in terms of integrating human rights into their work. This was strongly reflected in the responses to the RC survey undertaken as part of evaluation (50 RC respondents). Other initiatives supported by the UNSDG-HRM Fund also received positive feedback from RCs. For example, the majority of RC respondents indicated that the LNOB Guide and the UNSDG Guidance Note on Human Rights for RCs and UNCTs are mostly or very useful.

The positive trend in the number of UNCTs reporting to have undertaken a human rights analysis in the past year (see Figure 7) suggests that the efforts to reinforce the importance of this function through policies, guidance and additional capacities are having a positive impact.

**FIGURE 6.**

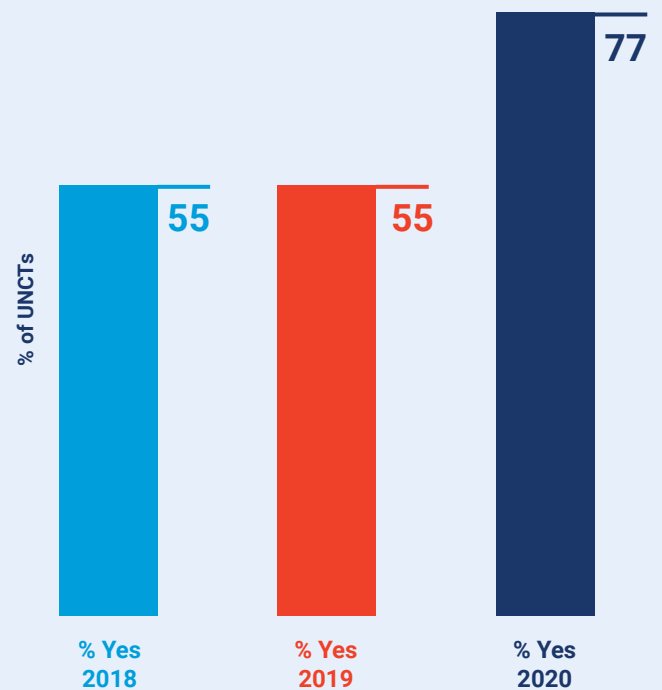
**RESIDENT COORDINATOR RATINGS ON THE USEFULNESS OF THE UNSDG OPERATIONAL GUIDE ON LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND FOR UNCTs**



Source: Final Report of the Evaluation of the UNSDG-HRM Fund, Annex II, survey of RCs.

**FIGURE 7.**

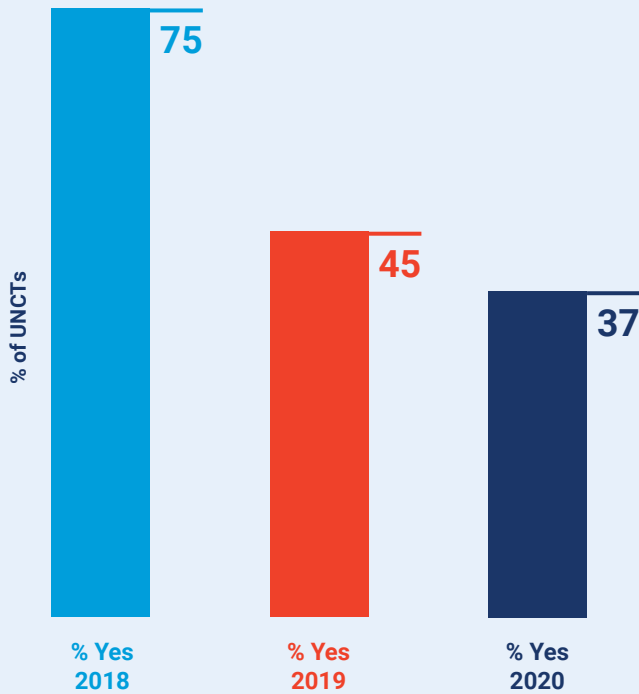
**POSITIVE TREND IN UNCTs REPORTING A HUMAN RIGHTS ANALYSIS UNDERTAKEN IN PAST YEAR**



Source: UNSDG Information Management System (IMS).

FIGURE 8.

