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.

   accessed on 27 May 2019.  
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
Abogados y abogadas del Noroeste argentino en derechos humanos y estudios sociales (Andhes)
ACADHOSHA (Action des Chrétiens Activistes des Droits de l’Homme à Shabunda)
ACAT
ACAT Belgium
ACAT Canada
ACAT Congo
ACAT Ghana
ACAT Italia
ACAT Luxembourg
ACAT Tchad
ACAT- Benin
ACAT- NIGER
ACAT-Brasil
ACAT-Burundi
ACAT-Cameroun
ACAT-France
ACAT-Switzerland
ACAT-USA
Action femme de valeur
Action Jeunesse pour le Développement
Action on Child, Early and Forced Marriage
ActionAid International
Activist
Adalah - The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel
Addu women’s Association (AWA)
Adska ong
Advocacy for women in peace and security- Africa
Afghan Women Network
Afghan Women News Agency Organization
Afghan women Skills Development Center
Agir Ensemble pour les Droits de l’Homme (AEDH)
Aid Organization
Al-Zahraa: Organization for the Advancement of Women
Alhaq
All Okinawa Council for Human Rights
Allamin Foundation for Peace and Development
Alliance Globale contre les Mutilations Génitales Féminines
American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)
Amnesty International
ALQST for Human Rights
Arab Women Network for Parity and Solidarity
Articulación Feminista Marcosur
ASEAN SOGIE Caucus
Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)
Asian Legal Resource Centre (ALRC)
Asian Migrants’ Coordinating Body (AMCB-IMA)
Asociación Ciudadana ACCEDER
Asociación de Mujeres Afrodescendientes del Norte del Cauca- ASOM
Asociacion Tesai Reka Paraguay
assiwar–the feminist arab movement
Associación Romskych Rodicu z.s.
Association “MARTA Centre”
Association for Civil Rights in Israel
Association for Cultural and Media Activism QUEER SQUARE Skopje
Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality
Association for the Prevention of Torture
Association for Women’s Rights in Development (AWID)
Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons
Association for Progressive Communications (APC)
Association of War Affected Women
Association of Women for Action and Research
ASTRA-Anti trafficking action
ATFD
ATTA LKER
AUDF
Avocats Sans Frontières France
Awen Amenca z.s.
Bahamas Crisis Centre
Bahrain Center for Human Rights
Baidarie
Bairo Pite Clinic Lanud, Timor-Leste
Balance Promoción para el Desarrollo y Juventud AC
Better World Campaign
Beyond Beijing Committee
Blind Women Association, Nepal (BWAN)
Botswana Watch Organization
Breakthrough Trust
Bridgebuilders Trust
Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies
Cambodian Center for Human Rights ("CCHR")
Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children
Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action
Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network
CBM
Center for Justice and International Law
Center for Legal Civic Initiatives
Center for Media, Data and Society, Central European University
Center for Reproductive Rights
Center for Women’s Global Leadership (CWGL)
Centre Catholique International de Genève
Centre for Civil and Political Rights
Centre for Indigenous Cultures of Peru
Centre for Migration, Refugees and Belonging, The University of East London
Centre for Social Concern and Development (CESOCODE)
Centro de Derechos Humanos de las Mujeres (CEDEHM)
Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas AC
Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez
Centro de derechos humanos pasado del Norte
Centro de estudios de la mujer
Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS)
Child Rights International Network
CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality
Church of Norway Council on Ecumenical and International Relations
CIDEM
CISCSA
CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation
Civil Rights Defenders
CKLP
CNRS
Coalition Burkinabe des Défenseurs des Droits Humains (CBDDH)
COALITION CEDEF ET LES ANGES DU CIEL
Coalition for Sexual and Bodily Rights in Muslim Societies
Coast Education Centre (COEC)
COC Nederland
Colectiva Ciudad y Género ac
Collectif des Associations Contre l’Impunité au Togo CACIT
COLLECTIF DES AVOCATS POUR LA DEFENSE DES VICTIMES DES CRIMES DE DROIT INTERNATIONAL COMMIS AUX BURUNDI
CoMensha
Comisión de Derechos Humanos - COMISEDH
Hazte Visible A.C.
