



General Assembly

Distr.: General
23 July 2024

Original: English

Human Rights Council

Fifty-seventh session

9 September–9 October 2024

Agenda items 2 and 8

Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General

Follow-up to and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action

National institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 13 of Human Rights Council resolution 51/31, in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the implementation of the resolution that included examples of best practices among national human rights institutions. The Secretary-General outlines the activities of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in support of the establishment and strengthening of national human rights institutions undertaken during the period from August 2023 to July 2024. He highlights the support provided by the United Nations Development Programme to national human rights institutions and the cooperation between those institutions and the international human rights system and describes the support provided by the Office to the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions and its regional networks.



I. Introduction

1. National human rights institutions are pivotal in promoting and protecting human rights at the national level. In its resolution 51/31, the Human Rights Council reaffirmed the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and the statement therein on the important and constructive role played by national human rights institutions, in particular their advisory capacity to the competent authorities, and their role in assisting victims to find remedies to human rights violations and in the dissemination of human rights information and education. The Council recognized the important role of national human rights institutions in monitoring, reporting to and advising government bodies and other stakeholders. It also encouraged States to cooperate with their national human rights institutions and to ensure that they can effectively and independently discharge their mandates and functions, including by ensuring the allocation of adequate resources.

2. In his vision statement,¹ the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights emphasized the need to invest in institutions that supported the rule of law, including national human rights institutions. In his call to action for human rights, the Secretary-General committed to enhancing support for States Members of the United Nations through increased capacity-building efforts for national and regional human rights institutions and mechanisms. These steps are crucial for strengthening the human rights infrastructure and ensuring that national institutions can effectively fulfil their roles.

II. Support provided by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to national human rights institutions

A. Advisory services, technical cooperation and capacity-building programmes

3. Within the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the National Institutions and Regional Mechanisms Section serves as the focal point for coordination of activities to establish and strengthen national human rights institutions. Together with its field presences, other United Nations system entities, in particular the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and regional networks of national human rights institutions, OHCHR assists Governments in establishing national human rights institutions and contributes to building their capacity. In that context, OHCHR works closely with national authorities, regional intergovernmental organizations, civil society organizations and other stakeholders.

4. OHCHR provides technical and legal assistance to national authorities and national human rights institutions regarding constitutional and legislative frameworks to ensure compliance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles). This assistance includes advisory services, capacity-building, technical cooperation projects, needs assessments and scoping missions to establish national human rights institutions or to strengthen their capacity to discharge their mandates effectively.

5. Currently, there are 118 national human rights institutions that are accredited by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions as being either fully or partially compliant with the Paris Principles. Ninety of those have been assessed as being fully compliant with the Paris Principles.

1. Africa

6. Regarding the establishment and strengthening of national human rights institutions, OHCHR provided legislative advice to the authorities in Benin, Cabo Verde, the Central

¹ Available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/outcome-documents/human-rights-path-solutions>.

African Republic, the Congo, Mozambique, Namibia, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles and Uganda in order to bring the enabling laws for those institutions into line with the Paris Principles and international human rights standards.

7. In March 2024, OHCHR organized a workshop to assist the Office of the Ombudsman of Botswana to operationalize its human rights mandate. OHCHR also provided technical support to identify best practices for its transition into an effective and independent national human rights institution.

8. Between September 2023 and April 2024, OHCHR provided technical and financial support to the national authorities in Cabo Verde by facilitating dialogues between the Office of the Ombudsman, the National Commission for Human Rights and Citizenship and human rights defenders focusing on merging those institutions to create an independent and effective national human rights institution.

9. OHCHR continued to support the National Commission for Human Rights and Fundamental Liberties of the Central African Republic, with a view to enhancing the Commission's internal processes and the implementation of its mandate for the promotion and protection of human rights and its engagement with international human rights mechanisms.

10. Between August 2023 and March 2024, OHCHR provided technical and financial support to the National Human Rights Commission of Chad to strengthen its technical and operational capacities on the protection of human rights in the context of elections and on transitional justice. OHCHR conducted 17 joint human rights monitoring missions with the Commission, focused on migrant rights and places of detention, that led to the release of 74 persons, including 2 children who had been arbitrarily detained.

11. In February 2024, OHCHR and the National Human Rights Commission of Djibouti conducted a joint training session on human rights in judicial investigations targeting law enforcement officials from 12 French-speaking African countries. OHCHR also facilitated the participation of the Commission in regional workshops on transitional justice and election monitoring, with the aim of building its capacity in those areas.