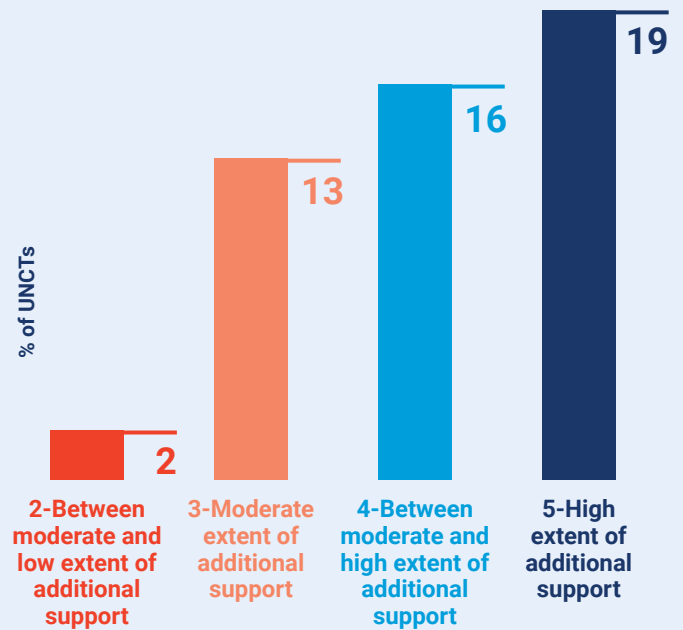
**NEGATIVE TREND IN UNCTs REPORTING HRBA TRAINING CONDUCTED IN PAST YEAR**



Source: UNSDG Information Management System (IMS).

FIGURE 9.

**RESIDENT COORDINATOR ASSESSMENTS OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH UNCTs NEED ADDITIONAL SUPPORT TO MAINSTREAM HUMAN RIGHTS AT THE COUNTRY-LEVEL**



Source: Final Report of the Evaluation of the UNSDG-HRM Fund, Annex II, survey of RCs.

However, the responses to the evaluation surveys of RCs and HRAs and other indicators from 2020 clearly point to outstanding support needs in integrating human rights into the work of RCs and UNCTs, particularly among UNCTs with no HRA and no OHCHR country presence (refer disaggregated UNCT results in the Achievements section). One such example is the negative trend in HRBA trainings (see Figure 8). Another example

is the weaknesses in the integration of the human rights-based approach identified in the *Human Rights Review of UNCT COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response Plans*. RCs have confirmed that there remains a high need for additional support (see Figure 9). Further examination of the reasons behind the observed gaps in the application of a HRBA can help inform the future priorities of the UNSDG-HRM Fund.



## UNSDG-HRM FUND OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE 2020

*“My goal for the United Nations – as it marks its seventy-fifth anniversary – is to promote a human rights vision that is transformative, that provides solutions and that speaks directly to each and every human being.”*

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, A Call to Action for Human Rights, 2020

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### ENSURING SUSTAINABILITY OF THE UNSDG-HRM FUND THROUGHOUT THE UNDS REFORM AND COVID-19 PANDEMIC CONTEXT

The Steering Committee, with the support of the Fund Secretariat, navigated the declaration of a global COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 and guided the adaptation of the planned investments for a strategic



and sustainable UNSDG-HRM Fund in the rapidly changing context. The Steering Committee expanded its UN development system representation with the involvement of UN WOMEN and UNICEF (re-joining) as members, and DCO as observer. The Steering Committee, with the support of the Fund Secretariat, reviewed and approved funding proposals in a timely manner through virtual meetings and electronic endorsements in light of the global pandemic restrictions. The Steering Committee also maintained oversight of the workplan and provided guidance to lead implementing organizations on the necessary adjustment of some projects given the radically changed operating environment and pressing need to maintain attention to policy coherence at the global level and deliver timely human rights advisory support and tools to RCs and UNCTs.

With strong donor interest and commitments in 2019, the UNSDG-HRM Fund was able to expand the ambition of the 2020 workplan. As COVID-19 prevented some activities from being implemented and/or required adjustments to the original design resulting in cost savings, the Fund Secretariat liaised with donors and facilitated agreements where necessary on the strategic use of UNSDG-HRM Fund resources in 2020 and 2021.

The Fund Secretariat implemented the Steering Committee decision to commission the UNSDG-HRM Fund's first independent evaluation. The evaluation was intended to enable the UNSDG-HRM Fund partners to benefit from a deeper understanding of the achievements, as well as areas where implementation of the Fund could be improved, so as to strengthen its overall impact going forward. The Fund Secretariat, tasked as Evaluation Manager, engaged and oversaw an Evaluation Team, facilitated the evaluation's consultative and participatory processes, and provided quality assurance regarding the outputs. The Steering Committee also established an Evaluation Reference Group composed of representatives of different participating UN agencies and donors. The Evaluation Reference Group was responsible for providing inputs to and approving the Terms of Reference for the evaluation, the inception report and the evaluation report. The evaluation commenced in August 2020 and the final report was submitted to the Steering

Committee in early February 2021. Informal feedback from stakeholders regarding the evaluation has been very positive.