HCLU
Health and Human Rights Info
HELP Resources
HK Human Rights Monitor
Honduras Forum Switzerland
Hong Kong Unison
Human Rights Alert
Human Rights Center of Azerbaijan
Human Rights Committee, Norwegian Psychological Association
Human Rights Commission of Pakistan
Human Rights Defenders Network-SL
Human Rights House Foundation
Human Rights in China
Human Rights Law Centre
Human Rights Watch
Humanists International
IBAHRI
IDHEAS, Litigio Estratégico en Derechos Humanos-México
ILGA World
ILGA-Europe
Ilsb
IM Swedish Development Partner
Independent
Independent Medico-Legal Unit
Indigenous Movement for Peace Advancement and Conflict Transformation (IMPACT)
Iniciativa Mesoamericana de Defensoras de Derechos Humanos (IM-Defensoras)
Insan Haklan Derneği / Human Rights Association - Turkey
Instituto de liderazgo Simone de Beauvoir AC
International Action Network for Gender Equity & Law
International Association for Human Rights Advocacy in Geneva
International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN)
International Commission of Jurists
International Council of Women
International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
International Federation of Settlements and Neighborhood Centers
International Indigenous Women's Forum
International Justice Resource Center
International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR)
International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT)
International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific
Intersex Human Rights Australia
investigacion para el desarrollo
Irish Council for Civil Liberties
Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights
Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society
JANANEETHI
Justice for Iran (JFI)
Karapatan Philippines
Kenya Human Rights Commission
Klagsverband/Litigation Association of NGOs against discrimination
LA VOIX DES SANS VOIX POUR LES DROITS DE L'HOMME (VSV)
Las Reinas Chulas Cabaret Y Derechos Humanos AC
Latvian Human Rights Committee (FIDH)
League for the Defence of Human Rights in Iran (LDDHI)
Legal Resources Centre
Ligue Algerienne de Defense des Droits de l'Homme
LIGUE DES DEFENSEURS REGIONAUX
Lutheran World Federation
MADRE
Maharat Foundation
MARUAH
Masimanyane Women's Rights International
MASUM
MEDITERRANEAN WOMEN MEDIATORS NETWORK
Member of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
MENA Rights Group
MenEngage Global Alliance
Minority Rights Group - Greece
Minotenk - minoritetspolitisk tenketank
Mongolia
Moroccan association for human rights
Movilización de Mujeres Negras por el Cuidado de Vida y los Territorios Ancestrales. Premio Goldman 2018
Mujeres Transformando el Mundo
Musawah
Muslim Women's Network UK
National Council of Women New Zealand
NATIONAL UNION OF DOMESTIC EMPLOYEES
National Women’s Council of Ireland
Nauru Island Association of NGOs
NGO Committe for CSW Latin America and the Caribbean
NGO Women for Development
NGO-Coordination post Beijing Switzerland
Noon Center for Women and Family Issues
North Wales Regional Equality Network
Norwegian Centre against Racism
Norwegian Helsinki Committee
Norwegian Humanist Association
Odhikar, Bangladesh
ODRI intersectional rights
Okogun Odigie Safewomb International Foundation (OOSAIF)
Omega Research Foundation
OMOD
Organisation Marocaine des Droits Humains
Oslo Metropolitan University (Oslomet)
Østsamene
OutRight Action International
Oxfam
Pacific Partnerships on Gender, Climate Change and Sustainable Development (PPGCCSD) - Regional
PACIFICWIN
PAIMAN
Palestinian Center for development And Media Freedoms-MADA
Partido Revolucionario Febrerista
PARTNERSHIP FOR WOMEN’S HEALTH AND WELLBEING
PathFinders Limited
Peace Brigades International
Peace Foundation Pakistan
People’s Watch - INDIA
Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (PAHRA)
Piattaforma CEDAW Italia
Lavori in corsa
Plan International
Plataforma Internacional contra la Impunidad
Positive Women (Ukraine)
Pro Sentret
Proceso de Comunidades Negras
Project on Organizing, Development, Education and Research (PODER)
Promo LEX Association, Moldova
PUBLIC COMMITTEE AGAINST TORTURE IN ISRAEL
Radha Paudel Foundation
RCMD
Reacción Climática
Reactor - Research in Action
REAMA Network network for the empowerment of women and self help support
RED de Educación Popular entre Mujeres
REPEM -LAC
Red Nacional de Mujeres - Colombia
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)
REDRESS Trust
Rescue Me-crime prevention
Réseau International des Droits Humains (RIDH)
RESPECT Network
RFSL - The Swedish Federation for LGBTQ Rights
Rights for All Women
Rivers without Boundaries International Coalition
Roma Future z.s.
ROMEA
Saami Council
Save the Children International
Sayoni, Singapore
Secretary
Shah-Aiym Network
Shirkat Gah Women’s Resource Centre
Sistren Theatre Collective
SOLIDARITE FEMININE POUR LA PAIX ET LE DEVELOPPEMENT INTEGRAL, Ong
Solidarity Network with Migrants Japan
SOS Children’s Villages International
Spatium Libertas AC
Spiralis z.s.
STIR: Stop Institutional Racism
Success Capital Organisation
Swedish Muslims in Cooperation Network
Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression (SCM)
Syrian Network for Human Rights
Tafawuq Consulting Center for Development
Tais Plus
Taternes Landsforening
TEDS Trust
Teresian Association
Terra Mater
The Advocates for Human Rights
The Canada OPCAT Project
The Egyptian initiative for personal rights (EIPR)
The MiRA Resource Center for black, migrant and refugee women
The MiRA Resource Center for black, migrant and refugee women in Norway
The Negev Coexistence Forum
The Norwegian Bar Association Human Rights Committee
The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions
THE NORWEGIAN HUMAN RIGHTS FUND
The Norwegian Support Committee for Western Sahara
The Regional Diversity Roundtable
The YP Foundation
Think Young Women
Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy
TRIAL International
Trócaire
Tunisian Human Rights League
UN Association of the United States of America (UNA-USA)
UNFPA
Unidad de Protección a Defensoras y Defensores de Derechos Humanas - Guatemala
United Nations Association of Norway
University
University of Kent
University Of The West Indies
UPR Info
US Human Rights Network
Uthema Maldives
Validity Foundation - Mental Disability Advocacy Centre
Vision Spring Initiatives
Vzájemně soužití (Life Together)
Wenshe Centre for Human Rights Education
Wi’am
Woman Inc (Woman Incorporated)
Women Against Rape Inc.
WOMEN AGAINST VIOLENCE
Women and Media Collective
Women Peace Network (32701)
Women’s Active Museum on War and Peace (WAM)
Women’s Human Rights Education Institute
Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)
Women’s Rights Center
Women’s International Solutions for Equality (A WISE Network)
Women’s Link Worldwide
World Organisation Against Torture
XUMEK
Youth Initiative for Human Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina
YWCA Canada

جمعية الحقوق المدنية