

To:

All Permanent Missions to the United Nations in Geneva and New York

Cc:

UN Secretary General
UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
Chairpersons of the Human Rights Treaty Bodies
Coordination Committee of UN Special Procedures

28 May 2019

Open NGO letter regarding the critical funding gap affecting UN human rights mechanisms and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

It is with a sense of urgency that we convey our deep concern regarding the critical funding situation affecting the UN's human rights mechanisms and OHCHR. We understand that the combination of delays in payments of UN member states' assessed contributions to the regular budget and the 25% cut to travel of UN representatives, including treaty body experts and Special Procedure mandate holders, and other budget cuts (2018-2019) may adversely impact on the capacity of various human rights mechanisms to carry out their mandates effectively.

In April, the Chairpersons of the 10 human rights treaty bodies were informed that due to the financial situation, the autumn 2019 sessions of six treaty bodies may need to be cancelled.¹ Not only is the cancellation of treaty body sessions deeply worrying as it may involve cancellation of reviews already scheduled and delay decisions on individual communications pending before the Committees but it also sends a troubling message ahead of the 2020 treaty body strengthening discussions. This unprecedented development would come as we celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the 40th anniversary of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

We understand that other independent expert mechanisms such as the Special Procedures, and other mechanisms created by the Human Rights Council such as Fact-Finding Missions and Commissions of Inquiry, may also be hampered in carrying out their mandates to monitor and investigate human rights violations.

As of 10 May, only 44 UN member states had paid all their assessments due to the UN. We would like to commend Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, China, Cuba, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Malawi, Malaysia, Monaco, Nauru, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Poland, Rwanda, Samoa, Singapore, Slovakia, Solomon Islands, Sweden, Switzerland and Tuvalu for having done so.² 98 member states had paid their regular budget assessments by 20 May 2019.

The failure to pay assessed contributions is only the latest in a worrying trend of shortfalls and cuts affecting the UN budget allocated to its human rights mechanisms. In the 2018-2019 budget the General Assembly made adjustments to reduce the resources for experts by 15 per cent, reduce the travel of representatives by 25 per cent, and reduce resources for travel of staff by 10 per cent³, all without taking into account the disproportionate effect these decisions would have on the UN's human rights mechanism. Only 3.7 per cent of the total UN regular budget is currently allocated to OHCHR⁴. We are extremely concerned by reports that the funding gap may affect the functioning of OHCHR and the human rights mechanisms in 2020 and beyond.

¹ <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24621&LangID=E>

² <http://undocs.org/en/A/73/443/Add.1>, para. 26 and <https://www.un.org/en/ga/contributions/honourroll.shtml> accessed on 27 May 2019.

³ <https://www.un.org/press/en/2017/gaab4270.doc.htm>

⁴ <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/AboutUs/Pages/FundingBudget.aspx>

Against the worrying background of a global pushback against the promotion and protection of human rights, we urge all UN member states to:

- Pay their assessed contributions without further delay, unless they have already done so, in order to assure the functioning of the UN's human rights mechanisms.
- Prioritise securing adequate funding for the UN's human rights pillar, with the promotion and protection of human rights being also indispensable to development, peace and security.
- Initiate, in due time ahead of the 2020-2021 budget negotiations, discussions on how to reverse the trend of reduced regular budget for OHCHR and assuring that the UN's human rights mechanisms are not disproportionately affected by over-all cuts to the UN budget, including by restoring the budget allocation for travel of representatives for these mechanisms.

Signatories:

A 11 - Initiative for Economic and Social Rights	Action on Child, Early and Forced Marriage	Amnesty International
Abogados y abogadas del Noroeste argentino en derechos humanos y estudios sociales (Andhes)	ActionAid International	ALQST for Human Rights
ACADHOSHA (Action des Chrétiens Activistes des Droits de l'Homme à Shabunda)	Activist	Arab Women Network for Parity and Solidarity
ACAT	Adalah - The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel	Articulación Feminista Marcosur
ACAT Belgium	Addu women's Association (AWA)	ASEAN SOGIE Caucus
ACAT Canada	Adska ong	Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)
ACAT Congo	Advocacy for women in peace and security- Africa	Asian Legal Resource Centre (ALRC)
ACAT Ghana	Afghan Women Network	Asian Migrants' Coordinating Body (AMCB-IMA)
ACAT Italia	Afghan Women News Agency Organization	Asociace romskych predstavitelu Libereckeho kraje z.s.
ACAT Luxembourg	Afghan women Skills Development Center	Asociación Ciudadana ACCEDER
ACAT Tchad	Agir Ensemble pour les Droits de l'Homme (AEDH)	Asociación de Mujeres Afrodescendientes de Yolombo - ASOMUAFROYO.
ACAT- Benin	Aid Organization	Asociación de Mujeres Afrodescendientes del Norte del Cauca- ASOM
ACAT- NIGER	Al-Zahraa: Organization for the Advancement of Women	Asociacion Tesai Reka Paraguay
ACAT-Brasil	Alhaq	assiwar--the feminist arab movement
ACAT-Burundi	All Okinawa Council for Human Rights	Associace Romskych Rodicu z.s.
ACAT-Cameroun	Allamin Foundation for Peace and Development	Association "MARTA Centre"
ACAT-France	Alliance Globale contre les Mutilations Génitales Féminines	
ACAT-Switzerland	American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)	
ACAT-USA		
Action femme de valeur		
Action Jeunesse pour le Développement		

Association for Civil Rights in Israel	Breakthrough Trust	Centro de derechos humanos pasó del Norte
Association for Cultural and Media Activism QUEER SQUARE Skopje	Bridgebuilders Trust	Centro de estudios de la mujer
Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality	Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies	Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS)
Association for the Prevention of Torture	Cambodian Center for Human Rights ("CCHR")	Child Rights International Network
Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID)	Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children	CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality
Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons	Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action	Church of Norway Council on Ecumenical and International Relations
Association for Progressive Communications (APC)	Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network	CIDEM
Association of War Affected Women	CBM	CISCESA
Association of Women for Action and Research	Center for Justice and International Law	CIVICUS: World Alliance for citizen participation
ASTRA-Anti trafficking action	Center for Legal Civic Initiatives	Civil Rights Defenders
ATFD	Center for Media, Data and Society, Central European University	CKLP
ATTA LKER	Center for Reproductive Rights	CNRS
AUDF	Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL)	Coalition Burkinabe des Défenseurs des Droits Humains (CBDDH)
Avocats Sans Frontières France	Centre Catholique International de Genève	COALITION CEDEF ET LES ANGES DU CIEL
Awen Amenca z.s.	Centre for Civil and Political Rights	Coalition for Sexual and Bodily Rights in Muslim Societies
Bahamas Crisis Centre	Centre for Indigenous Cultures of Peru	Coast Education Centre (COEC)
Bahrain Center for Human Rights	Centre for Migration, Refugees and Belonging, The University of East London	COC Nederland
Baidarie	Centre for Social Concern and Development (CESOCODE)	Colectiva Ciudad y Género ac
Bairo Pite Clinic Lanud, Timor-Leste	Centro de Derechos Humanos de las Mujeres (CEDEHM)	Collectif des Associations Contre l'Impunité au Togo CACIT
Balance Promoción para el Desarrollo y Juventud AC	Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas AC	COLLECTIF DES AVOCATS POUR LA DEFENSE DES VICTIMES DES CRIMES DE DROIT INTERNATIONAL
Better World Campaign	Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez	COMMIS AUX BURUNDI
Beyond Beijing Committee		CoMensha
Blind Women Association, Nepal (BWAN)		Comisión de Derechos Humanos - COMISEDH
Botswana Watch Organization		

Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos	Dalit NGO Federation (DNF), Nepal	Fédération Euro-Méditerranéenne contre les Disparitions Forcées - FEMED
Comité de América Latina y el Caribe para la Defensa de los Derechos de las Mujeres	Damascus Center for Human Rights Studies	Feminist Legal Clinic Inc.
Comité Víctimas Lesa Humanidad y Graves Violaciones DDHH Ecuador	Darfur Network for monitoring and Documentation	Femmes et Droits Humains
Committees for the defense of democracy freedoms and Human Rights in Syria(C.D.F)	Defence for Children International	FIACAT
Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI)	DefendDefenders (the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project)	First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada
Community Work Ireland	Dejusticia	FOKUS
Conectas Direitos Humanos	Democracy Today	Fondazione Pangea onlus
CONGCOOP	Democratic Party, Hong Kong	Foundation Ultimate Purpose
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd	Director, Comparative Governance and Policy Research Cente, Department of Government & International Studies, Hong Kong Baptist University	FRANCISCANS INTERNATIONAL
Congrès Mondial Amazigh	DIVA for Equality	Freelance
Consorcio para el Diálogo Parlamentario y la Equidad Oaxaca A.C.	Dóchas	Fundación Arcoiris
Continental Network of Indigenous Women of the Americas	Dominicans for Justice and Peace	Fundación de Mujeres Luna Creciente
Contra Nocendi International	Dublin Rape Crisis Centre	Fuuse
Cook Islands National Council of Women	Dutch CEDAW Network	Gender Alliance for Development Centre
cooperation committee for Cambodia (CCC)	Earthjustice	Gender and Sociology
Coordinadora de la Mujer	Echoes of Women in Africa Initiatives	Gender Equality Network
Coordinadora Lesbica y de Hombres Trans-Republika Libre	ECPAT France	Geneva for Human Rights (GHR)
Corte suprema de justicia	Edmund Rice International	Geten, Center for LGBTIQA People's Rights
Cotidiano Mujer, Uruguay	Education Coalition	GIN-SSOGIE
CROISADE-NIGER	Equality Now	Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Culural Rights
Czech Women's Lobby / Česká ženská lobby	European Center for Not-for-Profit Law	Global Network of Sex Work Projects
	European Network of People of African Descent - ENPAD	GQUAL Campaign
	European Roma Rights Centre	Greek Helsinki Monitor
		Groupe d'action pour les droits de la femme
		Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR)
		Gypsy Cooperative Uk
		Gypsy Council

Hazte Visible A.C.	Derechos Humanos (IM-Defensoras)	Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society
HCLU		
Health and Human Rights Info	İnsan Hakları Derneği / Human Rights Association - Turkey	JANANEETHI
HELP Resources	Instituto de liderazgo Simone de Beauvoir AC	Justice for Iran (JFI)
HK Human Rights Monitor	International Action Network for Gender Equity & Law	Karapatan Philippines
Honduras Forum Switzerland	International Association for Human Rights Advocacy in Geneva	Kenya Human Rights Commission
Hong Kong Unison	International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN)	Klagsverband/Litigation Association of NGOs against discrimination
Human Rights Alert	International Commission of Jurists	LA VOIX DES SANS VOIX POUR LES DROITS DE L'HOMME (VSV)
Human Rights Center of Azerbaijan	International Council of Women	Las Reinas Chulas Cabaret Y Derechos Humanos AC
Human Rights Committee, Norwegian Psychological Association	International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)	Latvian Human Rights Committee (FIDH)
Human Rights Commission of Pakistan	International Federation of Settlements and Neighborhood Centers	League for the Defence of Human Rights in Iran (LDDHI)
Human Rights Defenders Network-SL	International Indigenous Women's Forum	Legal Resources Centre
Human Rights House Foundation	International Justice Resource Center	Ligue Algerienne de Defense des Droits de l'Homme
Human Rights in China	International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR)	LIGUE DES DEFENSEURS REGIONAUX
Human Rights Law Centre	International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT)	Lutheran World Federation
Human Rights Watch	International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific	MADRE
Humanists International	Intersex Human Rights Australia	Maharat Foundation
IBAHRI	investigacion para el desarrollo	MARUAH
IDHEAS, Litigio Estratégico en Derechos Humanos-México	Irish Council for Civil Liberties	Masimanyane Women's Right's International
ILGA World	Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights	MASUM
ILGA-Europe		MEDITERRANEAN WOMEN MEDIATORS NETWORK
Ilsb		Member of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
IM Swedish Development Partner		MENA Rights Group
Independent		MenEngage Global Alliance
Independent Medico-Legal Unit		
Indigenous Movement for Peace Advancement and Conflict Transformation(IMPACT)		
Iniciativa Mesoamericana de Defensoras de		