Throughout 2020, the Fund Secretariat continued to support UNCTs to apply a human rights-based approach to development through knowledge exchange, primarily through managing the online UNSDG Community of Practice on Human Rights and LNOB and sharing HRBA-related updates, activities, tools and publications through the UNSDG network including through RCs and RCOs. The Fund Secretariat also supported the roll out of the DCO annual reporting by UNCTs (Information Management System) to ensure the collection and analysis of data on the capacities, actions and results on human rights mainstreaming at country level. This data is used for many purposes, including QCPR monitoring and to inform the policy-practice feedback loop.

The Fund Secretariat also ensured that donors received periodic updates, including on the UNSDG-HRM Fund's activities in the time of COVID-19, its relationship and contribution to other UN initiatives, and on the continuing demand for human rights mainstreaming support. With coordination and substantive support from the Fund Secretariat, and advice from the Steering Committee entities' resource mobilization experts, the Steering Committee produced a Transitional Funding Proposal for 2021 which was shared with current and potential donors. Through these efforts, USD 7.3 million in commitments was secured from Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, enabling full implementation of the UNSDG-HRM Fund 2021 workplan.

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## TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Throughout 2020 the Fund Secretariat continued to work closely with the Participating UN Organizations 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

## EVALUATION OF THE UNSDG-HRM FUND – FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

The evaluation report concluded, among others, that: “The Fund has demonstrated its **unique added value in supporting human rights mainstreaming throughout the UNDS** and is well placed to further advance human rights mainstreaming within the context of UNDS Reform,” and, “**By operating through its current pooled funding format, the Fund is able to directly engage a variety of UN agencies in human rights mainstreaming efforts, leverage the comparative advantages of these agencies, and pursue a diversified portfolio that links global to country level efforts.**” Selected findings include:

- the Fund has demonstrated its relevance by addressing important needs and priorities within the UNDS at the global, regional, and country levels and among national stakeholders by serving as an essential funding tool to mainstream human rights across the UNDS;
- the inter-agency nature of the Fund’s support for Human Rights Advisers and the fact that Human Rights Advisers work directly in the Resident Coordinator’s Office and are supported with the full institutional capacity of OHCHR has facilitated human rights support across UN organizations that make up UNCTs;
- the Fund has made important contributions to institutionalizing and operationalizing human rights mainstreaming across the UNDS;
- the Fund has provided extensive support to Member States through support from HRAs to strengthen their reporting on human rights and engagement with human rights mechanisms;
- the Fund has been effective at supporting the mainstreaming of human rights at the country level particularly through the provision of HRAs, which is the most widely recognized and appreciated aspect of the Fund’s work. Human Rights Advisors have played and continue to play a larger role than simply advising on human rights issues that includes bringing national stakeholders together and advancing human rights priorities at the country level;
- the Fund has found efficient ways to support human rights mainstreaming;
- mainstreaming human rights into five-year country plans (UNDAFs and UNSDCFs) has encouraged the sustainability of the integration of human rights into country planning and programming; and
- the Fund provides significant value-added to inter-agency coordination and cooperation around human rights by consisting of multiple UN agencies and by facilitating a space for UN agencies to work together to mainstream human rights.

*Note:* Evaluation Recommendations and the Steering Committee Management Response will be addressed in the consolidated annual report for 2021.

UNSDG. The Fund Secretariat also supported the DCO Senior Human Rights Adviser in providing secretariat support to the Human Rights Task Team, which included coordination and substantive support

to the initiatives of the Human Rights Task Team requiring funding from the UNSDG-HRM Fund (eg. the LNOB Guide and the revision of the HRBA Common Learning Package).