12. In August and September 2023, OHCHR provided technical and financial support to the Independent National Human Rights Commission of Liberia to assess multinational companies' compliance with human rights principles and to monitor the human rights situation in the context of the elections held in October 2023. Between June and September 2023, OHCHR supported the joint monitoring of detention facilities by the Commission and the Human Rights Division of the Ministry of Justice. OHCHR, in 2023 and in the first part of 2024, hosted a radio programme to raise awareness of human rights and enhance the visibility of the mandate of the Commission.

13. During the reporting period, OHCHR supported the National Commission for Human Rights of Rwanda to develop a national human rights action plan and a national action plan on business and human rights. OHCHR conducted capacity-building for the Commission on engagement with the international human rights mechanisms and follow-up on the implementation of recommendations.

14. OHCHR provided, between August 2023 and October 2023, support to the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights and the Office of the Attorney General in organizing regional and national human rights dialogues, resulting in strategies and recommendations for improving human rights and governance and the development of a new national human rights policy and action plan. In September 2023, with support from OHCHR, the Commission and the National Statistics Office officially adopted data on target 16.10.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which tracks verified cases of the killing, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture of journalists, media personnel, trade unionists and human rights defenders. That collaboration contributed to the integration of citizen-generated data from human rights defenders, the media and the Commission for official use by the National Statistical Office.

15. In November 2023, OHCHR conducted a need assessment exercise, at the request of the Human Rights Commission of Seychelles to strengthen its institutional capacity on human rights monitoring and reporting, including the amendment of the enabling law to be

in line with the Paris Principles and prepare for its accreditation application before the Subcommittee on Accreditation of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions.

16. In August 2023, OHCHR partnered with the Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance of the United Republic of Tanzania to carry out capacity-building for 70 members of human rights clubs from various universities with the aim of enhancing youth engagement with human rights mechanisms. In August and November 2023, OHCHR and the Commission jointly held two sessions with members of Parliament to raise awareness on the contributions of Parliament to the universal periodic review process and the ratification of human rights treaties, including through reporting and follow-up on the recommendations of human rights mechanisms. The meetings contributed to strengthening the partnership between the Commission and Parliament, and the need for human rights-compliant legislative and budgetary frameworks, the systematic examination of human rights violations and support for implementation of the national human rights action plan was emphasized.

17. In October 2023, OHCHR supported the Human Rights Commission of Zambia to follow up on an OHCHR-led study on advancing the rights to food and education in Zambia. The follow-up activities, which took the form of consultations and capacity-building workshops, were targeted at duty bearers and non-governmental organizations, leading to greater awareness of economic, social and cultural rights and promoting the implementation of those rights through enhanced legal protection and rights-based budgeting. In November 2023, OHCHR provided support to the Commission in submitting comments to the parliament on the access to information bill, which was enacted in December 2023.

2. Americas and the Caribbean

18. OHCHR provided legal advice to the authorities in Suriname on the establishment of a national human rights institution in line with the Paris Principles.

19. Between August and December 2023, OHCHR, through its surge initiative, collaborated with the Office of the Ombudsman of Peru to carry out a study to examine the socioeconomic factors driving social conflicts in the country. The study highlighted non-compliance with conflict resolution agreements, including those related to economic, social and environmental rights, as a key driver of the recurrence of conflict. Utilizing those findings, the Office of the Ombudsman improved its analytical capabilities and formulated recommendations to strengthen conflict prevention strategies.

3. Asia and the Pacific

20. During the reporting period, OHCHR observed national discussions towards the adoption of a law to establish a national human rights institution in Cambodia, to ensure its alignment with the Paris Principles.

21. In December 2023, OHCHR supported the Human Rights Commission of Maldives to host a human rights photo exhibition to raise awareness on human rights and to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In addition, a portal funded through the Special Fund established pursuant to article 26 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment was launched to track and provide updates on the implementation status of recommendations made by the national preventive mechanism of Maldives.

22. In November 2023, OHCHR engaged with the National Commission for Human Rights of Pakistan to better understand how OHCHR could assist the Commission in fulfilling its role in the implementation of the Torture and Custodial Death Prevention and Punishment Act of 2022, which designated the Commission as the oversight body of the Federal Investigation Agency.