Minority Rights Group - Greece	Okogun Odigie Safewomb International Foundation (OOSAIF)	Proceso de Comunidades Negras
Minotenk - minoritetspolitisk tenketank	Omega Research Foundation	Project on Organizing, Development, Education and Research (PODER)
Mongolia	OMOD	Promo LEX Association, Moldova
Moroccan association for human rights	Organisation Marocaine des Droits Humains	PUBLIC COMMITTEE AGAINST TORTURE IN ISRAEL
Movilización de Mujeres Negras por el Cuidado de Vida y los Territorios Ancestrales. Premio Goldman 2018	Oslo Metropolitan University (Oslomet)	Radha Paudel Foundation
Mujeres Transformando el Mundo	Østsamene	RCMD
Musawah	OutRight Action International	Reacción Climática
Muslim Women's Network UK	Oxfam	Reactor - Research in Action
National Council of Women New Zealand	Pacific Partnerships on Gender, Climate Change and Sustainable Development (PPGCCSD) -Regional	REAMA Network network for the empowerment of women and self help support
NATIONAL UNION OF DOMESTIC EMPLOYEES	PACIFICWIN	REd de Educación Popular entre Mujeres REPEM -LAC
National Women's Council of Ireland	PAIMAN	Red Nacional de Mujeres - Colombia
Nauru Island Association of NGOs	Palestinian Center for development And Media Freedoms-MADA	Red Nacional de Organismos Civiles de Derechos Humanos Todos los Derechos para Todas y Todos (conformada por 87 organizaciones de 23 entidades federativas de México)
NGO Committe for CSW Latin America and the Caribbean	Partido Revolucionario Febrerista	REDRESS Trust
NGO Women for Development	PARTNERSHIP FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH AND WELLBEING	Rescue Me-crime prevention
NGO-Coordination post Beijing Switzerland	PathFinders Limited	Réseau International des Droits Humains (RIDH)
Noon Center for Women and Family Issues	Peace Brigades International	RESPECT Network
North Wales Regional Equality Network	Peace Foundation Pakistan	RFSL - The Swedish Federation for LGBTQ Rights
Norwegian Centre against Racism	People's Watch - INDIA	Rights for All Women
Norwegian Helsinki Committee	Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (PAHRA)	Rivers without Boundaries International Coalition
Norwegian Humanist Association	Piattaforma CEDAW Italia Lavori in corsa	Roma Future z.s.
Odhikar, Bangladesh	Plan International	ROMEA
ODRI intersectional rights	Plataforma Internacional contra la Impunidad	
	Positive Women (Ukraine)	
	Pro Sentret	

Saami Council	The MiRA Resource Center for black, migrant and refugee women	US Human Rights Network
Save the Children International	The MiRA Resource Center for black, migrant and refugee women in Norway	Uthema Maldives
Sayoni, Singapore	The Negev Coexistence Forum	Validity Foundation - Mental Disability Advocacy Centre
Secretary	The Norwegian Bar Association Human Rights Committee	Vision Spring Initiatives
Shah-Aiyem Network	The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions	Vzájemně soužití (Life Together)
Shirkat Gah Women's Resource Centre	THE NORWEGIAN HUMAN RIGHTS FUND	Wenshe Centre for Human Rights Education
Sistren Theatre Collective	The Norwegian Support Committee for Western Sahara	Wi'am
SOLIDARITE FEMININE POUR LA PAIX ET LE DEVELOPPEMENT INTEGRAL, Ong	The Regional Diversity Roundtable	Woman Inc (Woman Incorporated)
Solidarity Network with Migrants Japan	The YP Foundation	Women Against Rape Inc.
SOS Children's Villages International	Think Young Women	WOMEN AGAINST VIOLENCE
Spatium Libertas AC	Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy	Women and Media Collective
Spiralis z.s.	TRIAL International	Women Peace Network (32701)
STIR: Stop Institutional Racism	Trócaire	Women's Active Museum on War and Peace(WAM)
Success Capital Organisation	Tunisian Human Rights League	Women's Human Rights Education Institute
Swedish Muslims in Cooperation Network	UN Association of the United States of America (UNA-USA)	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)
Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression (SCM)	UNFPA	Women's Rights Center
Syrian Network for Human Rights	Unidad de Protección a Defensoras y Defensores de Derechos Humanas - Guatemala	Women's International Solutions for Equality (A WISE Network)
Tafawuq Consulting Center for Development	United Nations Association of Norway	Women's Link Worldwide
Tais Plus	University	World Organisation Against Torture
Taternes Landsforening	University of Kent	XUMEK
TEDS Trust	University Of The West Indies	Youth Initiative for Human Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina
Teresian Association	UPR Info	YWCA Canada
Terra Mater		جمعية الحقوقيات المصريات
The Advocates for Human Rights		
The Canada OPCAT Project		
The Egyptian initiative for personal rights (EIPR)		