As the review of the UNSDG working arrangements continued in 2020, the decision to de-link the responsibilities of the Steering Committee from these formal structures proved sound as it shielded the UNSDG-HRM Fund from any direct impact of the ongoing discussions. The work supported by the UNSDG-HRM Fund remained aligned with the vision and priorities of the Human Rights Task Team, with lead implementing entities regularly engaging the Human Rights Task Team for substantive guidance and contributions on Fund-supported projects, as well as knowledge-sharing purposes. The Fund Secretariat and DCO also facilitated inter-linkages between the initiatives supported by the UNSDG-HRM Fund and other UNSDG processes, DCO-led workshops and trainings for RCO staff, UNSDG Task Teams on COVID-19 and on Integrated Policy Support.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some of the approved project activities involving in-person contact (such as training of trainers, deployment of

light teams and peer exchanges) were redesigned or put on hold due to travel restrictions. The Fund Secretariat supported Participating UN Organizations in the amendment of projects and prepared financial and other information for the Steering Committee to ensure informed decision-making regarding adjustments to planned projects.

The UNSDG-HRM Fund evaluation involved a survey among RCs and HRAs in 2020. Feedback from these critical stakeholders confirmed that human rights mainstreaming in development is a top priority for RCs, and that there remain unaddressed needs at the country level. The selected data below reflect the priority areas of need, as indicated by RCs and HRAs.

From the RCs' feedback, the top needs for better human rights mainstreaming point to funding, high-level advocacy support, support to engagement with national authorities, and increased technical capacities (see Figure 10).

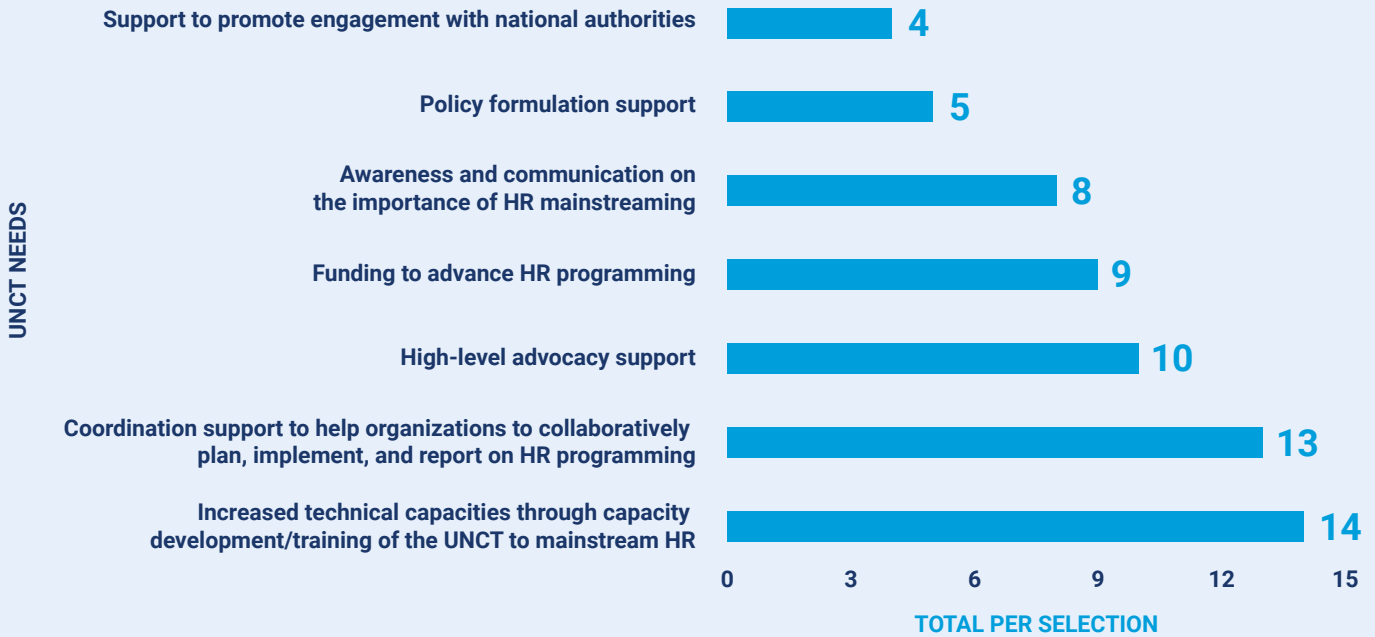
**FIGURE 10.**  
**RESIDENT COORDINATORS' TOP THREE NEEDS WITH RESPECT TO BETTER MAINSTREAMING HUMAN RIGHTS THROUGHOUT THEIR WORK**



Source: Final Report of the Evaluation of the UNSDG-HRM Fund, Annex II, survey of RCs.

FIGURE 11.