23. Between August 2023 and March 2024, OHCHR supported the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines through various initiatives. OHCHR provided technical advice to the Congress of the Philippines during its deliberations of the draft enabling law for the Commission. OHCHR provided training on the human rights-based approach to data collection and analysis and facilitated the Commission's workshops to enhance civil society

engagement with national authorities on recommendations emanating from the universal periodic review process. In addition, OHCHR conducted capacity-building activities on international human rights mechanisms and collaborated with the Commission to strengthen civil society organizations in promoting and protecting the rights of human rights defenders.

24. In November 2023, OHCHR supported the training of 10 staff of the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand and 18 representatives from civil society organizations on monitoring the realization of economic, social and cultural rights. The workshop enabled the Commission to engage and foster partnerships with civil society organizations and human rights defenders on how to address human rights violations and abuses related to economic, social and cultural rights. In February 2024, OHCHR, in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice and the Association for the Prevention of Torture, hosted a national dialogue to promote the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The dialogue, which was attended by key government officials, underscored the importance of Thailand ratifying the Optional Protocol, especially following the enactment of the Prevention and Suppression of Torture and Enforced Disappearances Act of 2022, and highlighted the Commission's initiative to act as a national preventive mechanism.

25. In December 2023, OHCHR supported the Office of the Ombudsman of Samoa in holding a public event on the right to education and human rights education, with the participation of the Minister of Education, representatives of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund and the Office of the Ombudsman. The event included the launch of a documentary produced by OHCHR, with partners, entitled "Changemakers: stories of young human rights educators". The event raised awareness and emphasized the linkages between religion, culture and human rights in the Samoan context.

4. Europe and Central Asia

26. From October 2023 to May 2024, OHCHR provided technical assistance to the Human Rights Ombudsman of Bosnia and Herzegovina in preparation for the fourth cycle of the universal periodic review. The Ombudsman participated in various OHCHR events, including conferences and consultations on the safety of journalists, disability rights and women's rights defenders, leading to enhanced engagement and institutional capacity in those areas. In addition, with the support of OHCHR, the Ombudsman submitted pledges in the context of the human rights 75 initiative, pledging to promote transparent institutions, improve cooperation with civil society and establish a strong national preventive mechanism.

27. During the reporting period, OHCHR provided advice to strengthen the capacity of the Ombudsman Institution of North Macedonia in fulfilling its role as the national monitoring mechanism under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by ensuring the meaningful participation of persons with disabilities, their representative organizations and civil society.

28. In November 2023, OHCHR took part in the international expert meeting on human rights and fisheries organized by the Danish Institute for Human Rights. In follow up to the meeting, OHCHR convened, jointly with the Danish Institute for Human Rights, an expert reference group to support the development of a climate change and human rights analytical framework.

29. In November 2023, OHCHR provided support to the Office of the Ombudsman in Kosovo² to strengthen its collaboration with the Office of the Language Commissioner in resolving language rights complaints. OHCHR also supported outreach activities of the Ombudsman, including a round table held in December 2023 to raise awareness on challenges faced by minority communities. OHCHR supported capacity-building initiatives for the Ombudsman and the National Statistical Office to promote a human rights-based approach to data collection and analysis.

² References to Kosovo should be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

30. During the reporting period, OHCHR reviewed the draft constitutional law on the Ombudsman of Kyrgyzstan and facilitated public discussions to ensure compliance with the Paris Principles. In October 2023, OHCHR, along with the Ombudsman and civil society, organized national consultations on a draft law on mass media, involving 100 stakeholders. The event facilitated the review of the draft law, and the need to ensure compliance with international human rights standards was highlighted. In November 2023, the Ombudsman organized, together with OHCHR, a national dialogue on human rights, enabling the Government and civil society to formulate pledges under the human rights 75 initiative.

31. During the reporting period, OHCHR supported three capacity-building workshops for the People's Advocate of the Republic of Moldova aimed at strengthening its capacity to monitor the rights of persons with disabilities.

32. In September 2023, OHCHR and the delegation of the European Union in Tajikistan organized a round table with the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman to discuss the implementation of the newly adopted national strategy for protection of human rights and its action plan for 2023–2025. Participants addressed issues related to child justice, equality and non-discrimination, the rights of persons with disabilities, fair trial right, due process and cooperation between the authorities and civil society on human rights. In October 2023, OHCHR supported a round table in commemoration of the thirtieth anniversary of the endorsement by the General Assembly of the Paris Principles, aiming to enhance the capacity of the Ombudsman Office to operate in line with the Paris Principles.

