

UNITED NATIONS



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POSTAL ADDRESS — ADRESSE POSTALE : UNITED NATIONS, NY 10017

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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
CABINET DU SECRETAIRE GENERAL

29 May 2013

REFERENCE:

Excellency,

Thank you for your letter of 8 May 2013 addressed to the Secretary-General expressing concern with the level of regular budget resources of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and suggesting that as a principle the regular budget should cover all costs of activities mandated by the Human Rights Council and other relevant bodies.

As you are aware, in paragraph 124 of resolution 60/1 on the 2005 World Outcome Summit, the General Assembly decided on the strengthening of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, to enable it to effectively carry out its mandate through the doubling of its regular budget resources over the next five years. This was stated as being with a view to progressively setting a balance between regular budget and voluntary contributions to its resources, keeping in mind other priority programmes for developing countries. In doing so, the General Assembly recognized the importance of the balance between regular budget resources and voluntary contributions.

In paragraph 100 of its resolution 62/236, the General Assembly decided to use the revised estimates for the biennium 2004-2005, amounting to \$64,139,100, as a baseline for the agreed doubling of the resources of OHCHR. As reported in paragraph 23.16 of section 23, Human Rights, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011 (A/64/6 (Sect. 23), the target of doubling of the resources for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights over the five years was achieved.

In this regard, I would note that the proposal under Section 24, Human rights, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015 amounts to \$166,724,500. Should this be approved by the General Assembly it would mean that the regular budget resources for OHCHR would have increased by 2.6 times in the course of nearly eight years.

His Excellency
Mr. Oğuz Demiralp
Permanent Representative of Turkey
to the United Nations
Geneva

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EXR/13/001

BUD/01/004

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His Excellency
Mr. Omar Hilale
Permanent Representative of the Kingdom
of Morocco to the United Nations
Geneva

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His Excellency
Mr. Juan José G. Camacho
Permanent Representative of Mexico
to the United Nations
Geneva

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His Excellency
Mr. Steffen Kongstad
Permanent Representative of Norway
to the United Nations
Geneva

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His Excellency
Mr. Yasar Halit Çevik
Permanent Representative of Turkey
to the United Nations
New York



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His Excellency
Mr. Mohammed Loulichki
Permanent Representative of the Kingdom
of Morocco to the United Nations
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His Excellency
Mr. Luis-Alfonso de Alba
Permanent Representative of Mexico
to the United Nations
New York

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His Excellency
Mr. Geir O. Pedersen
Permanent Representative of Norway
to the United Nations
New York

In addition, following its review of the work and functioning of the Human Rights Council, in its resolution 65/281, the General Assembly recognized the continued need for extra-budgetary funding to support the work related to the special procedures along with the need to ensure the availability of adequate resources from the regular budget to the Office of the High Commissioner.

With regard to the issue of increasing the financing from the regular budget of field operations and technical assistance activities of OHCHR, in its resolution 62/208 on the triennial comprehensive policy review of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system, the General Assembly reaffirmed that the fundamental characteristics of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system should be, *inter alia*, their universal, voluntary and grant nature, their neutrality and their multilateralism, as well as their ability to respond to the development needs of programme countries in a flexible manner.

I would further highlight that resources in the amount of \$214 million are projected for the biennium 2014-2015 under the Trust Fund for Support of the Activities of the Centre for Human Rights to finance field activities (\$175 million), and under the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Advisory Services and Technical Assistance in the Field of Human Rights to finance technical assistance activities (\$39 million). As such, the importance of extra-budgetary resources for OHCHR should not be underestimated as a valuable source of financing the activities, relating to the competence of the High Commissioner in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 48/141.

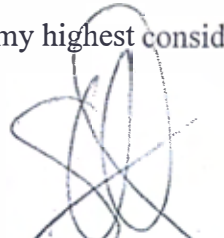
It is also recalled, that in accordance with General Assembly resolution 41/213, the proposed programme budget of the Secretary-General, including those for the work of Human Rights, under Section 24, Human Rights, is prepared on the basis of the Assembly's decision on the budget outline. Therefore, availability of additional regular budget resources for strengthening of the OHCHR activities depends entirely on the related decisions of the General Assembly.

That being said, additional resources will continue to be sought for implementing new and/or extended mandates as adopted by the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly. This will be done in accordance with established procedures, in particular, through programme budget implications in line with Rule 153 of the Rules and Procedures of the General Assembly and in the annual report on the revised estimates, resulting from resolutions and decisions of the Council in accordance with General Assembly resolution 65/281.