### HRAs' ASSESSMENT OF TOP THREE NEEDS OF THE UNCT WITH RESPECT TO BETTER MAINSTREAMING HUMAN RIGHTS THROUGHOUT THEIR WORK



Source: Final Report of the Evaluation of the UNSDG-HRM Fund, Annex II, survey of HRAs.

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From the HRAs' feedback (see Figure 11), the priority needs of UNCTs for better human rights mainstreaming are: increased technical capacities, coordination support, high-level advocacy support, and funding.

The two figures above reflect similar needs (although differing in ranking) and the importance of continuing support for human rights mainstreaming in the operational activities in the development pillar.



## CONCLUSION

2020 presented unprecedented challenges for the vision of the 2030 Agenda. The support provided by the UNSDG-HRM Fund strengthened the efforts and results of all UNCTs, including through direct and specialised advisory support. As the UNSDG-HRM Fund embarks on its strategic planning processes including the theory of change and multi-year results framework, the Steering Committee will be assessing how best to build on past successes and respond to current and emerging challenges at country level to further strengthen the impact of the Fund.

As the RCs and UNCTs continue their work on the new generation of Cooperation Frameworks and implementing joint actions that respond to requests from Member States for assistance in fulfilling

their commitments to human rights, the UNSDG-HRM Fund is well-placed to build on gains in UN policies and structures that reinforce the centrality of human rights to development, including through providing advisory capacity and other support to RCs and UNCTs to integrate human rights in analysis, programming and advocacy - including efforts to prevent and respond to crises, and engage strategically with human rights mechanisms.

In responding to the increasingly complex and divisive challenges the world faces today the UNSDG-HRM Fund will continue to be a critical tool for the UN development system in ensuring that its support to countries' implementation of the 2030 Agenda is grounded unequivocally in human rights.



## THE HUMAN RIGHTS ADVISER PROGRAMME – SPECIAL SECTION

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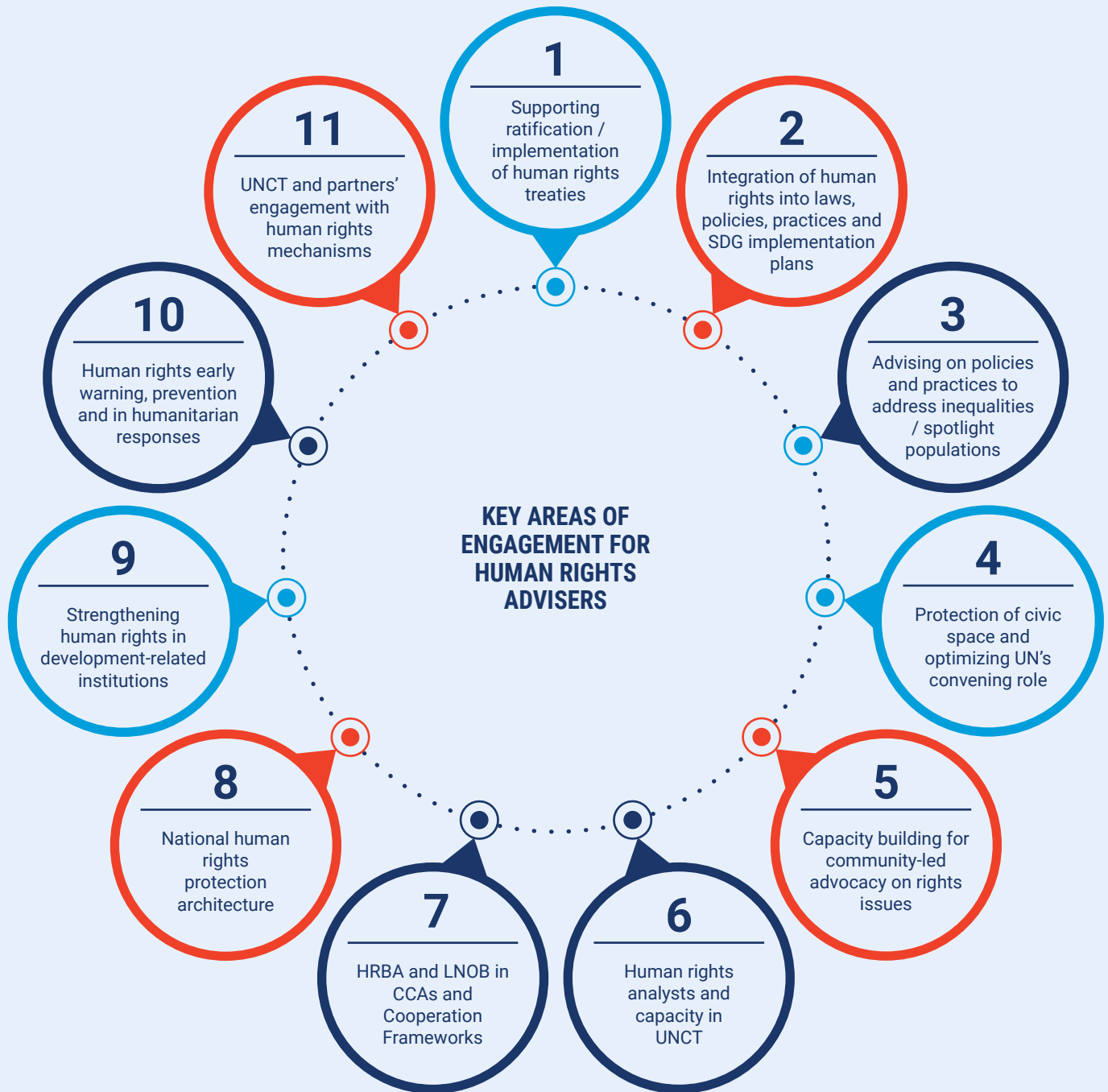
*“Much has changed since the repositioning of the UN development system. Yet, one thing remains as valid as ever: Human Rights Advisers are an invaluable resource in helping RCs and the UN system put people as rightsholders at the centre of our work. This is what we’re all about. Human Rights Advisers 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.