33. Between August 2023 and February 2024, OHCHR collaborated with the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation and the Consortium of Russian Universities to develop a human rights module and deliver a series of lectures on human rights.

34. In October 2023, jointly with UNDP and the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions, OHCHR supported the Office of the Ombudsman of Turkmenistan in the development and adoption of a five-year strategic plan. The activity was recommended following a capacity assessment conducted in 2022 under the tripartite partnership between OHCHR, UNDP and the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions.

35. During the reporting period, OHCHR cooperated with the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights to exchange information and respond to issues regarding the treatment of prisoners of war, human rights abuses in the occupied territories and the protection of civilians. In April 2024, OHCHR and the Commissioner's Office held discussions on the protection of the property rights of persons displaced from the occupied territory.

36. In April 2024, OHCHR provided a legal analysis of the draft law on the Authorized Person of the Oliy Majlis for Human Rights of Uzbekistan to enhance its compliance with the Paris Principles.

5. Middle East and North Africa

37. In March 2024, OHCHR and UNDP responded to a request from the National Human Rights Council of Algeria for support to implement a comprehensive plan for capacity-building activities. Work is under way to assess the needs of the Council to design and fund those activities.

38. In September 2023, OHCHR took part in the international conference on the impact of human activity on the right to a healthy and adequate environment and practices, challenges and solutions, organized by the National Institution for Human Rights of Bahrain. OHCHR presented a working paper on the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, in which it emphasized the key role of national human rights institutions in ensuring the implementation of that right.

39. During the reporting period, OHCHR provided technical support and training on human rights monitoring and investigation in detention facilities to the National Human Rights Commission of Lebanon.

40. In February 2024, OHCHR held a meeting with the National Council for Civil Liberties and Human Rights of Libya to discuss its engagement in the fourth cycle of the universal periodic review process. In May 2024, OHCHR launched a capacity-building programme for the Council focusing on monitoring places of detention, judicial proceedings and handling complaints.

41. In November 2023, OHCHR and the National Human Rights Council of Morocco jointly organized a workshop with religious actors, women's rights experts, academics and parliamentarians from the Middle East and North Africa region focusing on the impact of culture, tradition and religion on the equal enjoyment of rights among women and girls. In February 2024, OHCHR and the National Human Rights Council of Morocco organized a two-day workshop on the human rights of migrants at international borders. The workshop, which gathered representatives of civil society, national authorities and United Nations agencies, was aimed at deepening understanding, fostering collaboration and promoting a rights-based approach to border governance.

42. In February 2024, OHCHR conducted a training workshop for representatives of the Human Rights Commission of Oman on the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, with a focus on avenues for the contribution of national human rights institutions to the work of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances and the ratification of the Convention. The Commission requested further substantive training on the Convention and strategies for its effective implementation at the national level. In May 2024, OHCHR organized a training workshop for the Commission and national authorities to enhance their capacity in developing quantitative and qualitative indicators to measure progress in the implementation of international human rights standards.

B. Support provided to regional and subregional initiatives by national human rights institutions

1. Africa

43. In October 2023, within the framework of its B-Tech project, OHCHR hosted a workshop on empowering national human rights institutions in the domestic implementation of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights in the technology sector in Africa. The forum discussed the role of national human rights institutions in the implementation of the Guiding Principles in the technology sector and areas of collaboration between those institutions and other stakeholders towards rights-respecting technology regulation in the region.

44. In October 2023, OHCHR provided financial and technical support to the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions to organize the fourteenth biennial Conference of the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions. The conference, which brought together national human rights institutions in Africa, civil society organizations and other stakeholders, discussed and adopted outcomes on the role of national human rights institutions in integrating human rights into the context of business operations and the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area.

2. Americas and the Caribbean

45. In September 2023, OHCHR held a virtual consultation with six national human rights institutions from Central America to contribute to the Office's ongoing work on racial justice and equality in the region.

46. In January 2024, OHCHR, jointly with the Network of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Americas, hosted a webinar for five national human rights institutions in the region on the accreditation process. OHCHR, in its role as secretariat of the Subcommittee on Accreditation, shared information on the various stages of the accreditation process and the support that the Office provided to national human rights institutions in the process.

