



Human Rights  
Mainstreaming  
Fund



United Nations  
MPTF Office

# INVESTING IN HUMAN RIGHTS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Consolidated Annual Report of the Human Rights Mainstreaming Fund 2021

**#HUMANRIGHTS4SDG**



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

1 January 2021 – 31 December 2021

**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 Multi-Donor Trust Fund (the 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 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 2021. This report is consolidated based on information contained in the individual programme narrative reports and financial information provided by the 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



International Labour Organisation

## 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

2021 was characterized by a world still reeling from the COVID-19 pandemic, intensifying conflict, deepening inequalities, increased polarization and a climate emergency threatening our lives in increasingly direct and severe ways. Described by the UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, as the “greatest cascade of crises of our lifetimes”, the challenges ahead for achieving the vision of the 2030 Agenda are daunting. To support transformational, whole of society responses the UN system must work together, drawing on its foundation of international human rights and the respective strengths of its entities and partners. The fundamental importance for the UN of putting human rights at the centre of all of its work is clear, and governments have specifically called on the UN development system (UNDS) to support the

operationalization of human rights to realize the pledge to leave no one behind.

In 2021, the Human Rights Mainstreaming Fund (HRM Fund) expanded its support on integrating human rights in development – reaching more Resident Coordinators (RCs) and United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs), and more of their national partners, with more diverse types of support. The results of these initiatives show that with coordinated efforts guided by coherent policies and frameworks, the UNDS is supporting structural changes at the country level despite the many obstacles. These changes are improving people’s lives and their enjoyment of their human rights, and building the capacity of governments to implement their human rights obligations and development commitments.



These changes are building blocks for a renewed social contract anchored in human rights. The Fund is also building the muscles of the UNDS to jointly tackle the root causes of our biggest development challenges through responses that operationalize the guiding principles of a human rights-based approach, gender equality and women's empowerment and leaving no one behind.

The HRM Fund supports the efforts of the UNDS to respond to the call by Member States for UNDS entities to assist countries in their efforts to respect and fulfil their human rights obligations and commitments, including as a critical tool to operationalize the 2030 Agenda's pledge to leave no one behind. Leveraging the opportunities presented by the UNDS repositioning, the Fund enables the empowered, independent UN Resident Coordinators and new generation UN Country Teams to advance the values of the UN Charter and ensure that human rights are at the heart of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through coherent, system-wide policies and coordinated inter-agency action at all levels. The Fund's value-add is, drawing on inter-agency expertise, its focus specifically on strengthening the capacity of the UNDS through joint actions wherever possible, addressing gaps in the system and providing catalytic resources to UNCTs to respond to emerging human rights priorities and opportunities at country level, including strengthened partnerships with national human rights institutions, duty bearers and rights holders such as civil society organizations and human rights defenders.

Building on the achievements of the past 10 years of operations and the opportunities created by Member States in their mandates to the UN and the vision of the UN Secretary-General in his Call to Action for Human Rights (Call to Action) and Our Common Agenda, in 2021 the HRM Fund delivered the following key results:

1. **Policy Coherence - human rights reflected in the UNDS reform implementation and COVID-19 response** – for example, finalisation of the UNSDG Operational Guide on Leaving No One Behind drawing on expertise of a broad range of UNDS entities as well as UN Country Teams; finalisation
- of comprehensive, customizable training modules for an integrated approach to the application of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) guiding principles of human rights-based approach (HRBA), gender equality and women's empowerment and leave no one behind (LNOB); and initiation of the collaboration with the UN Staff System College to develop two e-learning courses – one foundational and one deeper, moderated course - based on the training modules.
2. **Strengthened RC and UNCT capacities to lead on human rights at the country level** – expanded in-country, expert advisory capacity and strategic advice from HRAs and further bolstered through additional remote expertise on the economic and social rights by the Surge Initiative empowered RCs and UNCTs to use international norms and standards as the basis for strategic decision-making and engagements with partners, and to use their convening power to support spaces for meaningful participation of civil society in dialogues with governments and policy-making processes.
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 54 countries by the end of 2021 – 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. This support enabled RCs and UNCTs to provide enhanced support to countries on addressing the huge economic impacts of the COVID-19

pandemic and other global crises and seize opportunities to put in place policy frameworks that are anchored in human rights to create more equitable and resilient communities.

- 5. Coherent and strategic engagement of UNCTs and national partners with UN human rights mechanisms** – through enhanced RC and UNCT strategic engagement with the Universal Periodic Review 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. This included integrated country support in 6 countries with results in the areas of strengthened rights-based data platforms for the SDGs, enhanced human rights and

SDG systems coherence and integration and targeted efforts on specific human rights and SDG issues; enhanced engagement of NHRIs in SDG monitoring, reporting and implementation in 10 countries; and increased understanding and documentation of how UNCTs have used the UPR process to advance sustainable development.

Through these initiatives, the HRM Fund has contributed to stronger integration of human rights, LNOB and gender equality and women’s empowerment into UNDS policies and guidance for UNCTs’ support to 2030 Agenda implementation that is underpinned by human rights, as well as strengthened RC and UNCT capacity to consistently leverage the UN’s mandate and normative authority in advocacy and programming, and to advance country level actions on thematic areas under the Secretary-



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General's Call to Action (especially rights at the core of sustainable development, public participation and civic space). Fund-supported results, particularly at the country level, demonstrate the many opportunities for UNCTs to expand and deepen their partnerships with rights holders and duty bearers, and to enhance UN analysis and planning, advocacy and joint programmes to better target the underlying causes of poverty, inequalities, humanitarian need, conflict and instability.

2021 was also a critical year for ensuring that the HRM Fund continues to represent a strategic investment by partners in ensuring that the UNDS delivers on the expectations of Member States and responds to the needs of the people we serve. The Fund Steering Committee<sup>1</sup> reviewed the Fund's achievements towards institutionalizing the mainstreaming of human rights into the UN operational activities for development, drawing on the findings and recommendations of the first independent evaluation of the Fund (2011-2019) and other data and information available. It then initiated a broad consultative process - with UN entities, RCs and current contributors to the Fund - through which it re-calibrated the Fund's overall goal, mission and vision to maximize its added value in supporting RCs and UNCTs to deliver on the 2030 Agenda, the UNDS repositioning and new Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) mandates, and the priorities of the Secretary-General's Call to Action. The outcomes of this process include a significantly strengthened Fund, with a detailed theory of change and multi-year results framework and targets, strengthened governance structure of the Fund with a formal role for donors, as well as enhanced operational guidance for participating UN organisations and Fund-specific resource mobilization and communications strategies and brand identity to reinforce the new strategic vision. These management outputs are aligned with the 2020 QCPR and were guided by the

Funding Compact Commitment #14 on common management features across all inter-agency pooled funds aimed at increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of development-related inter-agency pooled funds.<sup>2</sup> This work is further detailed in the Operational Performance section of this report.

Resource contributions to the HRM Fund met with challenges in 2021, with the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on donors' resources. Total contributions received was US\$ 6,226,810. Leveraging the expertise and capacities of the Participating UN Organisations, the RC system and other UN system entities, and the resources and support of its donors, the Fund continued to deliver significant results for rights-based development with relatively modest investments. The new Terms of Reference and extension of the Fund to 2025 will provide a solid foundation for bringing on new partners and securing multi-year commitments, which is a priority of the Steering Committee. The full replenishment of the Fund's 2022-2025 appeal will be a key contribution towards ensuring the achievement of the UNDS reforms, as well as cross-pillar goals of peace and security and human rights for all.

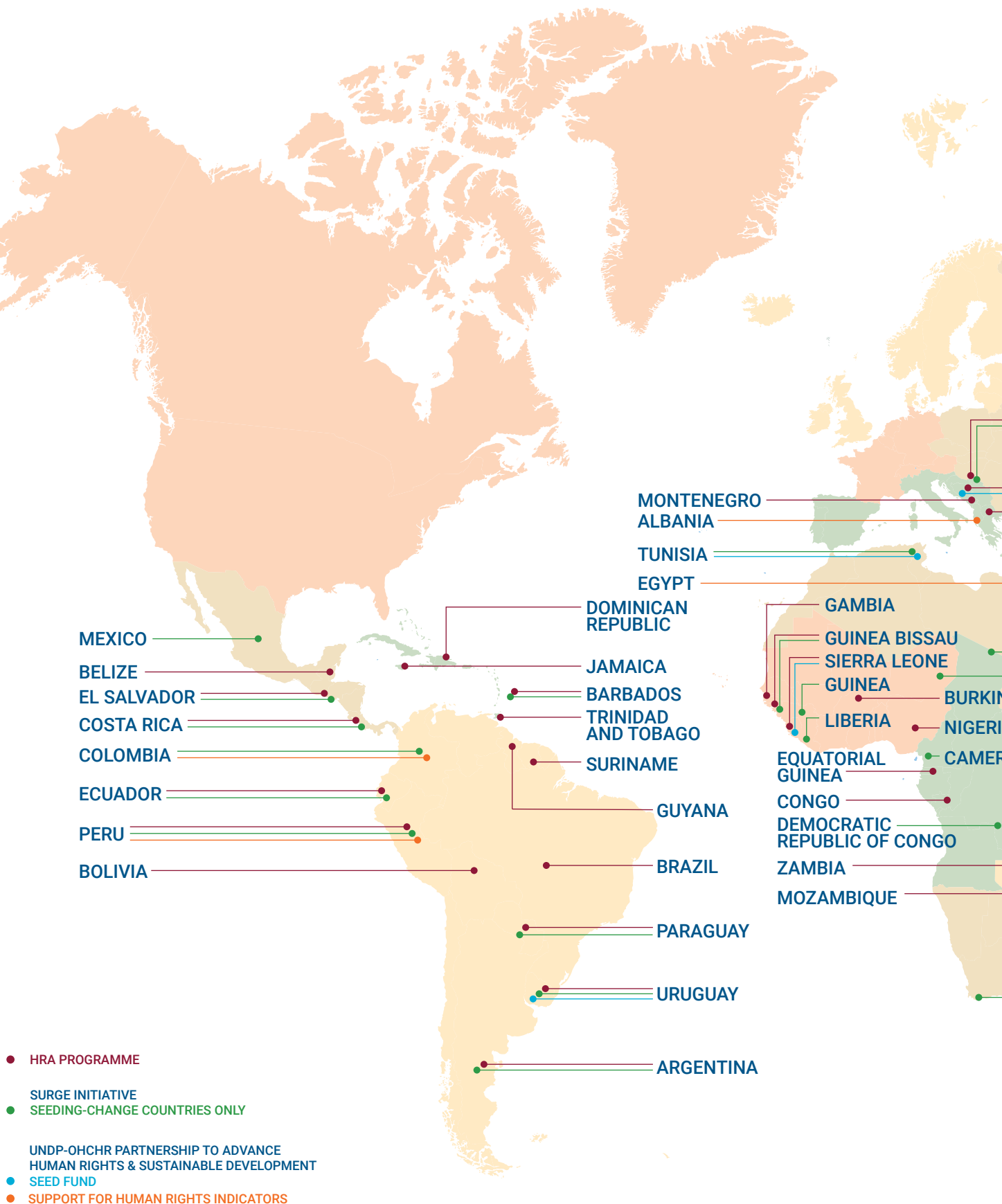
As of 31 December 2021, the cumulative amount transferred to Participating UN Organizations (7) from the HRM Fund was US\$ **30,266,169** with a balance of US\$ **1,954,794** remaining in the Fund account for 2022 programming. Notwithstanding the continuing operational challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, the Fund and its support structures demonstrated adaptability during the year to maximise delivery and results. The overall delivery rate for approved proposals in 2021 was 86%, which demonstrates the readiness of Participating UN Organisations to take forward initiatives supported by the Fund.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In 2021 the Steering Committee comprised: OHCHR (Chair), UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women, UNFPA, UNESCO, DCO and the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office. In 2022 ILO replaced UNFPA, which stepped down in September 2021.

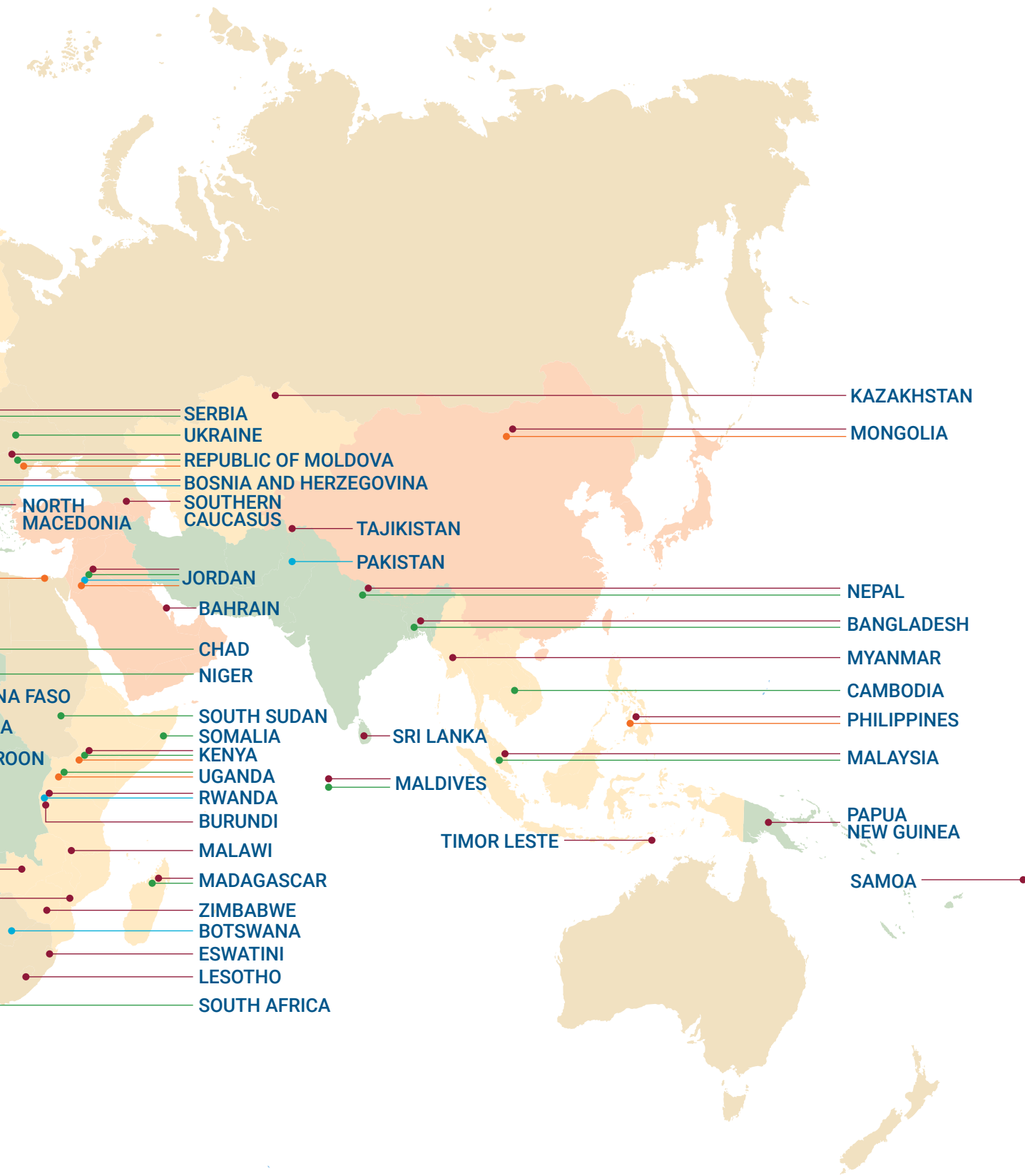
<sup>2</sup> UN General Assembly and UN Economic and Social Council, 'Report of the Secretary-General: Implementation of General Assembly resolution 71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, 2019: funding compact', A/74/73/Add.1-E/2019/14/Add.1

<sup>3</sup> The annual delivery rate is negatively impacted by the need to transfer funds to cover HRA salary costs for a full year in advance of posts being advertised.

# HRM FUND DIRECT AND IN-COUNTRY SUPPORT IN 2021







Note: The designations employed and the presentation of material on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or any area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.



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## SDG ACHIEVEMENTS

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***“Human rights are vital problem-solving tools that safeguard lives and livelihoods and can prevent grievances from arising.”***

**Our Common Agenda, 2021**

The Human Rights Mainstreaming Fund (HRM Fund) provides targeted support to the inter-agency efforts of the UN development system (UNDS) to put human rights at the core of its support to countries on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and across all SDGs. In a world of increasing inequality and rolling crises, including armed conflicts and the COVID-19 pandemic, the urgency of human rights for sustainable development is clear. Human rights are a vital tool for preventive, transformative and sustainable change that leaves no one behind and reaches the furthest behind first. As recognised in Our Common Agenda, “making human rights commitments a reference point in the design and delivery of United Nations programmes, development

assistance and crisis prevention initiatives” is a key element that the United Nations must take forward as part of its own support to and reflection on the renewed social contract.