### WHAT IS THE HUMAN RIGHTS ADVISER PROGRAMME?

The Human Rights Adviser (HRA) programme is a crucial asset in the repositioned UN development system in supporting countries to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. HRAs deployed under the 2012 UNSDG [Strategy For the Deployment of Human Rights Advisers to Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams](#) 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.

## KEY AREAS OF ENGAGEMENT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ADVISERS



### HOW DO HRAs FUNCTION?

HRAs are deployed at the request of RCs on behalf of the UNCTs. HRAs support and assist the RCs, Heads

of UN agencies and members of UNCTs to integrate human rights in their programming strategies and implementation as well as to strengthen national human rights capacities. HRAs are deployed under a common Terms of Reference with the RC as the

first reporting officer. The HRA programme deploys both national and international staff according to the country-specific needs.

OHCHR has the overall responsibility and oversight for the deployment of HRAs, and provides substantive support, training and backstopping. This includes valuable institutional and policy support, linkages to the thematic expertise of OHCHR and 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 and UNCT and national partners. Where relevant, HRAs' advice also strengthens the integration of human rights considerations in humanitarian response and post-crisis recovery under the direction of the RC/ Humanitarian Coordinator. The UNSDG, through its member entities and coordination mechanisms, and DCO also provide guidance and support to HRAs and engage with HRAs to ensure that their country experience informs the policy-practice loop.

***“The HRA deployment has been instrumental in taking the UNCT’s aspirations for rights-based development to the realm of action and practical initiatives to operationalize LNOB and enhance partnerships with CSOs.”***

**Joanna Kazana, RC Belarus**

The work of HRAs in providing strategic advice and technical support to focus attention on the situation of groups at risk of being left behind, as well as on the pivotal preventive role of human rights analysis, has proven critical throughout the challenging times faced by countries in addressing the impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, and striving to achieve the vision of the 2030 Agenda. Through this timely and targeted advice, RCs and UN entities were able to identify the specific challenges and obstacles faced by marginalized groups during the COVID-19 pandemic, and advocate for approaches and tools to respond to gaps in access to basic social services and enjoyment of rights. Results achieved with the support of HRAs are possible thanks to the engagement and expertise of RCs and UNCT

members, as well as through additional funding from OHCHR and other sources in some cases.

***“I would like to emphasize the technical support of the HRA to the RCO and the UNCT in the development process of the assessment and the Socio-Economic Response Plan, mainly to verify the integration of the human rights-based approach and the linkage to the HR recommendations of different UN protection mechanisms to strengthen the response and recovery proposed actions.”***