Let me conclude by stating that the Secretary-General shares your concern for ensuring that OHCHR has the resources to carry out its important mandate. With your continued support and that of the General Assembly, I am confident that this will continue to be achieved.

A similar response is being sent to each of the Permanent Representatives (based here in New York and in Geneva), who also co-signed your letter.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Susana Malcorra
Chef de Cabinet

ACTION
COPY

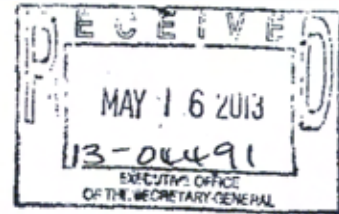
Mr. Casal (email)
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Mr. Tolcaga (email)
Mr. Simonovic (email)

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RELACIONES EXTERIORES

NORWEGIAN MINISTRY
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS



His Excellency Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General,
The United Nations,
1 United Nations Plaza
New York, New York 10017-3515

Date 8 May 2013

Dear Mr Secretary-General,

We are writing to draw your attention to our concerns as regards the financial challenges of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). This is based on the enclosed joint statement made by 42 states in the March 2013 session of the Human Rights Council (HRC).

Human Rights form the core of the United Nations, being one of the three pillars upon which the organisation is built. During the past decades we have seen a dramatic increase in the output of the work from the High Commissioners office, both at headquarters and in the field. This is a development we applaud.

Simultaneously the OHCHR is experiencing a financial gap as a result of the increasing requests for its support in the field, for the human rights treaty bodies, the Universal Periodic Review and its follow up, and an unprecedented number of new and expanded mandates by the HRC.

In light of this development we all have a common interest in ensuring that the OHCHR, as the leading institution in promoting and protecting human rights in the UN system, can fulfil its mandate. There is a need to strengthen the third pillar upon which the United Nations was founded. In that regard, we need to ensure the financial stability and predictability of the OHCHR.

We believe that as a principle the regular budget of the OHCHR should cover all costs of activities mandated by the Human Rights Council and other relevant bodies. In our opinion, the OHCHR's currently relies too heavily on unpredictable voluntary financing, including for mandatory activities. This is the case for field operations (91 %), support for the human rights treaty bodies (more than 40 %), Human Rights Council special procedures mechanisms (45 %) and the Human Rights Council (27%).

We are well aware of the current budgetary restraints of the United Nations and its member States. However, it is necessary to secure the sustainability and continued impartiality of the High Commissioner's Office. A sufficient share of core financing needs to be secured. Increased dependence on voluntary financing could over time reduce the legitimacy of the OHCHR and its work. Cross cutting budget cuts shouldn't undermine the encouraging demand for the OHCHR's competence.

EXR/13/001 ; BUD/01/004

We welcome the first steps taken by the High Commissioner for Human Rights to address the financial challenges of her office, including reductions in extra budgetary expenditures. A more strategic prioritization exercise for the four-year cycle from 2014 to 2017 and a functional review of the OHCHR will also be necessary.

This is, however, not sufficient. The aim should be to establish a sustainable resourcing over the coming years in a manner that balances member states' needs and interests, without infringing on the independence of the High Commissioner and her office, which operates under your administrative direction and authority.

The above views were expressed in a joint statement by 42 states in the 23rd session of the Human Rights Council on 28th February 2013 (enclosed). Most of these States also joined a statement to a similar effect during the General Assembly session in New York last fall. We also committed ourselves to support the High Commissioner in her efforts to prioritise and find efficiencies and savings, as well as to improve transparency and accountability, while securing her the required space to manoeuvre in this difficult situation.

We trust that you share our concerns and hope that we can work together to secure a sustainable resourcing over the coming years for the OHCHR, including during the upcoming preparations of the OHCHR regular budget for 2014-2015.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

			
Oguz Demiralp Ambassador PR, Permanent Mission of Turkey, Geneva	Omar Hilale Ambassador PR, Permanent Mission of Morocco, Geneva	Juan José G. Camacho Ambassador PR, Permanent Mission of Mexico, Geneva	Steffen Kongstad Ambassador PR, Permanent Mission of Norway, Geneva
			
Yaşar Halit Çevik Ambassador PR Permanent Mission of Turkey, New York	Mohammed Loulichki Ambassador PR Permanent Mission of Morocco, New York	Luis Alfonso de Alba Gongora, Ambassador PR Permanent Mission of Mexico, New York	Geir O. Pedersen Ambassador PR Permanent Mission of Norway, New York

**Human Rights Council, Item 2: Interactive Dialogue with the High Commissioner
for Human Rights, 28.02.13**

Common statement on OHCHR's financial challenges

Statement by Ambassador H.E. Oguz Demiralp, Turkey

Mr. President, We make this cross-regional statement on behalf of 42 countries:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Chile, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Indonesia, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Maldives, Mexico, Moldova, Monaco, Morocco, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Somalia, Switzerland, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and Uruguay.