Through relatively modest funds provided by generous contributors to the HRM Fund, and with the collaborative engagement of UNSDG entities, Resident Coordinators (RCs) and United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs) have been empowered 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>4</sup> With the UN Charter and the full spectrum of human rights as the reference points, the Fund is building on the key milestones over the past decades and leveraging the opportunities provided by the 2030 Agenda, UN reform and strategic vision of Member States and the Secretary-General to

<sup>4</sup> The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, para 18.

## 2021 CALL TO ACTION



drive concrete impact and change for the benefit of all, and particularly those left behind.

Investments of the HRM Fund have provided catalytic support to realize Our Common Agenda's vision of renewed social contracts anchored in human rights, through inter-agency initiatives to anchor new policies, systems, guidance and support in human rights, that enable UNCTs to build a strategic, rights-based value proposition to countries, with the human rights leadership of impartial, independent and empowered Resident Coordinators who stand up for international norms and standards and the values of the UN Charter. In the context of crises like COVID-19, previous results supported by the Fund 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.

The HRM Fund has also proven to be valuable in supporting staff at the country level in implementation of the Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights (Call to Action). The Call to Action seeks transformative change and emphasizes that human rights underpin 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 Resident Coordinators/Humanitarian Coordinators and UNCTs is essential.

**“Protect and uphold human rights, both in times of peace and in times of conflict.”**

Amina Mohammed, Twitter post, March 15, 2022, 6:58pm,  
<https://twitter.com/AminaJMohammed/status/1503868197916839938?s=20&t=4pghZRnsW3EXAp0tWulinA>

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 HRM Fund’s support to concerted and collective efforts across the UN system in ensuring human rights are at the core of our work at all levels. The Fund’s support to concerted and collective efforts across the UN system in ensuring human rights are the core of our work at all levels have contributed to the implementation of the Call to Action at country level in various ways. For example:

**Advisory capacities for RCs and UNCTs**

- HRA deployments contributed to **rights at the core of sustainable development** and **gender equality and the rights of women**, providing 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.
- HRA deployments were also 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 provided valuable support to RC/HCs and country teams in the integration of human rights in situation analyses and humanitarian responses.
- HRAs’ expertise enabled RCs and UNCTs to expand **public participation and civic space** by advocating and programming more effectively on the rights to freedoms

of opinion and expression, assembly and association. HRAs also supported RCs and UNCTs in the development of partnerships with CSOs, including through creation of community-led data and monitoring systems, inclusive decision-making mechanisms and strengthening CSOs’ capacity to engage effectively on rights issues and with the human rights mechanisms.

- The provision of specialized expertise to advise UNCTs on reinforcing economic, social and other rights outcomes, including as relevant to an economy that enhances human rights - through the Surge Initiative - contributed to **rights at the core of sustainable development** and **rights in times of crisis**. In 2021, this included advisory support to over 61 Common Country Analyses (CCAs) and Cooperation Frameworks as well as technical and financial support to an additional 9 seeding-change country projects to build disaggregated datasets, evidence and analysis on specific economic and social rights needs and challenges relevant to, for example, expanding fiscal space and economic reform. It also included reinforced partnerships between economists in the RC Offices and human rights specialists and human rights economists at the country level, including in the context of COVID-19 socio-economic responses and recovery efforts, and strengthened human rights-based (including from a macroeconomic perspective) analysis in Regional Monthly Reviews (RMRs) and human rights-based root cause analysis of conflicts, including as part of risk analysis and advice provided for CCA development.

**Guidance and capacity building tools**

- Guidance for UNCTs on how to support NHRIs facing acts of intimidation or reprisals and a comparative analysis of various UN protocols on reprisals against human rights defenders (design and consultative process initiated in 2021 under the UNDP-OHCHR partnership, products to be completed by mid-2022) contributes to expanding **public participation and civic space**.





- The compilation and codification of knowledge on good practices at country level in use of the UPR to support sustainable development will serve as a key resource for UNCTs to catalyse progress towards the 2030 Agenda and advance implementation of several areas under the Call to Action including **rights at the core of sustainable development**, as well as Our Common Agenda.
- Guidance and capacity building tools for UNCTs on the application of the HRBA, LNOB and Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment reinforces the importance of addressing root causes of discrimination against women and of ensuring meaningful participation of women across all stages of the UNCT programming cycle, contributing to **rights at the core of sustainable development** and **gender equality and equal rights of women**.
- Other knowledge products supported by the Fund, including on the HRBA and operationalization of LNOB, informed the development of UN guidance and tools on CCAs and Cooperation Frameworks and on COVID-19 socio-economic response, which shape the work of UNCTs together with partners to put **rights at the core of sustainable development**.

#### Catalytic support for RCs and UNCTs

- Integrated country support initiatives to strengthen coherence between human rights and sustainable development systems and approaches at the country level and capturing the needed know-how to advance human rights and sustainable development as well as supporting engagement of UNCTs with NHRIs and NSOs on compiling human rights indicators and data to inform development efforts has helped the UNDS to put **rights at the core of sustainable development**.

Detailed examples of the support provided through the Fund which are relevant to specific thematic areas of the Call to Action as well as Our Common Agenda can be found in the Achievements section of this report.

***“Substantial efforts have been made, including under my call to action, to advance the integration of human rights into development interventions at the country level.”***

Report of the Secretary-General on the Work of the Organization, 2021

Under the 2012 and 2016 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (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 HRM Fund, amongst others, this included stronger integration of human rights and the human rights-based approach (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, leave no one behind (LNOB) and gender equality and women's empowerment in development work through integrated approaches. Recognizing 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, 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 additional, catalytic resources for the UNDS provided by the Fund are building the muscles of the UN to raise awareness amongst national partners of the problem-solving nature of human rights for development and to provide high-quality, joined-up responses to requests for support in this area, as demonstrated in the detailed examples provided in this report.

***"The United Nations stands for the rights of every member of our human family. Today and every day, we will continue to work for justice, equality, dignity and human rights for all."***

**UN Secretary-General António Guterres,  
message on Human Rights Day 2021**

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## KEY STRATEGIC PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS MAINSTREAMING FUND IN 2021

Building on the 2019 [Terms of Reference of the HRM Fund](#) and leveraging the opportunities available and priorities of the UNSDG, the key objectives of the Fund in 2021 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, virtual meetings at global and regional levels, and curated resources available on the UNSDG website and UNSDG Knowledge 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.







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## ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS MAINSTREAMING FUND

*“We are redoubling our efforts to integrate human rights into our sustainable development work and thinking.”*

United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Development Coordination, Robert Piper, 29 April 2022

In 2021, the HRM Fund supported the UNDS to deliver concrete and transformative results in integrating human rights into global policies, programmes and guidance, and strengthening strategic, joined-up actions by United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs) to support Member States, NHRIs, civil society and other key stakeholders in progressing towards the 2030 Agenda, addressing emerging and chronic human rights issues hindering sustainable development, and contributing to stronger prevention and resilience. These achievements included strengthened operationalization of human rights, including a particular focus on economic and social

rights and the interlinkages with economic reform and expansion of fiscal space for the progressive realization of human rights, gender equality and leaving no one behind in countries responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and efforts to recover better, policy advice on structural and legal reforms to address inequalities, enhanced application of the guiding principles in key processes under the UNDS reform including Common Country Analyses (CCAs) and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (Cooperation Frameworks), and progress under priority areas outlined in the Call to Action for Human Rights (Call to Action).



**73 UNCTs receiving direct (in-country) support on human rights and LNOB through the HRM Fund**



In 2021, the Steering Committee strategically managed the resources of the HRM Fund to maximize the stability of ongoing initiatives and to expand the types of support offered to Resident Coordinators (RCs) and UNCTs in response to increased demands and opportunities for the strategic integration of human rights in development.

Building on the insights and recommendations from the independent evaluation of the HRM Fund completed in early 2021, the Steering Committee also engaged in a comprehensive, consultative process to revise the Fund's foundational documents, resulting in strengthened governance and management processes and a renewed strategic vision to maximize impact in the current environment, accompanied by a multi-year results framework for 2022-2025.

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

In 2021, the HRM Fund supported 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 through enhanced integration of the guiding principles in policies and guidance under the UN reform.

Following the successful piloting of the interim draft of the [UNSDG Operational Guide on Leaving No One Behind for UNCTs](#) (LNOB Guide) in 2019 and 2020,

a broad inter-agency group led by OHCHR and DCO (HRM Fund Secretariat) revised and updated the LNOB Guide to further strengthen the practical guidance and provide country examples in key areas. 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. Following extensive review and contributions from across the UNSDG, the [final document](#) was endorsed by the UNSDG in early 2022.

In 2021 the LNOB Guide continued to be utilized by UN country teams and partner governments undertaking in-depth analyses of groups left behind (in a range of contexts such as COVID-19 responses, UN planning processes, peace and conflict analyses, and support to VNRs), including in Kenya, Cabo Verde, Ukraine, Montenegro, Morocco and Serbia. The Guide also informed the analytical framework for the 2021 inter-agency review of the integration of human rights, LNOB and gender equality and women's empowerment in CCAs and Cooperation Frameworks, the findings of which will inform future policies and support to UNCTs. The Guide was featured in the May 2021 launch of the SDG Acceleration Toolkit hosted by the UNSDG Integrated Policy Practitioners' Network.

A parallel effort of the HRM Fund towards UNSDG policy coherence was the development of capacity building resources for UNCTs on HRBA, LNOB and Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (led by

*Operationalizing  
Leaving No One  
Behind*  
Good Practice Note for  
UN Country Teams



*Human Rights,  
Gender Equality  
and Women's  
Empowerment,  
and Leave No One  
Behind*  
Facilitators Guide



UN Women), which built on the 2019 work to update UNSDG Common Learning Package on the Human Rights Based Approach (led by OHCHR with HRM Fund support). In 2021, UN Women, in close collaboration with UNFPA, UNICEF and OHCHR and inputs from UNESCO, UNDP, ILO and DCO finalized the training modules for an integrated approach to the guiding principles on HRBA, LNOB and gender equality and women's empowerment, including presentation slide decks and facilitation manual. The comprehensive modules are aligned with the steps in the new Cooperation Framework cycle, are customizable and can be tailored to the specific needs of the UN country teams. In response to the COVID-19 travel restrictions, the in-person 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 broader e-learning course developed by the UNSSC and DCO on CCAs and Cooperation Frameworks. The new online approach has enhanced efficiency and sustainability features, since all staff members can participate in (at minimum) a foundational course at no cost. The UNSSC will use the completed training modules for the rollout of the online trainings in 2022.

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

RC and UNCT leadership on human rights is critical for achieving the 2030 Agenda and has received increased attention in recent years including from Member States (in the 2020 QCPR) and from the Secretary-General in the Call to Action and Our Common Agenda. Throughout 2021 the vision for a UN leadership anchored in human rights and positioning human rights strategically at country level was advanced with support from the HRM Fund.

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact directly on the opportunities for continuation of the RC human rights leadership dialogues in 2021. Despite these challenges, the HRM Fund and UNSDG entities engaged through remote platforms with RCs on leadership issues relating to human rights. For example, in 2021, the Fund Steering Committee convened a virtual

consultation with RCs and DCO Regional Directors to discuss challenges and opportunities on UNCT engagements on human rights. The consultation fed into the Fund's review of its foundational documents and new multiyear results framework. The leaders pointed to the importance of having dedicated human rights capacity to create opportunities and sustain longer-term engagements of national partners, both at programmatic and political/diplomatic levels, as well as the need for access to catalytic funds to engage UNCTs in joint efforts to respond to changing human rights situations at the country level.

HRAs provide valuable expertise and advice which 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 2021, additional expert advisory support for RC and UNCT leadership and advocacy on the operationalization of economic and social rights, including from macroeconomic specialists, was also delivered through the OHCHR Surge Initiative. For example, the Surge Initiative technical support has informed various UNCT advocacy, policy and programming initiatives with national counterparts and IFIs on, for example, fiscal policies and human rights-based budget analysis, to promote social protection and work on other economic and social rights in **Jordan, Cambodia, Serbia, and Barbados**, amongst others.

***“When faced with human rights challenges, it is my role as the RC to raise these challenges with the Government, and to find common solutions. There is not a single country where raising such sensitive issues is easy. The presence of a human rights adviser helps the RC and the UNCT navigate the normative framework, and equally importantly brings experience and best practices for resolving common challenges, so that we can take action, with the Government and civil society actors.”***

UN Resident Coordinator, Philippines

***“Through the technical advice of the Human Rights Adviser including analysis and linking UNHCR with key national actors including the Malawi Human Rights Commission and human rights civil society groups, UNHCR was able to play a key role in supporting effective advocacy and strategic actions which resulted in the suspension of a relocation Order that would have had disastrous implications for thousands of refugees in Malawi. Reforming laws and policies relating to refugees in line with international standards is a priority for the UNCT under the Cooperation Framework 2019-2023. With the valuable support of the HRA, we have increased the Government’s understanding of the human rights implications of the Order and consideration of alternatives.”***

**KOUAME Cyr Modeste,  
UNHCR Representative, Malawi**

The HRM Fund Secretariat also contributed to strengthened RC leadership on LNOB and human rights-based approaches through support to the implementation of three inclusion-related accountability scorecards for UNCTs under UN system-wide strategies on youth, gender equality and disability inclusion, which were also highlighted by Member States as priorities for strengthened engagement by the UNDS in the QCPR 2020. In 2021 DCO, with support from the Fund Secretariat, approved a Disability Inclusion Strategy for the Resident Coordinator System 2022-2025, which will further strengthen the accountability of Resident Coordinators for leadership in this area. These strategies and scorecards are roadmaps for UNCTs on joint action and provide accountability and incentives for enhanced efforts, including through direct engagement with representative organizations at country level in key UNCT planning and programming processes. In many countries, HRAs played a key role in supporting RC leadership on the implementation of these strategies which are

## **MONGOLIA**

In **Mongolia**, RC advocacy with support from the HRA contributed to the approval of the new law of human rights defenders through advocacy and outreach to government officials. On 2 April 2021, Mongolia became the first country in the Asia-Pacific region to adopt legislation on the protection of Human Rights Defenders (HRDs). The Law on the Legal Status of HRDs is the result of a years-long collective effort of the Mongolian government, civil society, and OHCHR, in cooperation with the UN presence in Mongolia. The law was drafted by the National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia with the support of civil society. The law includes a definition of human rights defenders in line with international standards, provides for their protection, and also foresees the establishment of an independent body to prevent and respond to violations of their human rights.

## **SERBIA**

In **Serbia**, the UNCT with the leadership and technical support from the HRA, advocated for increased civil society participation in policy development. The UN RC was invited to co-chair of the social dialogues which provides a forum for civil society participation in legislative and policy discussions under the auspices of the Prime Minister and Minister of Human Rights and the EU instruments.



critical entry points for advancing comprehensive, human rights-based approaches that address UN programming and operations. In 2021, the Fund Secretariat also supported the elaboration of indicators for the monitoring framework of the QCPR to track UNCT attention to human rights and groups left behind, including efforts on disability inclusion.

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

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact negatively on development gains and exacerbate inequalities, the unique expertise and skillset of HRAs enabled empowered and independent RCs and UNCTs 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 and in support of the

Secretary-General's Call to Action. Demand for HRAs continues to outstrip supply. In 2021, the number of HRA posts secured increased from 43 in 2020 to 54.

HRAs are highly 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 increase the strategic engagement with international and regional human rights mechanisms by UNCTs, governments, CSOs and human rights defenders, NHRIs and other national stakeholders. HRAs also supported UNCTs' engagement with other pooled funds – such as the Joint SDG Fund, the Peacebuilding Fund, and the UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities - to leverage additional resources for interventions to address structural causes of complex development and human rights challenges. HRAs' expertise also contributed to more coherent and joined up action on human rights under UN system-wide strategies and action plans on gender equality, youth, disability inclusion and indigenous persons.



## 2021 key results achieved by the HRA Programme:

- Assisted the integration of human rights into UN programmes and activities, particularly in CCA and Cooperation Framework processes in 27 countries
- Support to 18 RCs and UNCTs on the promotion of human rights as a common UN value and upholding international norms and standards through advocacy on key areas such as discrimination, hate speech, civic space, protection of human rights defenders, COVID-19 recovery, and gender-based violence
- Advisory services and technical support to States partners on the domestication and ratification treaties in 11 countries
- Strengthening of national capacities and institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights in 29 countries including strengthening of 9 NHRIs
- Integration of a human rights perspective into responses to humanitarian situations and post-crisis recovery in 8 countries
- Assisted national mechanisms for reporting and follow-up on recommendations from human rights mechanisms in 15 countries.