**Susana Sottoli, RC Bolivia**

## **SUPPORT FOR THE HRA PROGRAMME**

The HRA programme has grown from just a small number in 2011, to deployments in 43 countries by the end of 2020. The HRA programme covers all geographic regions. Deployments are either (or both) international and national experts as the situation requires. With the launch of the UN Secretary-General’s [Call to Action on Human Rights](#) in 2020 and UN Member States’ request for the support of the UN development system in fulfilling their human rights obligations in the 2020 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review resolution ([A/RES/75/233](#)), the HRA Programme is expected to continue expanding in response to demand. Supported primarily through the [UNSDG Human Rights Mainstreaming Multi-Donor Trust Fund](#) with additional contributions from OHCHR and through other sources, the HRA programme provides a critical resource for ensuring that UNCTs are able to access the support that they need to apply the guiding principles of a human rights-based approach, leave no one behind and gender equality and women’s empowerment to all UN development system activities, from developmental to crisis response operations. The timely and critical support of Member States, from funding contributions



## 43 HUMAN RIGHTS ADVISER DEPLOYMENTS SECURED BY END OF 2020



to recognition of the HRAs' valuable support to countries' development and human rights progress, are essential in sustaining the programme.

*"Human rights are at the core of the UN system's work, and at all times, including in times of crisis, it is essential to ensure that the support provided does not leave anyone behind. When programmes, projects and actions are designed and ultimately implemented we work with all UN agencies to identify vulnerable and marginalized groups as well as civil society organizations through which aid can and will reach the most vulnerable."*

Bea Ferenci, Human Rights Adviser, Moldova

### FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

- OHCHR HRA Operational Management: Pablo Espiniella [pespiniella@ohchr.org](mailto:pespiniella@ohchr.org)
- UNSDG Human Rights Mainstreaming Multi-Donor Trust Fund Secretariat: Brianna Harrison [brianna.harrison@un.org](mailto:brianna.harrison@un.org)
- MPTFO Gateway: <http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/HRM00>



## ANNEXES

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### 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 UNSDG-HRM Fund since 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 Organizations 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, RCs/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 UNSDG-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:

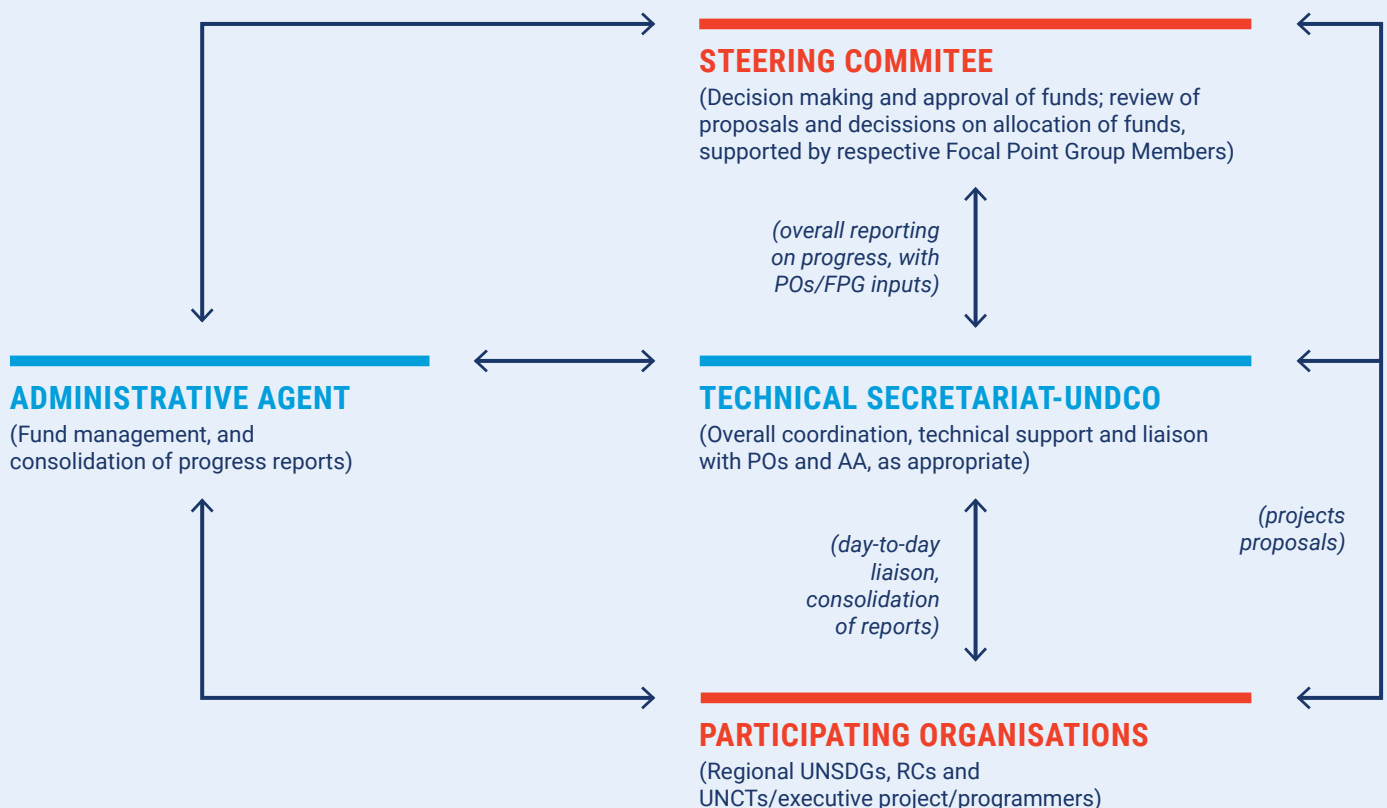
- Submit proposals to the UNSDG-HRM Steering Committee, through the Fund Secretariat, for review and subsequent consideration by the Steering Committee;
- Design, implement and oversee projects;