3. Asia and the Pacific

47. OHCHR, at the invitation of the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions, participated in the annual general meeting and conference of the Forum, held in September 2023. The conference adopted a declaration that included a pledge to support the continued establishment of national human rights institutions and strengthening the independence and effectiveness of existing national institutions.

48. In February 2024, OHCHR collaborated with the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions and the Social Development Division of the Pacific Community to hold Office-wide consultations on ways to strengthen the capacity of the Human Rights Ombudsman of Samoa, including on proposed amendments to the enabling law for the Office of the Ombudsman.

49. In November 2023, OHCHR, in collaboration with the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions, organized a side event at the fifty-second Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting, held in the Cook Islands, to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to support the establishment of national human rights institutions in the Pacific region, including establishing the Ombudsman Office of the Cook Islands as an independent national institution. Panellists, including the Prime Minister of Samoa, a member of the parliament of the Cook Islands and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Marshall Islands pledged to establish or strengthen national human rights institutions in the region and promote gender equality.

4. Middle East and North Africa

50. In October 2023, OHCHR, in collaboration with the Arab Network for National Human Rights Institutions, organized a regional dialogue on human rights education to promote the integration of human rights education into educational curricula. The meeting, attended by over 200 participants, including representatives of ministries of education, national human rights institutions and intergovernmental organizations, adopted a final statement that included recommendations related to the future of education and human rights education in the region.

51. In February 2024, OHCHR organized the international conference on food justice from a human rights perspective and challenges of reality and future stakes, together with the National Human Rights Committee of Qatar, UNDP, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States and the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions. OHCHR presented a working paper on measures to minimize the adverse impact of climate change on the full realization of the right to food while mitigating the adverse environmental impact of food systems. In the outcome document of the conference, participants reiterated the role of national human rights institutions in monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the right to food.

52. In March 2024, OHCHR, in collaboration with the Arab Network for National Human Rights Institutions and the National Human Rights Council of Morocco hosted a training workshop for participants from 10 national human rights institutions in the region on the human rights training methodology of OHCHR, with a focus on designing, managing and delivering human rights training.

C. Contributions to international initiatives supporting national human rights institutions

1. Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions

53. The Human Rights Council, in its resolution 51/31, urged the High Commissioner to ensure that appropriate arrangements were made and budgetary resources were provided to continue and further extend activities in support of national human rights institutions, including through increased support for the work of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions and its regional networks. OHCHR therefore provided financial and substantive support, as well as secretariat services, to the Global Alliance for its annual

meeting, convened from 6 to 8 May 2024, which included its Bureau meeting and two sessions of the Subcommittee on Accreditation, held from September to October 2023 and from March to May 2024.

54. In November 2023, OHCHR, in partnership with the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, the Danish Institute for Human Rights and the Ombudsman for Human Rights of Ukraine, jointly hosted the fourteenth international conference on national human rights institutions, focusing on the role of national human rights institutions in the prevention of torture and other forms of ill-treatment. OHCHR provided substantive and financial support to the conference, which resulted in a declaration outlining and reiterating the role of national human rights institutions in the prevention of torture and other ill-treatment.

55. At the National Human Rights Institutions Symposium on climate change and human rights, organized by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions on the margins of the twenty-eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, OHCHR made a presentation on the role of national human rights institution relating to climate action, including the implementation of the outcomes of the Conference of the Parties.

2. Subcommittee on Accreditation

56. As the secretariat of the Subcommittee on Accreditation of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, OHCHR continued to provide financial and technical support, including advice and secretariat services, to the Subcommittee.³ The presence of OHCHR during the decision-making processes in the Subcommittee continued to ensure its compliance with the established general observations and rules of procedure and contributed to its transparency, impartiality, fairness and rigour.

57. During the reporting period, the Subcommittee held two sessions, with each session containing a virtual and in-person segment, and reviewed a total of 37 institutions. At the second session of 2023, held from 25 to 29 September and from 23 to 27 October 2023, the Subcommittee reviewed 18 institutions.⁴ At its first session of 2024, held from 26 to 28 March and from 29 April to 3 May 2024, the Subcommittee reviewed 19 institutions.⁵

3. Fellowship programme for staff of national human rights institutions with A status

58. OHCHR has offered a fellowship programme for staff of national human rights institutions with A status since 2008. The technical cooperation programme has allowed staff of national human rights institutions to strengthen their mandate, as it is designed to provide fellows with a better understanding of the international human rights system and to familiarize themselves with the work of OHCHR. During the reporting period, staff from the national human rights institutions of Cameroon, El Salvador, Georgia, Indonesia, Kenya, the Philippines and the State of Palestine participated in the programme.