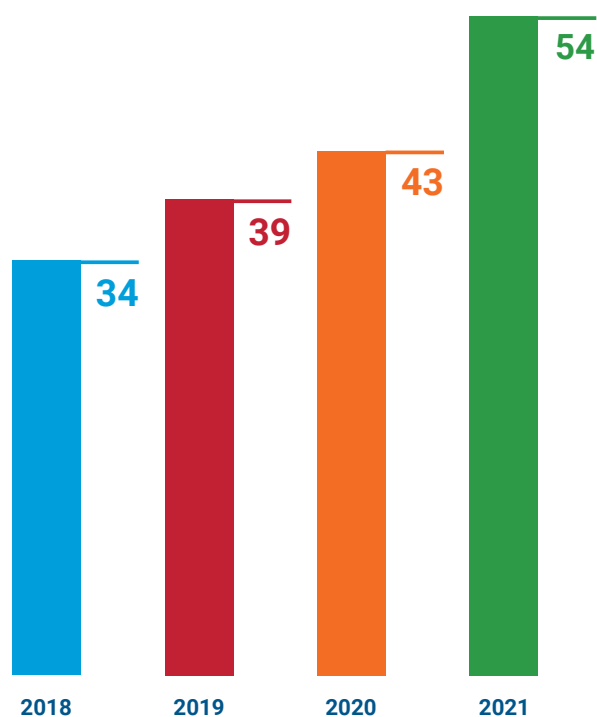
## OVERVIEW OF HRA PROGRAMME IN 2021

Scaling up and strengthening the HRA programme is a key part of the 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 underlined 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 continued expansion of the programme reflects the

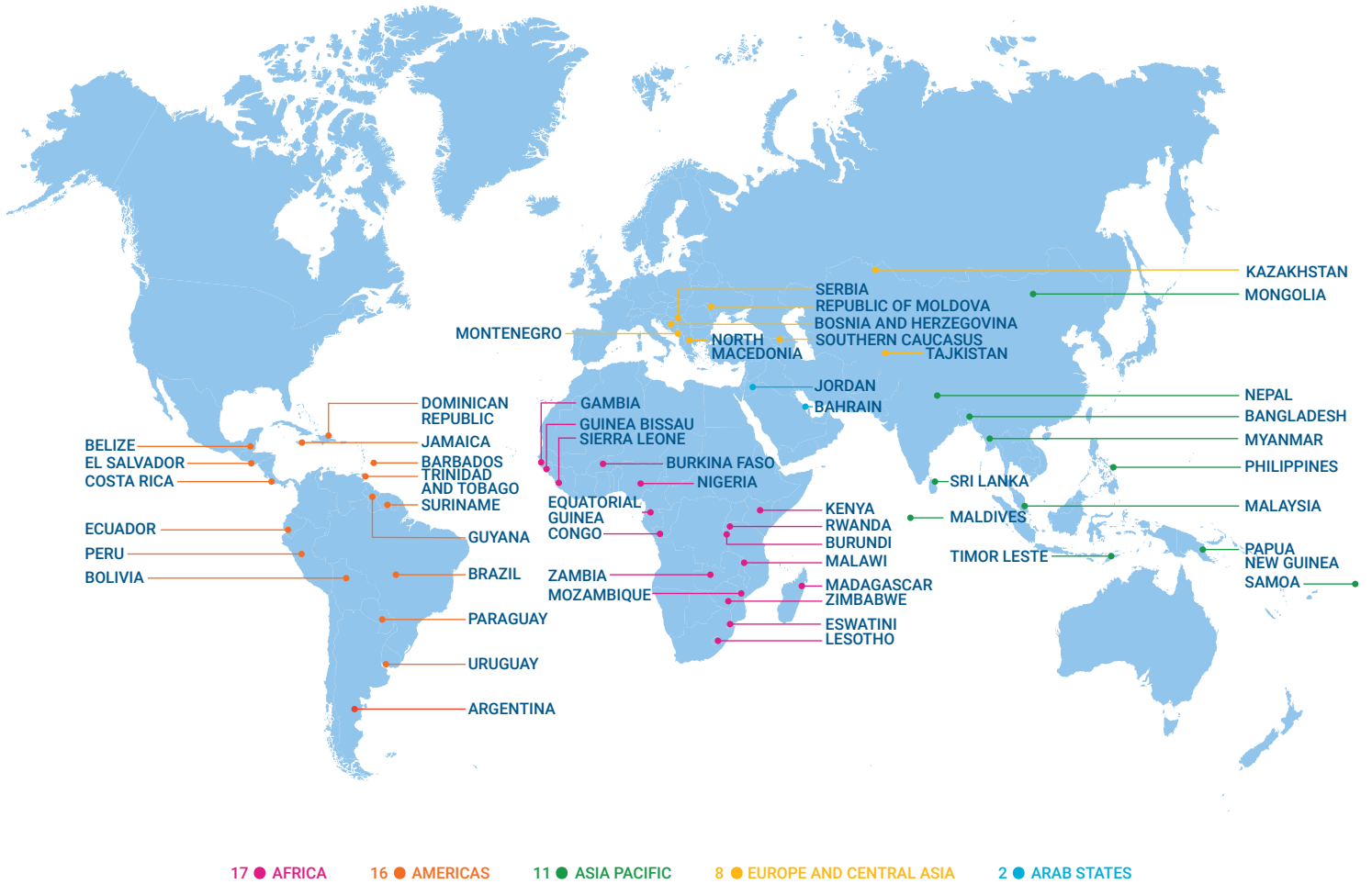
value placed on these capacities by RCs and UNCTs, as well as the increasing recognition and support from partners and donors. The demand for HRAs is increasing as RCs and UNCTs are expanding their efforts to move forward the human rights agenda, including to respond to Member States' request for support in the 2020 QCPR.

The funds received in 2021 made possible to have all HRAs fully covered through the HRM Fund, except in the case of Philippines and El Salvador where funding was received locally by OHCHR. OHCHR continued supporting additional teams in 13 of these countries including through funding for strategic activities which supported expanded results. 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. In 2021 the Fund also provided additional support to strengthen the management of the programme, given its significant size and impact.

## HUMAN RIGHTS ADVISERS (HRAs)

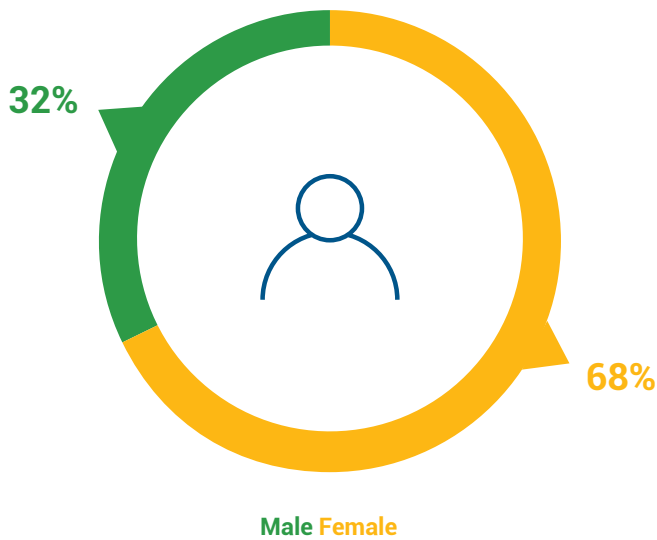


# 54 HUMAN RIGHTS ADVISER DEPLOYMENTS SECURED BY END OF 2021

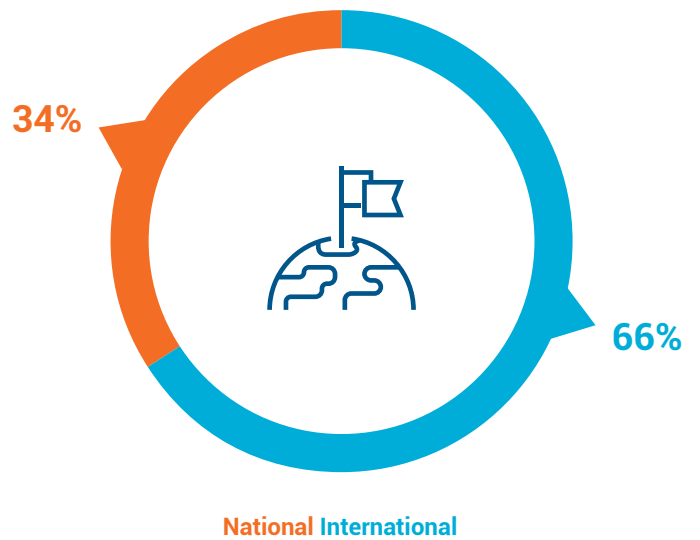


Note: HRAs approved in 2021 but deployed in 2022: Bahrain, Belize, Eswatini, Kazakhstan, Mozambique, Republic of Congo, Samoa, Sierra Leone, Suriname, Tajikistan, and The Gambia.

## 2021 HRA PROFILE BY SEX



## 2021 HRA PROFILE BY CATEGORY



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 2021, OHCHR in partnership with DCO and other HRM Fund Steering Committee members continued joint efforts in strengthening the HRA capacities

through sharing of experiences across themes. With COVID-19 travel restrictions limiting in-person meetings, OHCHR and DCO organised the first humanitarian, development and peace (HDP) Nexus orientation session for Human Rights Advisers. The orientation included discussion on entry points which HRAs can leverage to enhance their collaboration with the humanitarian, development, and peace actors and to capture best practices, and the ways to collectively support their respective UNCTs/HCTs.

## KEY HRA RESULTS AREAS



The annual Community of Practice meeting, led by OHCHR in close cooperation with DCO and with the participation of the Fund's Steering Committee members, facilitated exchanges of experiences, practices and tactics on integrating human rights in national SDG strategies and programming, COVID19 recovery, HDP nexus and good practices in collaboration with Peace and Development Advisers, and human rights mechanisms among others. Select RCs and HRAs also participated in the 53rd Session of the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights, held in Chad.

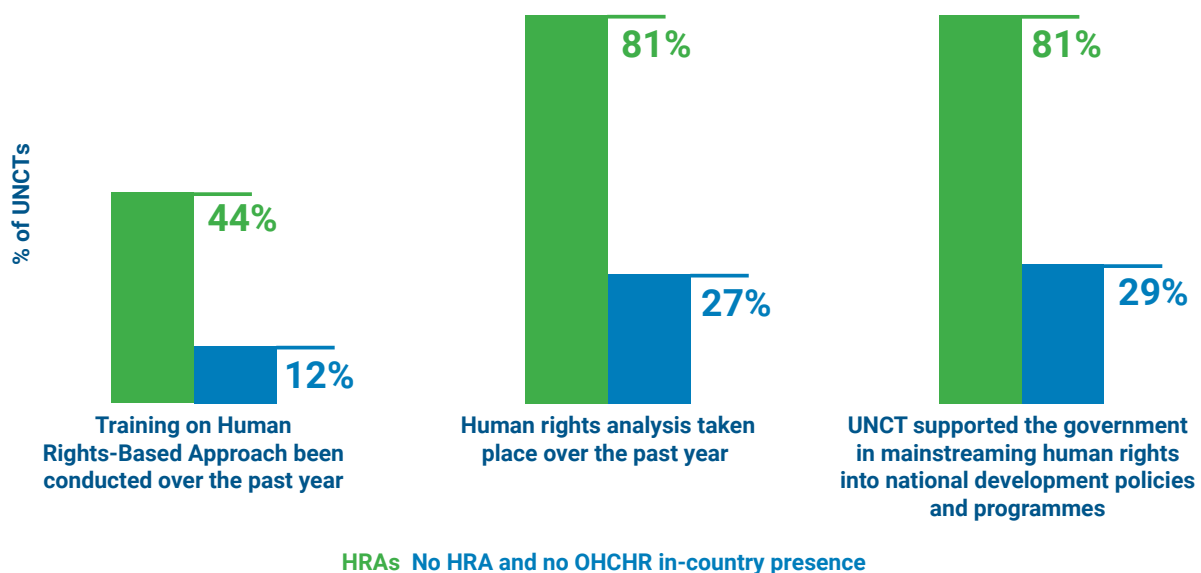
helped to open cooperation avenues for UNCTs with key State institutions including ministries to address some of the identified challenges, including issues related to discrimination and hate speech, weak legal redress for victims of gender-based violence, high rates of maternal and neonatal mortality, discrimination against minorities, massive deportations and attacks on defenders of sexual and reproductive rights of women. HRAs also continued supporting advocacy efforts addressing the impact of measures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic and on the situation of specific groups and populations being left behind, through convening and building upon global messages and concerns publicly raised by global leaders including the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Furthermore, technical support for the implementation of the United Nations Human Rights Due Diligence Policy was also an important area of work for many HRAs, including in **Jordan, Lesotho, Nepal, the Maldives, Myanmar and Montenegro**.

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

HRAs across the world supported RCs and UNCTs to ensure awareness and leadership around critical human rights issues and concerns. They also



**FIGURE 1.**  
**IN 2021 UNCTs WITH HRAs DEMONSTRATE STRONGER RESULTS ON KEY HRBA INDICATORS**



Source: Development Coordination Office.



As the second and third waves of the pandemic continued to unfold in many countries alongside efforts looking forward towards recovery, HRAs contributed to the socio-economic impact analyses relating to the crisis and provided support to rights-based build back better plans. For example, analysis carried out in 2020 on the challenges in accessing to basic social services in these critical times, on the risks and increased prevalence of gender-based violence or on the use of force in enforcing COVID-19 curfews and other emergency measures continued being updated and used throughout 2021 to inform integrated policy support to national partners.

In **Timor Leste**, the United Nations with the Human Rights Adviser consistently engaged with the Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion (MSSI) to follow up on the 2020 report on the impacts of COVID-19 for persons with disabilities and raised awareness within the Ministry of better integrating the specific needs of persons with disabilities in design and implementation of measures developed and support provided to combat the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the HRA supports the MSSI in implementing commitments outlined in the National Action Plan (NAP) for Persons with Disabilities adopted in October 2021.

**#persons with disabilities**

## MALAWI

In **Malawi**, tension and violence between Muslim and Christian communities escalated when a number of Christian-managed schools in the south of the country refused to educate girls wearing a hijab. Five schools were closed, leaving 10,000 children out of school. With the HRA-led community engagements, discussion on international human rights standards on education, non-discrimination and freedom of religion or belief led to reopening of schools and forging agreement that Muslim girls can wear a hijab at school, if they wish.

**#GEWE – discriminatory laws**

In **Argentina**, with support from the HRA, the Resident Coordinator supported afrodescendants communities and advocated with local authorities for the creation of the Afroargentine Directorate in Santiago del Estero province, where the oldest and one of the biggest afroargentine community lives. The Resident Coordinator's mission to Santiago del Estero in late 2021 led to several dialogues related to afrodescendants' rights and development, and a Directorate has recently been created which will oversee the local implementation of the International Decade and public policies and legal measures for the advancement of the afrodescendants' rights in the province.

**#racial discrimination**

In the **Dominican Republic**, with the support of the HRA, the Resident Coordinator engaged, among others, with the Congress and the Vice-president of the Republic on criminal law reform and maternal and neonatal mortality and discrimination of persons of Haitian origin or descent.

**#racial discrimination**

In **Nepal**, the United Nations continued advocating with technical advice from the HRA for the endorsement of the Second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, which was drafted in collaboration with women victims of conflict. The UN briefed influential political actors on the importance and key elements of the Action Plan, and this led to the Ministry of Home Affairs updating of the Action Plan.

**#Agenda for protection**

**#GEWE**

In **Barbados**, the HRA and the Surge Initiative researched on how high levels of debt and associated austerity measures in Barbados and Grenada impacts the enjoyment of economic and social rights, particularly the rights to health and education. The analysis highlights the need and ways to ring-fence budgets for economic and social rights with special attention to groups at risk of discrimination, and to integrate human rights considerations in debt negotiations. In addition, the assessment makes suggestions on how to achieve greater disaggregated fiscal and socio-economic data, to allow better understanding of the impact of fiscal policies on marginalized groups.

**#Inequalities**

In **Jordan**, the HRA contributed to the support provided by the UN to Jordan for the preparation and submission of its Voluntary National Review (VNR) report in 2022 and the Voluntary Local Review process on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Under the leadership of the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, gender and human rights were identified as specific and cross-cutting issues. This undertaking was also supported by the National Center for Human Rights and the HRM Fund-supported UNDP OHCHR partnership project.

#LNOB

HRAs in **Ecuador, Peru, Paraguay and Belize** supported protection of prisoners through protocol development and training of prison officials.

#LNOB

HRAs in **Jordan, Serbia and Zambia** supported advocacy and policy guidance for LNOB commitments, working in tandem with Surge Initiative teams, including Surge economists, through economic, social and cultural rights-based policy and operational analysis, including inputs for UN position papers and recovery processes on key issues relevant to health, education, food, water, sanitation and hygiene, livelihoods, and social protection systems, as well as social inclusion, and gender equality.