- 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 UNSDG-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.

## GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE OF THE UNSDG-HRM FUND



## ANNEX 2. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK OF THE UNSDG-HRM FUND AND TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS TASK TEAM

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 (Human Rights Task Team) 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/UNSDG 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 2020.

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 (August 2020), Extracts

#### **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 Task 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 Members 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.

### Scope of work and working methods

The Task Team will include representatives from UNSDG member entities. Other UN entities may be invited to participate in the work of the Task Team by the co-chairs where relevant. The Task Team will be co-chaired at Assistant Secretary-General or Director level. Participation will be at technical level, with the option for specific meetings to be called at ASG or Director level if decided by the co-chairs.

The Team will be co-Chaired by OHCHR (Nada Al-Nashif), UNESCO (Gabriela Ramos) and WHO (Zsuzsanna Jakab). The co-Chairs will lead the work of the Team, with Secretariat support provided from DCO. The Team will work to an agreed workplan, convene meetings as appropriate, allocate responsibilities to task teams or other mechanisms for timely delivery of the Team's workplan, liaise with other UNSDG Task Teams as necessary and with UN human rights working groups at regional and country levels, and report to the UNSDG on implementation.

The Task Team will be convened to address the following:

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 UNSDG task teams, collaborating with these - in particular, with the new Task Team on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment - to integrate norms, standards and principles, including leave no one behind and human rights in their work and to speak as one voice on these issues.

## ANNEX 3. ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<b>CAT</b>	United Nations Convention Against Torture	<b>NMRF</b>	National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow up
<b>CCA</b>	Common Country Analysis	<b>NHRI</b>	National Human Rights Institutions
<b>CEB</b>	The United Nations System Chief Executive Board for Coordination	<b>OCHA</b>	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>CED</b>	International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances	<b>OHCHR</b>	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
<b>CEDAW</b>	UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	<b>RC</b>	Resident Coordinator
<b>CRPD</b>	UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	<b>QCPR</b>	Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review
<b>CMW</b>	International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families	<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organization	<b>UNCT</b>	United Nations Country Team
<b>DCO</b>	Development Coordination Office	<b>UNHCT</b>	United Nations Humanitarian Country Team
<b>HRA</b>	Human Rights Adviser	<b>UNDAF</b>	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
<b>HRBA</b>	Human Rights-Based Approach	<b>UNDG</b>	United Nations Development Group
<b>ICCPR</b>	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights	<b>UNDS</b>	United Nations Development System
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization	<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration	<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>KAMPALA CONVENTION</b>	African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa	<b>UNEP</b>	United Nations Environment Programme
<b>LNOB</b>	Leave No One Behind	<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>MDTF</b>	Multi-Donor Trust Fund	<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>MEL</b>	Minimum Essential Levels	<b>UNSDG</b>	United Nations Sustainable Development Group
<b>MOU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding	<b>UN SERP</b>	Socio-Economic Response Plan
<b>MPTF OFFICE</b>	Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office UNDP	<b>UNSSC</b>	United Nations System Staff College
		<b>UN Women</b>	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
		<b>UPR</b>	Universal Periodic Review
		<b>VFTC</b>	Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights
		<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization





UNITED NATIONS  
SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
GROUP



United Nations  
MPTF Office

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**Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office**  
Bureau of Management Services  
United Nations Development Programme GATEWAY:  
<http://mptf.undp.org>