We all have an increasing interest in ensuring that the OHCHR, as a leading institution in promoting and protecting human rights in the UN system, can fulfil its mandate in light of increasing demands. Human rights have become increasingly relevant to peace and security, development and humanitarian efforts. There is a need to strengthen the third pillar upon which the United Nations was founded. In that regard, we need to ensure the financial stability and predictability of the OHCHR.

We welcome the first steps by the High Commissioner for Human Rights to address the financial challenges of her office. Efforts were already made to reduce extra budgetary expenditure by more than 7.5% in 2012, the proposed budget for 2013 has been reduced by 12% of about \$17 million USD, and a more strategic prioritization exercise for the upcoming four-year cycle from 2014 to 2017 probably needs to be undertaken.

The financial gap of the OHCHR is a result of the increasing requests for support by the OHCHR in the field, for the human rights treaty bodies and the Universal Periodic Review and its follow up, and an unprecedented number of new and expanded mandates by the HRC. After 20 years of existence, the OHCHR has grown tenfold. From 2008 to 2012 the number of Special Procedures appointed by the Human Rights Council has grown from 38 to 48 and the number of experts serving on Treaty Bodies has expanded from 139 to 172.

We do acknowledge that the financial challenge is complicated by OHCHR's extensive dependence on voluntary contributions, including for mandatory activities and field operations. Field operations receive merely 9% of their funding from the regular budget. There is an increase of requests for technical assistance for which no resources

are available. OHCHR support for the human rights treaty bodies, which should be entirely funded from the regular budget, relies on voluntary contributions for more than 40% of its funding. For the Human Rights Council special procedures mechanisms less than 56% of their support is covered by the regular budget. Even the secretariat supporting the Human Rights Council must draw on extra budgetary resources to pay for nearly 27% of its requirements.

The repeated calls on OHCHR to absorb the resource requirements of new mandates leave the human rights programme especially vulnerable. We are also concerned that reductions in the Secretariat's programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015 will result in an even greater reliance on extra budgetary resources.

The aim should be to establish a sustainable resourcing over the coming years in a manner that balances the different interests by states, without infringing on the independence of the High Commissioner and her office, which operates under the administrative direction and authority of the UN Secretary General and General Assembly.

With this in mind, we reiterate our commitment to:

- Strengthen the funding of the OHCHR, including the regular budget for the coming years, and to secure timely funding of mandates. Our ambition is that the regular budget of the OHCHR should cover all costs of activities mandated by the Human Rights Council and other relevant bodies at the latest by the end of 2018. The relative proportion of the OHCHR budget from the UN regular budget should also be increased.
- Support the High Commissioner in her efforts to find efficiencies and to prioritise, securing her the required space to manoeuvre in this difficult exercise.
- Continue to provide voluntary contributions, providing unearmarked contributions as much as possible.
- To bear in mind current financial constraints when mandating new activity.

The necessary broadening of the resource base for the OHCHR should be accompanied by pursuance of its management reform. We acknowledge the measures identified by the High Commissioner for Human Rights and her office to face its financial challenges, in accordance with their mandates, in particular their efforts to:

- Continue to roll-out the new performance monitoring system across all OHCHR field presences and Geneva HQ.
- Take a realistic and sustainable approach to budgeting and enhance efficiencies and savings through:

- Furthering the prioritization exercise so that reductions take into account identification of areas of work where the OHCHR has demonstrated clear results, project underperformance, overlaps, and essential versus non-essential nature of activity.
- Implementation of structural and procedural changes based on the results of the functional review of the Office
- Strengthen the communication regarding resource requirements and how these could be met.
- Continue to develop the dialogue with states to secure transparency and easily accessible information on sources and allocation of funding to the OHCHR, based on the independent role of the High Commissioner.
- To expand the donor base, and work for as wide a geographical spread of donors as possible.

Thank you