#LNOB

#Inequalities

***“The presence of an HRA meant that we were able to identify and follow the multiple human rights challenges that Nigeria faces with minimum resources. We have also created new partnerships and engaged in dialogue with the government and CSOs on human rights issues affecting those left furthest behind.”***

UN Resident Coordinator/  
Humanitarian Coordinator a.i. Nigeria

***“The support provided by the HRA has been pivotal in promoting human rights as a common UN value, upholding international norms and standards through advocacy and awareness-raising, and strengthening in a coordinated manner national capacities for the promotion and protection of human rights in the Dominican Republic”***

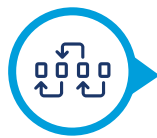
UN Resident Coordinator, Dominican Republic

***“Having an HRA in Equatorial Guinea has helped improve the credibility of the UN in the country and her support to the UN to advance the human rights agenda and leave no one behind has been tremendous in a short period of time.”***

France Begin, Representative, UNICEF,  
Equatorial Guinea

***“Stigma and discrimination is hampering the response to HIV/AIDS in Madagascar. Unless basic human rights of key populations and people living with HIV and AIDS are addressed and maintained, we will not end AIDS as a public health issue by 2030, as per the SDG. As such, the collaboration with the HRA is of vital importance. Hundreds of key populations and people living with HIV have been trained and equipped with skills to know and advocate for their human rights through the HRA’s role in the UN Joint Team on AIDS in Madagascar.”***

Jude Padayachy, Country Director, UNAIDS,  
Madagascar, Comoros, Mauritius and Seychelles



## 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

HRAs' support to RCs and UNCTs to the integration of these outcomes in the CCA and Cooperation Framework – in line with the UNSDG Guidance on Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks – was critical in making the pivots expected under the UNDS reform and Secretary-General's Call to Action. Capacity development for UN actors in applying the guiding principles of HRBA and LNOB in CCAs and Cooperation Frameworks continued to be a common area of work for all HRAs in all countries of deployment, 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.

Throughout the year and with additional support from the OHCHR Surge Initiative Team in many cases, HRAs supported analytical contents and operational advice for strengthened CCAs and/or Cooperation Frameworks in 27 countries: **Bangladesh, Belarus, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guinea Bissau, Guyana, Jordan, Kenya, Lesotho, Maldives, Moldova, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nigeria, Paraguay, Peru, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.** The new Cooperation Framework is offering practical opportunities for effective integration of all civil, cultural, economic, political, and social human rights at the core and as a key contributor to an economy that enhances human rights including with a view to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda and recovery from the impact of COVID-19 more broadly.

*“The work of HRAs and their teams supports an evidence base for reaching those most vulnerable and ensure that all programmatic interventions have a strong human rights-based approach.”*

UN Resident Coordinator, Republic of Moldova

*“Through the HRA’s technical support and advice, human rights were systematically integrated into the analysis and programming documents of the UNCT thereby paving the way for human rights principles to underpin UN country level support to implementation of the national development strategy and the 2030 Agenda.”*

UN Resident Coordinator, Zimbabwe

In the **Republic of Moldova**, the HRA and the Surge team conducted an in-depth study on the impact of COVID-19 on human rights in Moldova with a focus on vulnerable groups. The findings of the report were shared with State authorities, CSOs, national human rights institutions (NHRIs) and development partners and contributed to defining programme interventions, advocacy initiatives and the drafting of the CCA and the Cooperation Framework.

#LNOB  
#CCA/CF

In **Belize**, the HRA facilitated the engagement of vulnerable groups such as indigenous populations, organizations for people living with disabilities, women's groups and civil society organizations with the UNCT enabling them to contribute to human rights assessments, project development and programme planning. In 2021, these groups participated in the consultations on the Socio-economic Response Plan (SERP) for COVID-19, the CCA and the United Nations Multi-country Cooperation Framework (UN MSDCF).

#LNOB  
#civic space

In **Jordan**, as a result of the technical support from the HRA, the UNCT adopted three action plans for 2021-2022, including 12 concrete joint actions. The action plans provide the Resident Coordinator's Office with a plan to ensure coherent engagement with the Department of Statistics to improve data collection, analysis and management related to LNOB policies; integrating human rights analysis into UNCT policy briefs; preparation of a human-rights based analysis of the budget and revenues in Jordan (currently in its final stages with the support of the Surge Initiative); collecting and rolling out good practices on inter-ministerial coordination and multi-stakeholder engagement; the adoption of a UNCT Prevention Strategy aligned with the Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights; and rolling out the UN Guidance Note on civic space.

#LNOB

#civic space

In **Myanmar**, as a result of the technical support from the HRA, the UNCT continued supporting integration of human rights-based approach in the development of the CCA, including through trainings on HRBA and the practical application of the guiding principles including LNOB. Following the dramatic changes in the political, human rights and operational environment for the UN in Myanmar in 2021, the HRA has supported efforts to ensure meaningful implementation of the Human Rights Strategy of the UNCT and of the recommendations from the "Rosenthal report" within the context of those challenges.

#CCA/CF

#agenda for protection

In **Kenya**, a human rights-based analysis of Kenya's 2021/2022 budget was undertaken with the support of the HRA team and an OHCHR Surge Initiative economist. Focusing on key social sectors, the analysis demonstrated that under-investment will impact upon the progressive realisation of economic, social and cultural rights, inequalities and attainment of the SDGs. The analysis supports the implementation of recent 2020 UPR recommendations to increase budget allocations

and resources to alleviate poverty and realize the SDGs with focus on vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. This analysis and previous human rights reports on the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on marginalised communities in Kenya were factored into the new UN Common Country Assessment, which had a strong focus on inequalities and leaving no one behind. LNOB is now a central focus of the new Cooperation Framework for Kenya that is being finalised.

#CCA/CF

#LNOB

*"In 2021, the most vital process for the UNCT in El Salvador was the strategic planning process towards achieving the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. In my view, it is the process where the role of a HRA is to shine the brightest light possible at the intimate nexus between human rights and development and where the basis is laid that human rights are present in the daily implementation of programmes and projects by our UN colleagues."*

UN Resident Coordinator, El Salvador

*"The HRA is a key engine for the UN system to accelerate progress in the implementation of the SG's call to action for human rights in Burundi."*

UN Resident Coordinator, Burundi

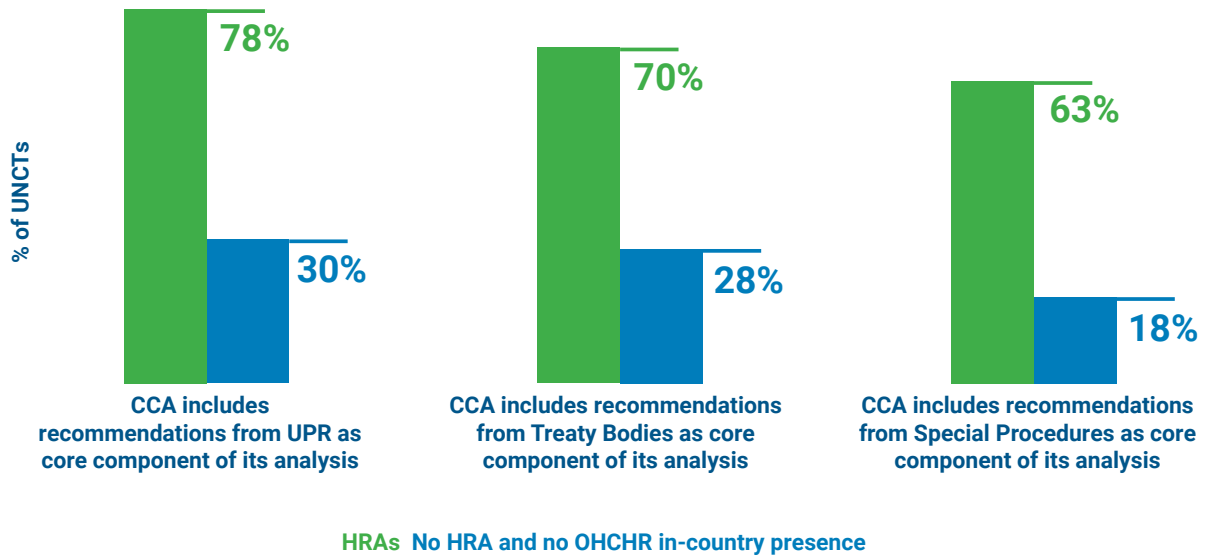
### Support to the building and strengthening of national capacities and institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights

HRAs strengthened national capacities and institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights in 2021, enhancing UNCTs' capacity to leverage the links between human rights and the 2030 Agenda for more coherent and integrated



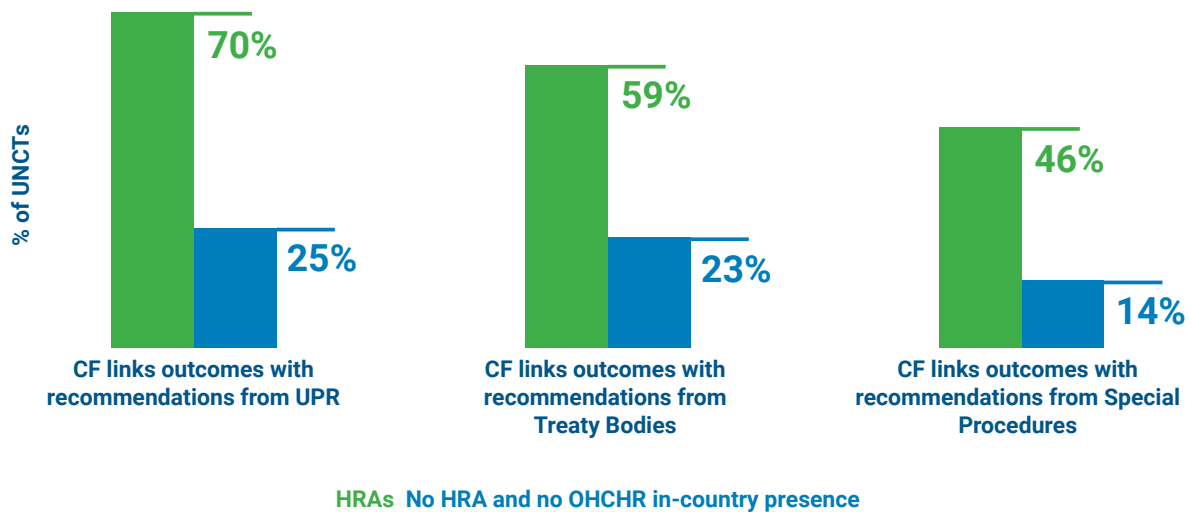


**FIGURE 2.**  
**UNCTs WITH HRAs REPORTED STRONGER USE OF HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS' RECOMMENDATIONS IN CCAs**



Source: Development Coordination Office.

**FIGURE 3.**  
**IN 2021 UNCTs WITH HRAs REPORT STRONGER USE OF HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS' RECOMMENDATIONS IN UNDAFs/COOPERATION FRAMEWORKS**



Source: Development Coordination Office.

support to national partners. HRAs' role in convening and supporting UNCTs' technical assistance and capacity building for State institutions has direct impact on the alignment between international human rights standards and development efforts. Supporting civil society to engage strategically on the rights-related aspects of development, including states' pledge to leave no one behind and reach the furthest behind first is also a critical part of HRAs' work, as is the protection and expansion of civic space as a critical component of strong national protection systems, accountability and a social contract anchored in human rights.

Hate speech has been a growing concern for many countries, and HRAs with support from the Office of the Special Advisor for the Prevention of Genocide (OSAPG), developed action plans in **Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Moldova, and Kenya**.  
#Agenda for Protection

## REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

In the **Republic of Moldova**, the technical advice and advocacy from the HRA increased the knowledge and capacity of journalists and media professionals to promote diversity and equality in the media. Journalists and media professionals on both banks of the Nistru River produced human rights-compliant and gender-sensitive media materials that also elaborated how to prevent hate speech and apply a HRBA, with a focus on vulnerable groups. Following the training of 10 lecturers from the Journalism Faculty of Moldova State University on the role of mass media in ensuring inclusive communication and the application of a HRBA to journalism, an agreement was established regarding the integration of human rights into the curricula of the Journalism Faculty.

#Agenda for protection

*"UN engagement with the Prime Minister's Office on Human Rights Mechanisms for the development of the UPR National Action Plan has provided progress on protection and promotion of rights of minorities, women, as well as for a victim-centric transitional justice process."*

UN Resident Coordinator, Nepal

*"The HRA within the Office of the Resident Coordinator is able to bring depth an expertise to support the State to deliver on National Human Rights Action Plan in a highly consultative and practical way which brings concrete results."*

UN Resident Coordinator, Moldova

In **Zimbabwe**, under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator, the HRA provided advocacy and technical advice and worked in collaboration with UNDP, UN Women and UNESCO to develop a project to address the specific needs of the five independent constitutional commissions, namely, the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission, the Zimbabwe Gender Commission, the Zimbabwe Media Commission, the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission and the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission.

#GEWE

#Agenda for protection

In **Lesotho**, the HRA in collaboration with the UNCT supported national partners to establish the National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-up (NMRF), which will coordinate state party reporting and follow-up to recommendations of UN human rights mechanisms. High level advocacy meetings were also conducted with the National Reforms Authority, Ministry of Justice, and Members of Parliament on fast tracking the law to create a Human Rights Commission, and this led to an early legislative calendar and expected passage of the law in 2022.

#maximizing the use of the human rights mechanisms  
#NHRI



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In the **Philippines**, the HRA led the drafting of a joint UN technical cooperation programme through consultations with, with the Government, the Commission on Human Rights and civil society, to strengthen domestic accountability mechanisms, improve police data, strengthen the National Mechanism on Reporting and Follow-up, build the capacity of civil society and the Commission on Human Rights, and to promote human rights based approaches to drugs and counter-terrorism. The Programme was signed by the Government and the UN and has paved the way for coordinated technical cooperation on human rights by OHCHR, UNESCO, UNOCT and UNODC.

**#maximizing the use of the human rights mechanisms**  
**#civic space**

In **Georgia**, the HRA cooperated with the Ministry of Justice to establish a national mechanism for supporting the rehabilitation of victims of torture and other ill-treatment. The HRA and the OHCHR team undertook a study on the existence of rehabilitation systems for victims of torture in different countries that was used as an advocacy tool to encourage the Government to make a policy decision on the creation of such a mechanism. At the request of the Government, the HRA also provided expert advice to

<sup>5</sup> A set of international standards which frame and guide the work of National Human Rights Institutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1993 (A/RES/48/134).

## GUINEA-BISSAU

In **Guinea-Bissau**, an interagency cooperation including regional stakeholder consultations, with support from PBF, UNDP, FAO, UNICEF, and with HRA support led to the development of a joint project to strengthen the national human rights protection system in Guinea-Bissau (2022-2024). The project, supported by the UN Peacebuilding Fund, addresses several of the peacebuilding priorities identified following UNIOGBIS's closure in 2021, including the establishment of a national human rights institution in line with Paris Principles<sup>5</sup> (which also corresponds to a commitment undertaken by Guinea Bissau in the context of its multiple Universal Periodic Reviews by the UN Human Rights Council). The project will also strengthen engagement with human rights mechanisms, including treaty bodies, and support the implementation of recommendations. It also foresees support to civil society, including protection of human rights defenders, at a time where more and more reports alleging restrictions to fundamental freedoms such as freedom of expression are surfacing.

**#maximising the use of the UPR**  
**#human rights defenders**

the preparation of a Human Rights Strategy and an accompanying National Action Plan. The Strategy and Action Plan are being finalized and expected to be adopted in 2022.

**#maximising the use of treaty bodies**

In **Bangladesh**, the UN country team is implementing a joint programme on social protection for tea garden workers under the LNOB window of the Joint SDG Fund. In 2021, the HRA helped to convene a national level policy dialogue with multi stakeholders on gender responsive planning and budgeting (GRPB) and explored ways to develop a common understanding of social protection issues of female tea gardens workers by leveraging GRPB as a tool. A platform to dialogue on the reach and access to services for the tea garden women workers and adolescent has been formed with the involvement of local government, tea garden authority, local administration, and panchayat leaders.

**#GEWE**

**#civic space**

In **Argentina**, the UN with the technical support from the HRA contributed to the development of a National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights and to the inclusion of chapters and actions on business and human rights in local human rights action plans in the provinces of Salta and San Juan and in the city of Buenos Aires. In addition, four State-owned enterprises elaborated their policies on human rights, including their commitment to implement due diligence in their activities. Furthermore, more than 23 national and provincial human rights institutions agreed on a common protocol to deal with business and human rights at the national and local level, harnessing their role to monitor business practices and supervise State actions.

**#business and human rights**

In the **Republic of North Macedonia**, the HRA provided normative guidance to UNCT members (UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNHCR), State and non-State actors in establishing protocols for the safe operation of shelters and referral centres and the provision of immediate assistance and support for domestic violence survivors/victims. The Government has prioritized this assistance and support in response to the growing “shadow pandemic” of violence against

women. Particular emphasis has been placed on addressing the intersecting and multiple forms of discrimination and the negative gender stereotypes associated with gender-based violence.

**#GEWE**

HRAs in **Uruguay, Jamaica, Georgia, Jordan, Burkina Faso, North Macedonia, Guinea-Bissau, Dominican Republic, Malaysia** and **Mongolia** supported the strengthening of NHRIs, from the established of NHRIs to enhanced compliance with the Paris Principles, including their work human rights data and documentation of human rights violations.

**#LNOB**

**#NHRIs**

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



HRAs deployed in countries with humanitarian situations and/or post-crisis recovery enhanced 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. HRAs supported UN teams to implement the prevention agenda and the Call to Action, 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. HRAs often worked in close partnership with Peace and Development Advisers, helping to cement the linkages between human rights capacity building and UNCTs’ prevention analysis and response.

***“Strengthening national capacities for early warning and response is a critical pillar of the advancement of the UN prevention agenda. Doing so in an inclusive and innovative way increases our chances of success and sustainability.”***

UN Resident Coordinator, Kenya



*“I commend the HRA for great teamwork with other colleagues in the RCO that are part of the Conflict Prevention Programme (DPPA-UNDP), which made possible the full development of the Malawi Prevention Platform with important products arising from it: monthly notes to HQs, monthly reports to the UNCT, risk analysis matrix of the CCA, border prevention work in relation to the spillover effect from Mozambique.”*

UN Resident Coordinator a.i,  
Shigeki Komatsubara, Malawi

In **Madagascar**, the HRA established eight youth observatories of human rights defenders in eight regions of the country, with the support of PBF funding. These observatories are part of a national network of youth organizations, working together to monitor, report and engage with authorities to resolve human rights violations. They respond to a nationwide lack of data on human rights violations and weak civil society structures. The HRA team trained the youth in human rights, monitoring, advocacy and peacebuilding, as well as supporting them in meetings with local and regional authorities to generate spaces for dialogue on addressing human rights issues and local level peacebuilding.

[#civic space](#)

[#youth](#)

[#Human rights defenders](#)

In **Burkina Faso**, the HRA continued to support the Humanitarian Country team in integrating human rights into their programmes, the HCT Protection Strategy and its action plan. The Human Rights Adviser also participated in the Global Protection Cluster Task Team on human rights engagement in humanitarian action. The situation on the attacks against civilians in the Sahel, East, North and Centre-North regions were closely followed and analytical notes about human rights violations and abuses and breaches of international human rights law produced.

[#Agenda for protection](#)

## KENYA

The HRA and Peace and Development Advisor co-led the UNCT Prevention and Integrated Analysis Platform, which is the primary early warning and prevention mechanism for the UN in **Kenya**. The Platform, with support from PBF and membership from across the UNCT – produces quarterly integrated prevention and risk analysis reports that are structured around areas of risk analysis drawn from the UNSDG multi-dimensional risk analysis framework, and highlights trends, risks and opportunities, with an accompanying map illustrating intersecting areas of risk and vulnerability. The Resident Coordinator’s Office, through the HRA and the Peace and Development adviser, is scaling up capacity on early warning and prevention responses, with particular attention to incitement and hate speech that could trigger violence. This includes the use of new technologies such as artificial intelligence, paired with human monitoring and analysis, to identify risks and potential for violence – and counter messaging to reduce the impact of identified risks.

[#rights in times of crisis](#)

[#new frontiers](#)

In **Argentina**, the RC, HRA and UN family conducted an assessment of the different UN initiatives in a follow up visit to Salta as part of continued support to the sociosanitary emergency response. Salta Province has one of the largest indigenous communities in the country. In 2020 their health and social crisis emergency led to malnutrition and deaths among indigenous communities including children. The provincial government cited the Resident Coordinator’s leadership with technical support from the HRA as pivotal in ensuring human rights focus on the overall UN system and national

partner response efforts in the Salta province crisis. They noted the UN’s commitment to tackle discrimination and inequality led to the involvement of other stakeholders including the European Union providing support to civil society projects to address the problems facing indigenous peoples. With support from the UN Resident Coordinator’s Office including the HRA, Salta is now crafting a provincial human rights action plan to create synergies with the SDGs and local planning implementation in Salta.

**#indigenous peoples**

In **Nigeria**, the Human Rights Adviser supported the drafting and adoption of a Code of Conduct and Rules of Engagement for security operations.

It also provided assistance for the establishment of the Human Rights Desk by the Nigerian Army and supported the operations and monitoring of these framework/mechanisms, including through the deployment of international and national human rights monitors.

**#HRDDP**

HRAs in **North Macedonia, Costa Rica, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka**, and **Bangladesh** also worked with the humanitarian teams to advocate for refugee protection, prevention of sexual exploitation, and psychosocial and legal services for those in conflict-affected communities.

**#Agenda for protection**





## 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 are a key tool for RCs, UNCTs and national partners including CSOs to increase their engagement with human rights mechanisms and support national efforts to ensure consideration and integration of the work of these mechanisms and recommendations in national processes including those linked with the 2030 Agenda. The expertise of HRAs enabled support to countries' efforts to establish national mechanisms for reporting and follow-up on the recommendations of human rights mechanisms, and increased interest and strategic engagement of both national partners and UN teams in the work of the human rights mechanisms and their value to sustainable development.

HRAs' advisory and technical cooperation work in this area was often facilitated by additional resources for activities of the HRA programme provided through the HRM Fund, as well as through the Treaty Bodies Capacity Strengthening

Programme, the Voluntary Fund for Financial and Technical Assistance in the implementation of the UPR, and through joint programmes with UNDP.

In **Malaysia**, the HRA and UN family (IOM, UNICEF, UNDP and UNHCR) with ILO's overall coordination, advanced national frameworks for the protection of migrants through providing high level policy and technical support to the drafting of the Anti-Trafficking of Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Act and assisted in finalizing and rolling out the related National Action Plan on Trafficking in Persons 2021-2025 (NAPTIP) and the National Action Plan on Forced Labour 2021-2025 (NAPFL).

**#migrants**  
**#labour rights**

In **Montenegro**, with inputs from OHCHR, UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR and IOM, the Government adopted the new Roma and Egyptian Inclusion Strategy for 2021-2025. The Strategy draws upon recommendations issued by the UPR, CRC, CEDAW, CERD and CRPD to combat discrimination and negative social attitudes, improve access to education, undertake measures to combat child marriage and other forms of violence against women and girls, trafficking and

## RWANDA

In **Rwanda**, the HRA and UNCT, with additional integrated support from the UNDP-OHCHR partnership project, facilitated capacity-building workshops for government representatives, CSOs and members of the National Treaty Body Reporting Taskforce, and provided guidance on the UPR mechanism and good practices examples to support the national UPR process. These efforts contributed to the Government's preparation and validation of its national report for the third UPR cycle. In addition, 21 alternative reports were submitted by CSOs, which is double the number of reports that were submitted

during the second UPR cycle. During the virtual validation meeting of the report, partners contributed to the improvement of Rwanda's UPR State report. A retreat was held to prepare for the road map for the implementation of the 160 UPR recommendations Rwanda accepted. The UN Rwanda Human Rights Taskforce, chaired by the HRA, was entrusted with elaborating the road map to support the UNCT. The Rwanda UPR good practice is included in the forthcoming 2022 publication.

**#maximising the use of the UPR**



forced labour and improve access to health care and employment. The HRA played a key role in supporting this development. Specific measures are included to strengthen standards related to non-discrimination, an adequate standard of living, education, health, employment, housing, social protection, political participation and legal identity

**#Maximising the use of UPR and treaty bodies**  
**#labour rights**  
**#racial discrimination**

Technical advice from the HRAs was critical for the UN and partners in the preparation for engagement with the UPR, including through national consultations as well as in the preparation of submissions and reports and in follow up, for example in **Malaysia, Maldives, Timor Leste, Belize, Lesotho, Guinea-Bissau, Dominican Republic, Guyana and Rwanda.**

**#Maximizing the use of the UPR**

HRAs also provided support to States in meeting their reporting obligations with treaty body reporting and ensuring connection with other reporting mechanisms for example on the efforts towards the implementation of specific SDGs. HRAs contributed to the establishment or strengthening of national mechanisms for reporting and follow-up on recommendations from human rights mechanisms in 15 of the countries of deployment. For example,

HRAs supported the CEDAW alignment processes of sexual and gender-based violence laws in **Nigeria, North Macedonia, and Brazil.** HRAs in **Moldova, Montenegro, and Serbia** assisted on disability inclusion including implementation of recommendations from the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

**#GEWE – discriminatory laws**  
**#rights of persons with disabilities**

In **Serbia**, the HRA contributed to UNCT Serbia's regular engagements with and support to the civil society Platform of Organizations for Cooperation with UN human rights mechanisms. With this ongoing support - including training provided by the HRA and OHCHR to the 20 leading CSOs of the Platform on 2030 Agenda, the LNOB principle,

and linkages with the outcomes of human rights mechanisms - the Platform prepared and submitted joint reports to the international human rights mechanisms and interacted with Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council. The Platform initiated strategic engagement with authorities and line ministries in key areas, including prevention of torture, rights of children and persons with disabilities. It also engaged in joint monitoring and advocacy in relation to human rights implementation and accountability. The Platform's other areas of focus included risk mitigation processes, signaling urgent developments, contributing to policy development and thematic exchanges with authorities and the National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-up (NMRF) to jointly follow-up on recommendations issued to Serbia by UN human rights mechanisms.

**#maximising the use of treaty bodies and special procedures**  
**#civic space**

***“Having been supported by a dedicated human rights capacity in my office, we were able to capitalize on the UN’s normative role in particular, by intervening in the development of new or updated laws and strategies, that bring Serbia closer to its human rights commitments. We were able to step up the UNCT human rights structure as well as our engagement and visibility in some of the most sensitive regional areas, such as transitional justice, hate speech or civic space and freedom of expression. More than before, we succeeded in our support to human rights defenders by strengthening the space for their voice to be heard, in the Government and by a much wider audience.”***

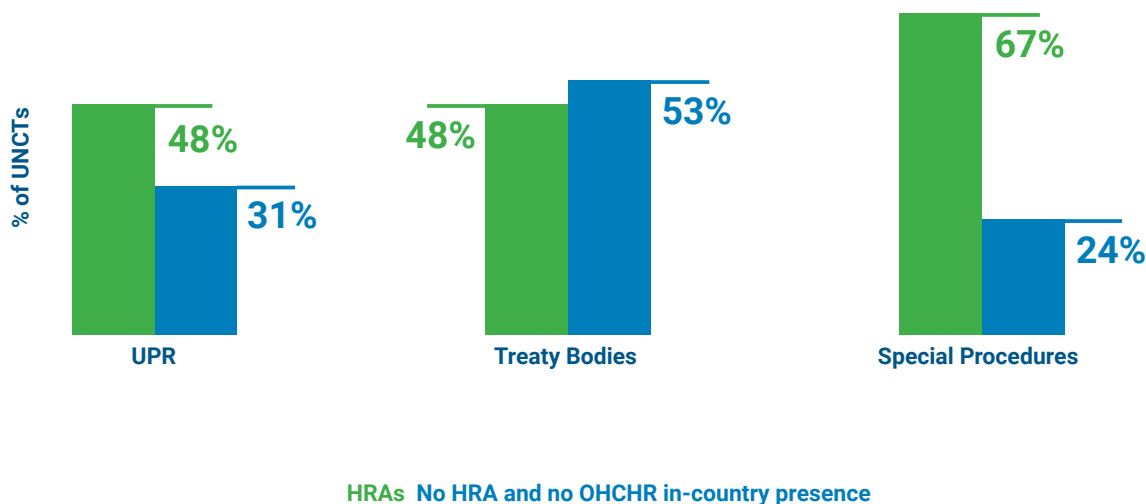
UN Resident Coordinator, Serbia

HRA's technical support to civil society engagement with human rights mechanisms generated clear results in terms of increased reporting to mechanisms and interaction with special procedures. As we strive towards a whole of society engagement for a renewed social contract anchored in human rights, empowering civil society to contribute directly to human rights mechanisms is a critical entry point for UN country teams to advance this vision. For example, in **Brazil**, after the HRA dialogues on international mechanisms in partnership with the National Articulation of Indigenous Peoples and the Network of cooperation in the Amazon, the participating indigenous peoples organizations submitted inputs to CEDAW for consideration regarding the Committee's general recommendation on the rights of indigenous women and girls. In the **Republic of Moldova**, the recent ratification of the Optional Protocol on CRPD has been linked to the capacity building on rights of vulnerable groups and the international human rights framework provided to civil society groups including those from Transnistria region which strengthened the public advocacy and submission of collective claims on CRPD.

*“The support of the HRA Unit was critical to the UNCT’s work in the UPR process, both in terms of bringing together UN stakeholders around a common human rights analysis, but also in supporting civil society engagement. This helped generate even further interest in PNG’s UPR process and contribute to increasing political will for significant legislative changes which we have subsequently seen.”*

UN Resident Coordinator a.i., Papua New Guinea

**FIGURE 4.**  
**IN 2021 UNCTs WITH HRAs REPORTED MORE SUPPORT OVERALL TO CIVIL SOCIETY TO ENGAGE WITH HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS**



Source: Development Coordination Office.



*“The HRA has been instrumental in supporting the integration of human rights across our programme cycles and results. The strategic engagement of Treaty bodies and Special Procedures paved the way for a ‘whole of UN’ approach in support of the UN’s core human rights agenda.”*

UN Resident Coordinator, Costa Rica

The Escazu Agreement entered into force on 22 April 2021. This agreement, which was negotiated by governments in Latin America and the Caribbean, enshrines the right of every person of present and future generations to live in a healthy environment and to sustainable development. It is the region’s first environmental treaty as well as the world’s first agreement with provisions on human rights defenders in environmental matters, an issue of particular importance in the region due to risks for advocates and activists. **Uruguay’s** HRA in close cooperation with UNEP, ECLAC, UNDP and OHCHR led the public webinar for the region and explored country capacities and challenges in implementing the agreement.

**#rights of future generations**

In **Costa Rica**, the HRA enabled a key alliance with the Judiciary and indigenous leaders in the elaboration of a road map including methodological tools to develop a preliminary and participatory assessment of the level of access to justice of indigenous peoples in Costa Rica as the basis for a policy on access to justice for indigenous peoples based on key recommendations from the UPR and other human rights mechanisms.

**#indigenous peoples**

### **Strengthened programme management**

Through the financial support received for the full-time position of the Manager of the HRA Programme in 2021, 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 and are particularly critical to ensure the further stabilization and expansion of this programme.

- **Strategic direction and outreach for the ongoing expansion of the programme:** In close cooperation with DCO, a mapping of human rights capacities needs and requests was maintained during 2021. Through regular outreach, communications with RCs and their teams, assessments with relevant branches in OHCHR, and coordination with DCO on priorities and review by the Steering Committee, new requests were duly assessed and the programme expanded in a strategic manner. Under the leadership of the Programme Manager, the criteria for HRA deployment and extensions were revised and updated in accordance with the Steering Committee’s Management Response to the evaluation, including all relevant considerations arising under the UNDS repositioning. The Programme Manager led coordination with the Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights (VFTC), including meetings of the VFTC Board with RCs and HRAs, and including the Board’s insights on the programme in the Board’s statements and interventions, ensuring wide understanding of the programme.
- **Programmatic implementation including financial and human resources management:** OHCHR continued ensuring, through the Programme Manager, implementation in line with the established UNSDG framework and the latest operational guidance from UN Senior Management linked to the implementation of the UNDS reform. An internal Frequently Asked Questions factsheet was prepared in close cooperation with DCO and shared with the Steering Committee to ensure full understanding of the framework of the programme among new RCs and HRAs. The Programme Manager also ensured overall management of the USD 15,000 seed funding per deployment in addition to the USD 10,000 contribution to cover operational costs. The Programme Manager also led the preparation of a new Programme Document for the HRA Programme for 2022-2025 which takes into account relevant recommendations from the HRM Fund evaluation and which will strengthen the programme and reduce

transaction costs while maintaining required steps for approval, disbursement, monitoring and reporting.

- **Knowledge management:** Capacity strengthening and continuous learning through sharing of experiences across regions is one of the components of the areas of work of the Programme Manager. This included the organization of the HRAs annual Communities of Practice meeting in close cooperation with DCO and with the participation of the Steering Committee. Experiences were shared and technical capacities expanded through briefings from experts, for example, in the area of labour rights. The Programme Manager also coordinated with other branches and sections of OHCHR to ensure HRAs received timely advice on key topics, and access to tools and platforms for knowledge exchange. A needs assessment was also designed and launched in 2021 to inform knowledge and capacity building efforts in 2022 and beyond.

- **Reporting and support to resource mobilization:** The expansion of HRA deployments continued representing an increase of the reporting volume and impacting the requirements for resource mobilization. Enhanced strategic well-coordinated actions and efforts for resource mobilization not only by OHCHR, but by the entire Steering Committee ensuring predictability and sustainability of the funds for the programme has become more critical than ever. The Programme Manager continued strategically coordinating complementary funding support from the VFTC and expertise from the five high level experts of its Board of Trustees representing the five UN world regions. This coordination is critical for the stability of the programme due to the need to bridge the gap between HRM Fund replenishments. The Programme Manager also ensured regular analysis of results reported and provided all the financial details for new requests, consolidated budget inputs to anticipate fundraising efforts and costs estimations of the overall programme to ensure it remains on a solid financial footing.



## SURGE INITIATIVE IN 2021 BY NUMBERS



61

Surge Team supported UN in-country presences with analytical contents and operational advice for **61 CCA and UNSDCF processes**



42

Surge Team delivered **42 briefings and trainings to UNCTs and other partners** on the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals and the UNSDCF Guiding Principles of a Human Rights-Based Approach and Leave No One Behind



24

Surge Team held strategic discussions and engagements with **24 RCO Economists**



21

Surge Team participated and provided inputs and recommendations to **21 UN Regional Monthly Reviews**



39

Surge Team provided technical and financial support to total **39 seeding-change country projects** since 2020 (8 new projects launched in 2021)



1

Surge Initiative issued **1 good practice and lessons learned report**: "Seeding Change For a Human Rights Economy - Progress Report of the Surge Initiative", and represented the principal highlights in a [public ECOSOC report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights](#)

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

The Surge Initiative - composed of five country-facing economists working together with OHCHR specialists on economic and social rights and sustainable development - was launched in 2019 and continued apace in 2020 and 2021. Building on the critical human rights-based operational advice to UNCTs developing COVID-19 socio-economic emergency responses and recovery processes, in 2021 the Initiative provided specialized human rights expertise, including on human rights-based macroeconomics, to UNCTs for country analyses, policies and programming to operationalize States' obligations on economic and social rights and commitments relevant to the 2030 Agenda, the SDGs and the LNOB pledge, and linking these with country development and economic agendas and efforts to integrate human rights and curb inequalities including through national budgeting and economic policies, strategies and reforms.

The Surge Team continued to fill a long-standing gap in the UN system to better link human rights with economics and development practice. Specific emphasis was placed on joining forces with RCO and other UN economists at a time of increased efforts by the UN system to reinforce its engagement with the IFIs and advise on economic policy-making of Member States – for example, the Surge economists joined the UN policy network of economists coordinated by DESA, and held an inter-agency workshop on [Operationalizing the New Social Contract at the Country Level: Sharing Experiences of Integrating UN Values for Transformative Economic Change](#) which brought together UN economists, development and human rights specialists from OHCHR, ILO, UN Women, UNICEF, UNRISD, UNDP, and DCO, to brainstorm and reflect on how the UN's human rights normative standards can be leveraged in advising macroeconomics. Finally, the Surge Initiative entered into a [new partnership with the](#)

[Raoul Wallenberg Institute for Human Rights \(RWI\)](#) and increased capacity and outreach to academics, research institutes and other key stakeholders.

By bringing together economists and development, economic and social rights experts, the Surge Initiative:

- **Provided specialized advice and analysis to operationalize economic and social rights**, as relevant to furthering the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- **Seeded change for an economy that enhances human rights**, by developing and applying a human rights-based approach to macroeconomics through country projects;
- **Maximised the findings and recommendations of the UN human rights mechanisms** by translating these into strategic options to inform country development policies, plans and programmes;
- **Advised on medium- to long-term economic policies** to ensure compliance with Member States' economic and social rights obligations, including by providing budget analysis on expanding fiscal space for social spending; and
- **Contributed to the 2030 Agenda LNOB pledge** by prioritizing engagement that addresses economic and other inequalities, including through addressing data gaps and analysis.

Below are some key achievements in economic and social rights integration in UN country work supported by the Surge Initiative, working together with other UN entities, HRAs and RCO economists:

- **Egypt's CCA** included analysis on the minimum core obligations concerning the rights to health and education as set in the Constitution, the budget linked to these rights and the importance to prevent retrogression in economic and social rights, and analysis on debt and fiscal space and progressive taxation largely drawing on recommendations from the human rights mechanisms.

- **Bosnia and Herzegovina's** UN Position Paper on Social Protection fleshed out the human rights aspects of social protection and established the relevant links with the 2030 Agenda goals and targets, national SDG framework, as well as the LNOB principle.
- **Zambia's** government-led COVID-19 recovery needs assessment was enriched with Macroeconomic Impact Assessment including human rights inputs and analysis on social spending and remittances among others, and human impact assessment on social protection, social inclusion and gender equality.
- In **Cambodia**, collaboration with the UNDP economist led to the design of a UNCT dashboard that integrates human rights indicators to monitor socio economic development in the country.
- Strengthened attention to issues of income inequality and the need to expand fiscal space, notable for social spending (eg. through special measures reducing tax evasion and illicit financial flows) and strengthen integration of a human rights-based and gender perspective across the outcomes of the 2022-2026 Cooperation Framework for **Albania**.

The Surge Initiative's **39 seeding-change projects** supported system-wide efforts to place human rights at the centre of socio-economic recovery and building-back better, including by advocating for economic policy shifts that counter rising inequalities, putting a spotlight on disadvantaged groups and advancing investment in economic and social rights, building a renewed social contract anchored in human rights and enabling an economy that enhances human rights. Examples of some of the work advanced in 2021 through these projects include:

- **Barbados** built on various recommendations of human rights mechanisms, including on assessing the gender-specific effects of austerity measures and ensuring an internal redistribution of its domestic resources in order to overcome the consequences of budget cuts (CEDAW 2017),

ensuring transparent, efficient and accountable delivery of public services (UPR 2018), as well as continuing to promote social policies in the areas of health, education and poverty reduction, in favour of the most vulnerable groups (UPR 2020). Once finalized, the analytical report will be used for various advocacy purposes including with Government, and the IFIs and will be available to the Eastern Caribbean RC to use as a basis to advocate for an invitation for a visit by the Independent Expert on Foreign Debt.

- **Colombia** built on various recommendations of human rights mechanisms such as budgeting for human rights and reducing inequality and poverty, and fighting discrimination. The analysis highlighted the substantially lower level of enjoyment of economic and social rights by Afro-Colombians in Buenaventura, underscoring the need for greater fiscal transparency and coordination for the provision of public services as well as strengthening of monitoring capacities for implementation of the Buenaventura agreements covering different human rights areas, including health, education, employment conditions and environmental protection.
- **Nepal** worked directly with women social movements and analysed budget allocations and challenges to women's right to health especially on sexual and reproductive health rights services. The final outcomes of the project will include costing the minimum essential levels of material components of the right to health for disadvantaged groups of women working in informal sectors.
- **Somalia's** inter-agency Human Rights and Protection Group of UN Assistance Mission assessed the human rights compliance of the government's social protection scheme (budget cash transfer – Baxnaano) in follow up to the relevant 2021 UPR recommendations. The study, which is being finalized, calls for improving inclusivity and gender responsiveness as well as using debt relief to make social protection available and accessible. The findings of the study will be used to inform the UNCT particularly



in follow-up to the Cooperation Framework's prioritization of social protection,<sup>6</sup> and to assist State efforts to ensure human rights compliant social protection programmes.

- **Ukraine** analysed social spending and participatory budgeting in select localities in the context of decentralization reforms and its impact on vulnerable groups.

Throughout the Surge Initiatives actions, special attention was paid to curbing discrimination and inequalities by avoiding further economic burdening on already marginalized or vulnerable populations, and in prioritizing the inclusion, empowerment

and participation of local actors and grass roots communities in Surge-supported initiatives.

The Surge continued to reinforce critical partnerships with development actors throughout the reporting period. Within the UN system, partnerships were particularly reinforced with RCO economists, UN Women and ILO in the context of socio-economic recovery analysis and advice. In 2021, the Surge held strategic consultations with 24 RCO economists, and in many instances initiated collaboration for joint work. For example, on a monthly basis, the Surge economist for the Americas joins the **Ecuador UN Economists Network** alongside the RCO Economist contributing a human rights perspective to discussions of economic

## ADDRESSING ROOT CAUSES OF CONFLICT IN CHAD

A principal concern in Chad, similar to several of its Sahel neighbours, is the existence of violent conflicts between herders and farmers over difficult access to and management of natural resources (in particular land and water), which has been further exacerbated by the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 and climate change. These conflicts are then the cause of various human rights violations, in particular the loss of human life, attacks on physical integrity, destruction of property and sometimes even displacement of populations fleeing conflict zones. Despite the adoption of new national strategies, policies and legislation on agriculture and livestock management, the commitment to a multi-sectoral approach to nutrition and food, and Chad's ratification of various international human rights conventions, these conflicts and the related human rights causes and consequences persist. It is against this background and in view of various UN human rights mechanisms recommendations (CESCR, CERD and UPR)

and the government commitment to the 2030 Agenda that the Surge helped to conduct a human rights-based root cause analysis of these conflicts, using the right to food as the analytical framework as relevant to socio-cultural, judicial, budgetary and other structural issues. The analysis was informed by focus group and individual consultations with members of affected communities, local authorities, CSO, religious and traditional leaders, and other stakeholder holders, as well as human rights-based budgetary analysis. The analysis is being used for advocacy purposes, including in the upcoming National Inclusive Dialogue given its impact on human rights and social cohesion, and is intended to feed into the ongoing work of the national Sub-Committees on Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and that in charge of drafting the new Constitution, as well as the upcoming Cooperation Framework design process, and related development of the second National and Provincial Development Plans 2023-2026.

<sup>6</sup> The CF Results Framework Outcome 4.3 provides: By 2025, the proportion of vulnerable Somalis with scaled-up and sustained resilience against environmental and conflict-related shocks is increased, based on better management of life cycle risk, food security and better nutrition outcomes." The relevant indicator is 4.3.f "Proportion of poor people covered by predictable safety nets."



and fiscal policies and to the production of quarterly bulletins with analysis on these issues. Surge experts also provided support to the UNCT in **Cabo Verde** to strengthen their proposal for the Joint SDG Fund.

The Surge Initiative also includes a comprehensive knowledge management component, with particular emphasis on documentation of its work and country experiences as a means for cross-fertilization and learning. In addition to flagship publications, in 2021 the Initiative produced quarterly newsletters (4) and Country Snapshots (5) for key partners including CSOs, UN entities and member state partners. It also supported 31 e-con blogs and has integrated the development of promising practice tool-boxes as a core part of its work.

The inter-agency review on levels of human rights integration into CCAs and Cooperation Frameworks developed from January 2019 to mid-2021 indicates that CCAs' analyses on the political economy insufficiently integrate relevant human rights obligations. Similarly, only 22 percent of Cooperation Frameworks include outcomes and outputs that thoroughly connect human rights obligations and recommendations from the human rights mechanisms and ILO supervisory bodies with economic policy advice and programmatic work.<sup>7</sup> The

review highlighted country examples where the surge work had impact, but also underscored the importance that specialized human rights capacities be sustained and provided space for, to ensure that socio-economic development challenges, including in the area of health, poverty, adequate food, clean water and sanitation, education, and employment be informed by human rights obligations and recommendations from country reviews by the UN human rights mechanisms or ILO standards and supervisory body comments.

As evidenced by the continuing demand for Surge specialized support across all UN development processes and results from the above-mentioned review of CCAs and Cooperation Frameworks, the Surge's specialized expertise remains an essential complement to the UN human rights country capacity in supporting governments with practical and operational advice on macro-economic interventions for post-COVID-19 recovery and beyond. Building on a number of good practice so far - for instance, on joint work on human rights-based budget analysis or developing UNCT common positions on IFI financing to inform advocacy with State counterparts - particular emphasis will be maintained on progressively building confidence and partnerships with other economists in the UN system including in RCOs.

<sup>7</sup> Preliminary findings of ongoing CCA/Cooperation Framework review.

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

*“Ultimately, voluntary national reviews create space for Governments and their partners to identify what is needed to keep the promise of the Sustainable Development Goals.”*

United Nations Deputy Secretary-General,  
Amina Mohammed, 12 July 2021

Promoting and protecting human rights is essential for ensuring sustainable development outcomes. At the same time, progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development also advances human rights. To harness synergies across these agendas and improve the effectiveness of the international communities’ efforts, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), in close cooperation with the UN Development Coordination Office (DCO), launched a partnership to support UN systemwide strategic engagement with human rights mechanisms to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2021.

To support Member States put rights at the core of sustainable development in line with the Secretary-General’s Call to Action, the UNDP OHCHR partnership project sought to strengthen coherence between human rights and sustainable development systems and approaches at the country level and document the needed know-how to advance human rights and sustainable development around the world. The project is implemented jointly by UNDP and OHCHR in close collaboration with DCO as well as the broader UNCT and through relevant interagency Call to Action workstreams that have prioritized some of the project’s activities in their work plans. This helps to promote knowledge sharing across the UN system and ensure complementarities of efforts. The project began in January 2021 and will be completed by the end of April 2022.

With HRM Fund support, the UNDP OHCHR partnership project entitled *Enhanced Resident Coordinator and UNCT strategic engagement with the Universal Periodic Review 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*, was launched in 2021 and operationalized through UNDP’s Global Programme on Strengthening the Rule of Law and Human Rights for Sustaining Peace and Fostering Development. While implementation of the project is ongoing until April 2022, significant milestones were reached in 2021, including:



### STRENGTHENED INTEGRATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEMS AND APPROACHES IN 6 COUNTRIES AND IN CENTRAL ASIA

Thus far, six countries have benefitted from joint UNDP OHCHR assistance on human rights and sustainable development integration in close coordination with the broader UNCT: **Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Tunisia, and Uruguay**. Based on the needs and priorities in each country context, joint programming was developed across three focus areas:

1. Human rights and SDG systems coherence and integration;
2. Rights-based data platforms for the SDGs;
3. Targeted efforts on specific human rights and SDG issues.

In addition, a regional mapping exercise in Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) was carried out to identify existing mechanisms and good practices for building coherence between sustainable development and human rights monitoring and reporting efforts. (Subregional consultations on this topic are being organized for April 2022 with additional support from UNDP’s Global Programme on the Rule of Law and Human Rights).

## Country-level results on human rights and SDG integration

- In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, the SDG Council, the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees, the national human rights institution (NHRI), and civil society organizations have initiated an important partnership to improve reporting on the 2030 Agenda and human rights and to link human rights obligations with SDGs implementation.
- In **Botswana**, civil society is developing a database for improved coordination and planning of SDG and human rights indicators in collaboration with the government-led national recommendations tracking database.
- In **Pakistan**, the government has strengthened harmonization of data collection and reporting on human rights and the SDGs by linking the various systems together through a digital platform called the Human Rights Information Management System, which is now operable across all provinces and at the federal level.
- In **Sierra Leone**, national partners developed an integrated implementation and monitoring strategy to track progress on human rights recommendations, the SDGs, and the Government of Sierra Leone's Medium-Term National Development Plan.
- In **Tunisia**, civil society organizations in the Medenine region are developing the first spotlight report on SDG 16 utilizing a human rights-based approach to data and analysis.
- In **Uruguay**, a citizen's perceptions tracker to monitor public opinion about justice and human rights was created and is being utilized to inform efforts to promote alternatives to detention.



## ENHANCED ENGAGEMENT OF NHRIs IN SDG MONITORING, REPORTING, AND IMPLEMENTATION IN 10 COUNTRIES

Considering the different entry points for NHRIs to engage in VNR processes, two countries have benefitted from joint UNDP and OHCHR assistance in close coordination with the broader UNCT: **Jordan** and **Rwanda**. OHCHR has also extended support to UNCTs to strengthen collaboration with NHRIs and National Statistical Offices (NSOs) on compiling human rights indicators and data, including in the SDGs, in nine countries: **Albania, Colombia, Egypt, Jordan, Moldova, Mongolia, Peru, Philippines, and Uganda**. A mapping of good practices of NHRIs and NSOs in operationalizing human rights indicators and human rights-based approach to data, with a repository of capacity building materials and data collection tools, is also being undertaken and will be completed in April 2022.

### Country level results on NHRI engagement include:

- In **Albania, Jordan, Moldova, Mongolia, and the Philippines**, memoranda of understanding between NHRIs and NSOs have been agreed with the aim of catalyzing the production of human rights indicators, including in the SDGs, and their different uses.
- In **Jordan**, in advance of the 2022 High-level Political Forum (HLPF), the NHRI and key government partners are developing a roadmap for accelerating 2030 Agenda implementation and building innovative and data-driven solutions for monitoring and reporting on the SDGs with a human rights perspective.
- In **Rwanda**, the NHRI and key government partners are conducting a comprehensive review of the 2019 VNR and 2020 UPR recommendations to inform the midterm review of the national development plan, the next Cooperation Framework, and other national planning efforts.

## PAKISTAN

On 16<sup>th</sup> February 2016, the Pakistan Parliament unanimously approved the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as the national development agenda. It also formed the Parliamentary SDGs Secretariat based at the National Assembly – one of the few countries to do so. This process of legislation was the first and crucial step in mainstreaming and localizing the SDGs. A recurring theme in Pakistan's UPR and treaty body recommendations is the lack of digital capacity, institutional competency, and resources, inhibited by a non-digital reporting culture, all of which hamper its capacity to effectively monitor human rights treaties. Building on previous UNDP support to the Government of Pakistan, the UNDP OHCHR partnership project in 2021 supported the finalization of the digital interfaces of the Human Rights Information Management System at the Federal Ministry of Human Rights that have been established between the Human Rights Information Management System portals in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh, and Balochistan. Linkages with the SDGs data platform established at the Ministry of Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives have also been integrated into the system. A National Strategic Framework for Coherence and Harmonization of Human Rights Data Collection and Reporting Mechanisms was also developed by the Ministry of Human Rights.

This is the product of a long consultative process in which the Ministry of Human Rights carried out stakeholder engagement with federal ministries, provincial line-departments, provincial and federal human rights institutions, and civil society representatives from across Pakistan. Through this process, collaboration across government entities, national and provincial human rights institutions, and civil society organizations working on human rights and the SDGs has also been significantly strengthened. For example, the consultative workshops provided a space for civil society members to share their views (See quote below from the workshops).

*“The key role of civil society in the implementation process of the recommended National Strategic Framework on Coherence of Human Rights Data Mechanisms, is undeniable, they not only support us in mass sensitization on human-rights issues, but we benefit from their active linkages within the community.”*

*Sabira Islam Ombudsperson Balochistan for Protection against Harassment of Women at Workplace*



### INCREASED UNDERSTANDING AND DOCUMENTATION OF HOW UPR PROCESSES ADVANCE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

To support the roll-out of the Practical Guidance on the UPR, UNDP, OHCHR, and DCO gathered over 60 experiences from across the UN system on how the UPR process and recommendations, which advance the promotion and protection of human rights, have had an impact on sustainable development at country

level. Eighteen of these examples were selected and curated into a flagship publication, *UN Good Practices: How The Universal Periodic Review Process Supports Sustainable Development* (published February 2022). The repository demonstrates how the UPR can be utilized as an essential and practical problem-solving tool to address priority human rights and development challenges. The examples gathered will be uploaded to an online repository hosted by DCO, to be completed by April 2022.





### **INCREASED KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS DIMENSIONS OF VNR PROCESSES**

In collaboration with the interagency Call to Action working group on SDG and Human Rights monitoring, UNDP and OHCHR are leading an initiative in collaboration with DESA to develop an Operational Common Approach Guidance Note on Human Rights and Voluntary National Reviews to strengthen the human rights lens in VNRs. A concept note for the guidance has been developed and the consultative process and product will be completed by mid-2022.



### **STRENGTHENED COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION AMONGST UN ACTORS TO SUPPORT NHRIS UNDER THREAT**

To enhance UN action in situations where NHRIs are facing reprisals for their work to protect and promote human rights, UNDP, OHCHR, DCO, and the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions are developing guidance for UNCTs. This guidance builds upon an existing protocol which is no longer applicable post-UN reform. In August of 2021, a senior expert was hired to develop the new guidance in the context of current roles and responsibilities in the UN system (post 2019 UN reform) and through a consultative process with relevant partners, NHRIs, and their networks. The guidance will be finalized by mid- 2022 and will propose UNCTs with clear guidance on how to support NHRIs facing acts of intimidation or reprisals.

In addition, a comparative analysis of the various UN protocols on reprisals against human rights defenders is being completed to help in identifying the similarities and differences in approaches with the aim of building UN coherence on supporting human rights defenders who are facing intimidation and / or reprisals whilst protecting the nuances needed for specific groups.

### **Tailored letters to RCs on opportunities to engage with human rights mechanisms**

In 2021, the Fund Secretariat supported UNCTs' strategic engagement with UN human rights mechanisms by sending the annual letter from OHCHR and DCO 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 7<sup>th</sup> year of this initiative, and again RCs welcomed the strategic support.

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## **LESSONS LEARNED**

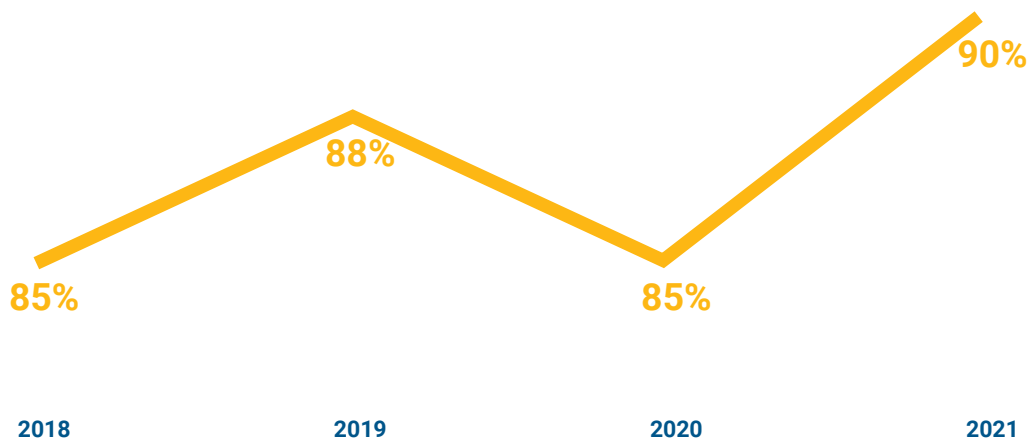
The achievements of the HRM Fund in 2021 reflect the growing relevance of the Fund in supporting well-coordinated and concerted system-wide efforts to integrate human rights in the work of the UNDS and its support to countries in the urgent efforts to get on track to deliver the 2030 Agenda, including responding to the pandemic of global health, humanitarian and human rights crises. Despite the continuing operational challenges posed by COVID-19 and other crises in some areas of operations, the Participating UN Organizations were able to proceed and recalibrate approaches where necessary to respond to evolving situations. 2021 showcased the criticality of having system-wide human rights-based policies, tools and capacities readily available to RCs and UNCTs in an ever-evolving complex world. As the repositioned UNDS gains stability, the ongoing efforts on policy coherence and support and the increased in the number of countries benefiting from support through the Fund's investments correlates with overall increased actions by RCs and UNCTs to integrate human rights into their development support to countries (see, for example, figures 5, 6 and 7).

However, UNInfo data shows that there are still gaps in some areas that need to be addressed to meet the expectations of the UN in supporting governments to achieve the 2030 Agenda. For example, training on human rights-based approaches is still not back

to pre-reform levels (45% of UNCTs reported an HRBA training in 2021, compared to 75% in 2018). Moreover, a recently-completed inter-agency review<sup>8</sup>

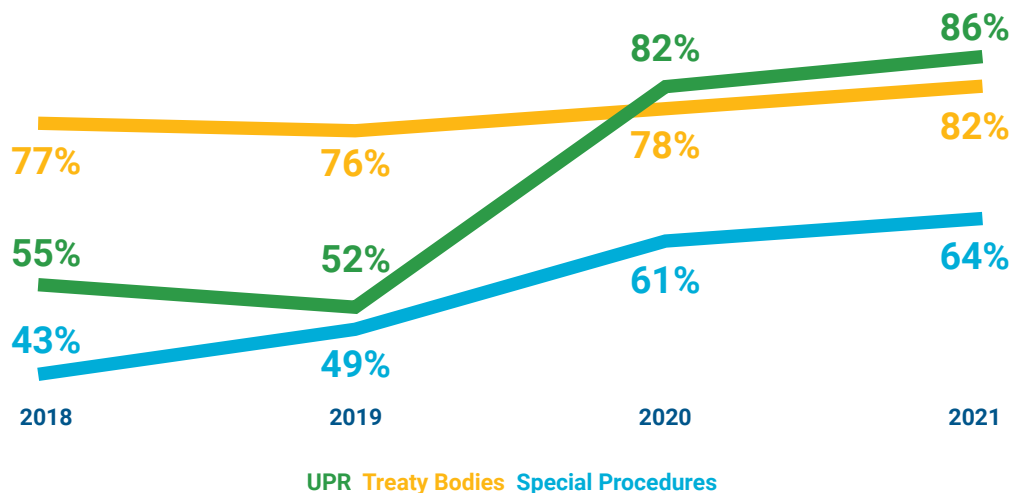
of the degree of integration of human rights, LNOB and gender equality and women's empowerment in new generation CCAs and Cooperation Frameworks

**FIGURE 5.**  
**UNCTs SUPPORTED THE GOVERNMENT IN MAINSTREAMING HUMAN RIGHTS INTO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES**



Source: Development Coordination Office.

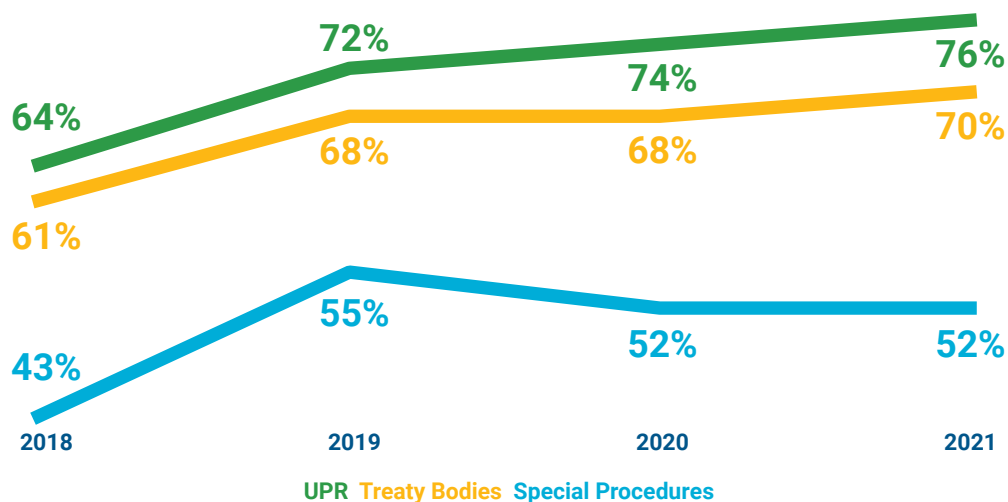
**FIGURE 6.**  
**CCAs INCLUDED RECOMMENDATIONS FROM HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS AS CORE COMPONENT OF ITS ANALYSIS**



Source: Development Coordination Office.

<sup>8</sup> The review was conducted by 12 UN entities, namely: DCO, DESA, ILO, OCHA, OHCHR, UN Women, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, and WHO plus the inputs from the UN Network on Racial Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. The Surge Initiative experts also contributed to the review.

**FIGURE 7.**  
**COOPERATION FRAMEWORK OUTCOMES LINKED TO  
 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS**



Source: Development Coordination Office.

(initiated in 2021 under the Secretary-General's Call to Action) showed, among others, a degree of attention to human rights and LNOB in new generation CCAs and Cooperation Frameworks, however it also highlighted key gaps and pointed to the urgency to step up ambition and operationalization of human rights integration into UN development analysis and programming work at the country level.

#### Some key lessons from 2021 in terms of achievements and challenges for the HRM Fund:

- **Building muscles of UN RCs and country teams**

Moving the needle requires expertise, skills, strong partnerships and coordination, and to do it faster and better we need innovations and good practices taken to scale. The same principle applies to human rights work of empowered RCs and UN country teams. RCs and UNCTs must think and do human rights regularly to build strong muscles. The data above show a positive trend in recent years on the integration of recommendations from human rights mechanisms in CCAs and Cooperation Frameworks. However, the findings of the inter-agency analysis of

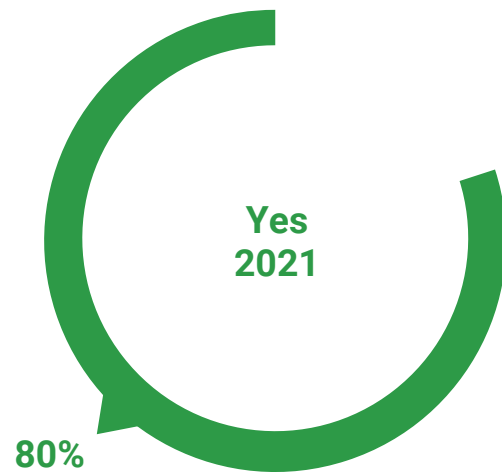
CCAs and Cooperation Frameworks is a reminder of the importance of heightened efforts to ensure quality and concrete outcomes of UNCT efforts to apply the HRBA, gender equality and the principle of LNOB. The Fund's evaluation and stakeholder consultations pointed to the value of dedicated capacities on human rights in-country (covering the breadth of civil, political, economic, cultural and social rights), as well as scaling up specialized expertise and targeted initiatives to respond to gaps in system support to UNCTs, in combination with policy coherence and clear guidance across the system. The Fund-supported initiative to update and roll out the training on HRBA, LNOB and gender equality and women's empowerment through a UN Staff System College e-learning course is intended to ensure that all field staff have a minimum level of understanding on how to apply the guiding principles, thereby increasing the demand and support for routine integration. Systematic leadership support for RCs on human rights will continue to be essential in helping UNCTs and national partners to prioritize actions that will build more equal and resilient societies and establish a renewed social contract anchored in human rights.

- **Importance of empowerment and protection of civil society as key partners in rights-based and sustainable development**

Civil society are not only rights-holders, they are critical partners in the shared vision of the 2030 Agenda. In 2021, 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. Moreover, UNCTs increased their support to civil society to engage with human rights mechanisms, as well as with national and local level decision-making processes. Concrete policy gains were achieved in some countries, including for indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, refugees, people in closed settings and women.

Data from new indicators on UNCTs support to civil society show that 80% of UNCTs overall reported contributing to an enabling environment for civic space online and offline in partnership with civil society in 2021 (see figure 8), primarily through supporting the engagement of more diverse communities/constituencies including those at risk of being left behind. The inter-agency review of CCAs and Cooperation Frameworks found that when the UNCT engages civil society in the design of CCAs and Cooperation Frameworks, the quality of the frameworks improves. However, some groups – such as indigenous peoples, LGBTIQ+ and racial and ethnic minorities continue to be left behind, including in the UN's engagements and development programming. UNCTs also reported for the first time on the different ways that the UNCT has contributed to protecting civil society online and offline (see figure 9). Further expanding partnerships to ensure engagement with representatives of all groups left behind and strengthening UN country team engagement with civil society, support for civic space, and concrete measures to protect civil society, including human rights defenders, journalists and trade unionists online and offline are areas where the HRM Fund will increase its support in coming years.

**FIGURE 8.**  
**UNCT CONTRIBUTION TO CIVIC SPACE ONLINE AND OFFLINE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CIVIL SOCIETY**

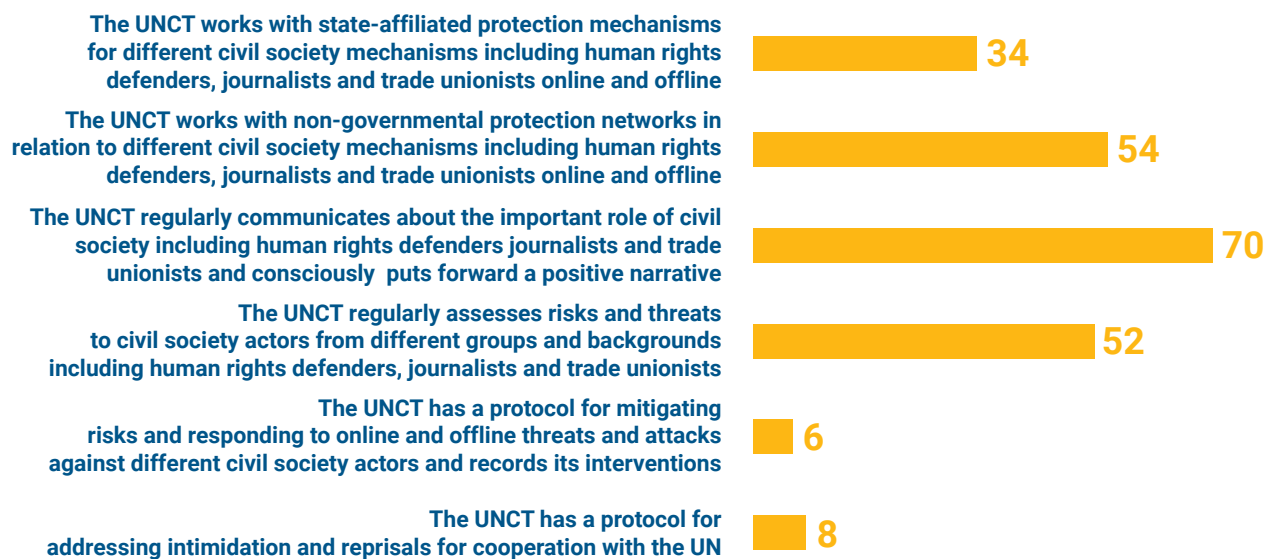


Source: Development Coordination Office.

- **Joined up solutions as force multiplier**

Strengthened cross-pillar collaboration is critical to enhanced programmatic integration and impact to strengthen prevention and integrated support to countries to achieve the 2030 Agenda. Results from HRAs, the Surge Initiative and the UNDP-OHCHR partnership on human rights and SDG processes included examples where the UNDS was able to integrate human rights, humanitarian, development and peace analysis and expertise for complimentary or joined up solutions that address the complexity of challenges at the country level. For example, HRAs in several countries worked in tandem with the PDAs on strengthening cross-pillar work on prevention, resilience and human rights due diligence in fragile contexts, and Surge Initiative experts contributed economic and social rights analysis to prevention and crisis response in the Regional Monthly Reviews. In line with the Secretary-General's Call to Action and Our common Agenda, ensuring that the UNDS maximizes the complimentary nature of the expertise

FIGURE 9.  
**IN 2021, UNCTs WORK ON PROTECTING CIVIL SOCIETY,  
 HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS, JOURNALISTS, TRADE UNIONS**



Source: Development Coordination Office.

available – including through the support provided through the HRM Fund – is an area where further efforts in policy coherence, coordination at HQ, regional and country levels and knowledge sharing could bear additional fruit.

- **Strengthening the HRM Fund’s accountability and forward planning to maximize impact**

In response to the Funding Compact commitment on improving transparency and accountability (#9) in relation to accessibility of evaluations, the HRM Fund [published on the UNEG page](#) the full evaluation report on its decade long operations and its [management response](#) to the evaluation including [quarterly](#)

[progress updates](#) on the Gateway. On the Funding Compact commitment (#14) on increasing efficiency and effectiveness of development-related inter-agency pooled funds, the Fund updated its Terms of Reference and theory of change as well as crafted a multiyear results framework informed by stakeholder consultations involving RCs, UN entities (regional and HQ-based) and current donors. In this process, the Fund’s Steering Committee received more structured feedback from current donors through the first annual dialogue. The dialogue facilitated a shared understanding of the Fund’s impact and expanded ambition, and greater involvement of current donors in mobilizing support for the 2022-2025 multiyear funding appeal.





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## OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE 2021

*“Increasing flexible contributions to core funding and to global pooled funds is necessary if the UNDS is to move away from a more projectized model and towards policy support that is integrated, uses the full assets of the UN, and is tailored to national context.”*

ECOSOC Operational Activities Segment 2021,  
19 May 2021

### REVITALISING THE HRM FUND TO SUSTAIN AND BUILD MOMENTUM

In 2021, the Steering Committee, with the support of the HRM Fund Secretariat, completed the Fund’s first independent review of its decade long operations, agreed and implemented a comprehensive management response to the evaluation (see further details in the box). This involved, *inter alia*, a consultative process to update it’s the Fund’s constitutional documents ([Terms of Reference](#)) including its vision and theory of change and develop a multi-year results framework while working remotely due to the protracted global COVID-19

pandemic. The Steering Committee extended the Fund duration period to 2025 based on stakeholder consultations involving RCs and HQ-based UN entities and the EOSG and discussions with current donors. The Steering Committee, informed by the evaluation and stakeholders' feedback, elaborated, with support from the Fund Secretariat, a multiyear results framework and funding appeal for 2022-2025. In October, the Steering Committee held its [first annual dialogue](#) with all current donors as part of its strengthened governance framework in establishing a systematic dialogue between the Fund Steering Committee members and current donors to inform the Fund's strategic directions, including generation of support for its resource mobilization strategy and supported initiatives.

The Steering Committee, with the support of the HRM Fund Secretariat, reviewed and approved funding proposals through virtual meetings and electronic endorsements. The Steering Committee continued its oversight of the programme/project workplans and provided guidance to lead implementing organizations on recalibration of some plans due to the evolving pandemic and fragility contexts of some partner countries as well as ensuring policy coherence at the global level and deliver timely human rights advisory support and tools to RCs and UNCTs.

With strong donor-development partners engagement in 2021, the HRM Fund was able to continue supporting successful programmes including the Human Rights Advisers and the Surge Initiative, as well as support new initiatives (e.g. UNDP-OHCHR joint programme on linking human rights and sustainable development processes). Through these efforts, the scope and nature of the support offered to the UNDS and particularly to RCs and UNCTs was considerably expanded including collaboration with more entities and in more countries beyond the flagship HRA Programme. The Fund Secretariat also assisted Participating UN Organizations in the amendment of project documents and prepared financial and other information for the Steering Committee to perform its oversight over Fund-supported projects/programmes.

The HRM Fund Secretariat supported the Steering Committee in implementing its ambitious Management Response plan to the Evaluation Recommendations, including leading on key initiatives upon request of the Steering Committee. Quarterly updates on the implementation progress are tracked and posted on the [MPTFO Gateway](#).

The HRM Fund Secretariat designed and convened stakeholder consultations and outreach plans to support the Steering Committee's efforts in strengthening the Fund's theory of change and better understanding of the Fund's value-add in the current human rights and development system landscape, including the new mandates in the 2020 QCPR and priorities and vision of the Secretary-General.

With coordination and substantive support from the HRM Fund Secretariat, and advice from the Steering Committee entities' resource mobilization experts, the Steering Committee adopted a resource mobilization strategy to accompany its Multi-year Funding Appeal for 2022-2025. Actions taken under this strategy in 2021 include the creation of a brand identity and logo for the Fund, liaison with UN entities and offices to ensure consistent recognition of the contributions of the Fund in relevant reports to Member States, and outreach to development partners.

The HRM Fund Secretariat provided regular updates to donors, including on the Fund's activities in fragile settings, its compliance to the Funding Compact, its relationship and contribution to other UN initiatives and pooled funds, and on the continuing demand for human rights capacities.

To support the impact and ongoing coherence of the HRM Fund's work within the UN system, the Fund Secretariat continued to work closely with the Participating UN Organizations of the HRM Fund, the Human Rights Task Team, Call to Action Task Teams, DCO and other UN entities to ensure institutional linkages and information sharing. The work supported by the Fund remained aligned with the vision and priorities of the UNSDG inter-agency groups (e.g., Human Rights, COVID19) and Call to Action Task Teams, with lead implementing entities



engaging the relevant counterparts for feedback and contributions to Fund-supported projects including knowledge management. The multi-year results framework of the Fund endorsed by the Steering Committee in 2021 is aligned with the UNSDGs at the outcome level and key QCPR indicators at the output level. The Fund Secretariat and DCO also facilitated inter-linkages between the initiatives supported by the Fund and other UNSDG processes, DCO-led workshops and trainings for RCO staff, and UNSDG Task Teams. For example, the Fund Secretariat provided advice to the Joint SDG Fund Secretariat on the integration of human rights and LNOB in Joint SDG Fund processes, thus leveraging the relatively small investments in the HRM Fund for greater impact across other development-related pooled funds.

The HRM Fund Secretariat furthered knowledge management, 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 (Yammer platform and others) and through sharing HRBA-related updates, activities, tools and publications through the UNSDG network including through RCs and RCOs. The Fund Secretariat co-manages the [UNSDG Knowledge Portal on Human Rights and Leaving No One Behind](#) and created the HRM Fund toolbox to highlight key knowledge products and information related to Fund-supported initiatives aligned with key UNSDG policies and human rights themes. The Fund Secretariat also continued its quality assurance support to the DCO annual reporting by UNCTs (UN INFO) to ensure the collection and analysis of data on the capacities, actions and results on human rights mainstreaming at country level. The UN INFO data is used for QCPR monitoring, tracking progress towards the Fund's outcome and outputs under the new results framework, and to inform the policy-practice feedback loop.



## HRM FUND INDEPENDENT EVALUATION AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

The Independent Evaluation report was submitted to the Steering Committee in January 2021. The 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”, “The UNDS Reform and the Secretary-General’s Call to Action for Human Rights present important opportunities to advance the Fund’s current work and reinvigorate the mainstreaming of human rights within the UNDS...”* 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.”*

Further details regarding the evaluation including key findings are included in the 2020 Annual Report of the Fund.

## MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS

The Steering Committee is committed to strengthen the Fund’s support to institutionalizing human rights mainstreaming in the UN development system. A shared vision, enhanced multi-year interagency planning and collaboration, and continued engagement of development partners will be key in the Fund’s sustained contribution towards 2030 Agenda.

The Steering Committee recognizes with gratitude the contributions of key stakeholders to the evaluation, including UN entities, donors, UN Resident Coordinators (RCs) and Human Rights Advisers (HRAs). The Steering Committee generally agrees with the five main recommendations, which resonate with the overall medium-term direction

of the Fund, as reflected in the decisions of the Steering Committee taken prior to the completion of the evaluation. The Management Response covers practical and timebound key actions that build on ongoing work, including designation of entities responsible for implementation.

### Key Recommendations and Management Response

1. Define the Fund’s strategic vision, including through the creation of a Theory of Change and multi-year results framework, and raise awareness among the UNSDG about the need for a UNDS-wide senior leadership space to guide human rights mainstreaming work, including that of the Fund. **Accept.**
2. Mobilize additional resources by developing a resource mobilization strategy and an aligned communications plan that promote the Fund’s visibility among UN stakeholders and donors and that articulates the Fund’s comparative advantage, value added, and its future vision for mainstreaming human rights across the UNDS. **Accept.**
3. Continue scaling-up support for Human Rights Advisers (HRAs) while simultaneously expanding the proportion of the Fund’s portfolio that falls outside of the HRA Programme. **Partially Accept.**
4. Institutionalize and systematize the Fund’s management processes to align them with good management practices and to better reflect results-based management principles. **Accept.**
5. Update the 2012 HRA deployment criteria and clearly articulate the detailed criteria (including prioritization) in a formalized document. At the same time, formalize DCO’s contributions towards supporting the HRA Programme in line with its new role of supporting the RC system. **Accept.**



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## CONCLUSION

2021 was a year of expansion and re-positioning for the HRM Fund. RCs and UNCTs demanded more from the Fund, and we responded. The support provided by the Fund reached more countries, with more direct advisory support and targeted seed funding than in recent years, responding to the increased demand from Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams to help them to better leverage opportunities and respond to concerning developments in their work with partners, and to fulfil the expectations of the UNDS reform and vision of the Secretary-General. The Fund also continued to support policy coherence and the institutionalization of the human rights-based approach through a variety of initiatives drawing on thought leadership, policy priorities, expertise and good practices from global, regional and country levels. Through these initiatives, the HRM Fund contributed to stronger integration of human rights, LNOB and gender equality and women's empowerment into UNDS policies and guidance for UNCTs' support to 2030 Agenda implementation that is underpinned by human rights, and strengthened RC and UNCT capacity to leverage the UN's mandate and normative authority, including in the COVID-19 response and thematic areas under the Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights.

The HRM Fund also expanded its engagements with other UN system entities and processes, and with donors, to ensure that its revitalized goal, vision and mission for the coming years builds on past successes and gains in development structures and frameworks and responds to new and emerging

challenges in order to deliver the change we need to see. Through these processes, ILO signaled interest in re-joining the Fund. ILO membership and participation in the Steering Committee was approved in early 2022.

As we approach the mid-point to the 2030 Agenda with concerning regression on both human rights and development indicators, the HRM Fund's vision is necessarily ambitious. As the only dedicated funding mechanism available today to enhance the capacities of RCs and UNCTs in their efforts to integrate human rights into their work, the contributions of the Fund are critical to achieving the 2030 Agenda and meeting Member States' request for support under the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review. Responding to the findings and recommendations of the independent evaluation and informed by additional information and analysis generated through the Steering Committee's strategic planning processes in 2021, UNDS entities elaborated the 2022-2025 results framework for the Fund, and stand ready to jointly implement multi-year strategic programmes to achieve the targets set. To catalyse efforts to further institutionalize interagency collaboration on human rights for development, to implement the Call to Action and to support the realization of the vision of Our Common Agenda greater investment is required. The resources required to strengthen Member States and other duty-bearers as well as engage rights-holders more at the country-level also reflect the growing demands and challenges created by armed conflict, the pandemic era of COVID19, climate change, and multiple planetary crises.



# ANNEXES

## ANNEX 1

### HRM Fund Governance

This section outlines the roles and processes and describes how they contributed to the overall governance and accountability of the HRM Fund since the 2021 update of the Terms of Reference.

#### Steering Committee

The HRM Fund 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 Fund, reviews funding proposals and approves allocations.

#### Technical Secretariat

The Secretariat provides operational coordination and technical support to the HRM Fund. It will be hosted by the UN Development Coordination Office to facilitate the Secretariat's support to inter-agency coordination, institutional linkages between the Fund and the UNSDG and its working mechanisms, and the coordination of, support to, and communication with, RCs and UNCTs

and Regional UNSDG structures as required to achieve the Fund's objectives. The Secretariat provides overall coordination and facilitation support to the Steering Committee, Participating UN Organizations, and the Administrative Agent.

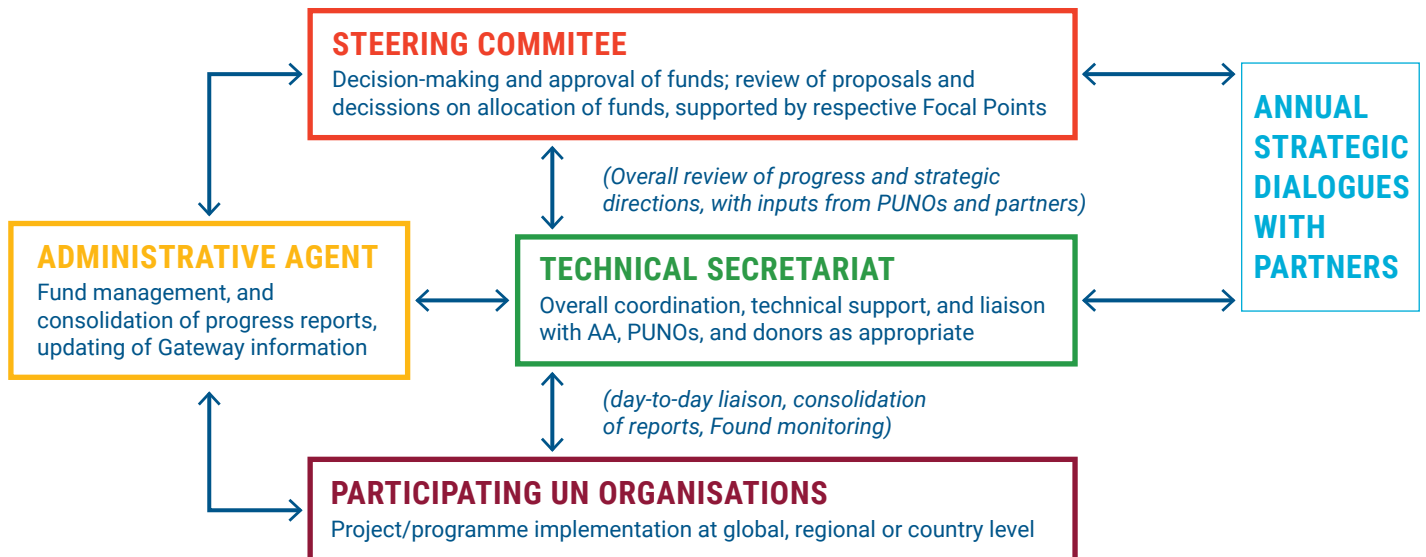
#### Administrative Agent

The Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) Office is the Administrative Agent for the HRM Fund. It is responsible for the receipt, administration and management of contributions from donors, disbursement of funds to Participating Organizations, and consolidation and dissemination of progress reports to the donors.

#### Participating United Nations Organizations

UN Organizations that participate in the Fund sign a standard memorandum of understanding with the Administrative Agent. Operating under their own financial regulations, rules and policies, each organization assumes full financial and programmatic accountability for the funds disbursed to it by the Administrative Agent and for the implementation of the project. Participating Organizations provide financial and narrative progress reports to the Administrative Agent on their activities, as described in the memorandum of understanding.

### HRM FUND GOVERNANCE



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## ANNEX 2

### Abbreviations and Acronyms

<b>CCA</b>	Common Country Analysis	<b>OCHA</b>	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>CEB</b>	The United Nations System Chief Executive Board for Coordination	<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>PBF</b>	United Nations Peacebuilding Fund
<b>CERD</b>	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination	<b>PUNO</b>	Participating United Nations Organizations
<b>CF</b>	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework	<b>QCPR</b>	Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review
<b>CRC</b>	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child	<b>RC</b>	Resident Coordinator
<b>CRPD</b>	UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organization	<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>DCO</b>	Development Coordination Office	<b>UNCT</b>	United Nations Country Team
<b>DESA</b>	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs	<b>UNDAF</b>	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
<b>ECOSOC</b>	United Nations Economic and Social Council	<b>UNDG</b>	United Nations Development Group
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	<b>UNDS</b>	United Nations Development System
<b>GEWE</b>	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment	<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>HDP</b>	Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus	<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>HRA</b>	Human Rights Adviser	<b>UNEP</b>	United Nations Environment Programme
<b>HRBA</b>	Human Rights-Based Approach	<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>ICCPR</b>	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights	<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization	<b>UNHCT</b>	United Nations Humanitarian Country Team
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration	<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>LNOB</b>	Leave No One Behind	<b>UNIOGBIS</b>	United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau
<b>MDF</b>	Multi-Donor Trust Fund	<b>UNOCT</b>	United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism
<b>MOU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding	<b>UNODC</b>	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
<b>MPTFO</b>	Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office UNDP	<b>UNSDG</b>	United Nations Sustainable Development Group
<b>NMRF</b>	National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow up	<b>UN SERP</b>	Socio-Economic Response Plan
<b>NHRI</b>	National Human Rights Institutions	<b>UNSSC</b>	United Nations System Staff College
<b>NSO</b>	National Statistics Office	<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>VNR</b>	Voluntary National Review
		<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization







**Human Rights  
Mainstreaming  
Fund**



**United Nations  
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**Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office**  
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<http://mptf.undp.org>