59. Participants have acknowledged the role of the fellowship programme for strengthening their professional knowledge and institutional capacity, in particular on interaction with the international human rights system. As at January 2024, the fellowship programme expanded to host five staff from institutions with A status. Further expansion of, and additional resources allocated to, the programme will be necessary in order to enable

³ Another report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions in accrediting national institutions in compliance with the Paris Principles will be submitted to the Human Rights Council, pursuant to paragraph 13 of its resolution 51/31.

⁴ Argentina, Australia, Bahrain, Burundi, Egypt, Germany, Guatemala, Liberia, Malawi, Myanmar, Nepal, the Niger, Nigeria, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Uganda and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (national human rights institutions of England, Scotland and Wales and of Northern Ireland).

⁵ Azerbaijan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Costa Rica, India, Iraq, Lithuania, Oman, Pakistan, Paraguay, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka and the United Kingdom (national human rights institution of England, Scotland and Wales).

more institutions to benefit from the programme and to further expand the scope to include study tours to other national human rights institutions.

III. Best practices among national human rights institutions

60. On 23 March 2024, OHCHR sent a request to national human rights institutions, asking them to provide examples of best practices. Twenty-one contributions were received, from the national human rights institutions of Armenia, Australia, Azerbaijan, Cameroon, Costa Rica, Denmark, Georgia, Germany, Guatemala, India, Iraq, Kenya, Myanmar, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Nigeria, Poland, Qatar, Spain, Sweden, Türkiye and Zambia.

A. Combating gender-based violence and discrimination

61. The Australian Human Rights Commission launched the Women's Voices project, which is dedicated to addressing systemic injustice affecting First Nations women, girls and gender-diverse communities across Australia. Over 2,000 women and girls were engaged in that project across Australia during the reporting period.

62. In August 2023, the Danish Institute for Human Rights, in collaboration with the Human Rights Council of Greenland and the Spokesperson for Persons with Disabilities in Greenland, published an analysis on protection against sexual assault in institutions for persons with disabilities in Greenland. Several recommendations have been formulated on how residents of residential care facilities in Greenland can be better protected against sexual abuse.

63. The Ombudswoman of Croatia continued to participate in drafting legislation and public policies. During the reporting period, notable examples included a draft bill on protection of whistle-blowers, a draft bill on social welfare and a draft national plan to combat poverty and social exclusion.

64. In October 2023, the Office of the Public Defender of Georgia, operating as a femicide watch mechanism, organized, in collaboration with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), a working group meeting with the Office of the General Prosecutor, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Supreme Court to improve the statistical data collection methodology on femicide and attempted femicide.

65. In October 2023, the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission conducted a field visit to schools to ascertain whether students had access to fundamental rights, including the human rights to food, potable drinking water, education and health care.

66. Since August 2023, the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights provided input for parliamentary debates on domestic violence, femicide and the criminalization of psychological violence with the aim of enhancing gender equality in the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

67. The Equality Ombudsman of Sweden resolved 510 discrimination complaints and received 286 complaints of sexual harassment during the period under review. In 2023, the Ombudsman initiated five times more litigation cases, compared with 2022, with the aim of providing redress to all victims.

B. Ratification and implementation of human rights instruments

68. As a result of its advocacy, the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of Azerbaijan was designated in 2023 as the independent monitoring mechanism under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

69. Since 2023, the German Institute for Human Rights has advocated for the implementation of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and provided legal advice to Germany to include a separate criminal offence in the Penal Code to that end.

70. In October 2023, the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights engaged with the parliamentary committees advocating for the criminalization of enforced disappearance in law and the ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

71. The Human Rights Commission of Zambia carried out several education and awareness-raising programmes in 2023 on the need to amend the Bill of Rights to include economic, social and cultural rights and build consensus on the need to consider removing the derogation provision providing for the death penalty in the Constitution, given that the death penalty had been abolished in the Penal Code.

C. Human rights-based approach to data collection and analysis

72. In April 2024, the Office of the Human Rights Defender of Armenia officially launched a programme to enshrine gender equality provisions and promote the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 5, on gender equality, in the domestic legal framework. The main goal was to promote the equality of women and men through the improvement of State institutions.

73. The National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms of Cameroon signed a memorandum of understanding with the National Institute of Statistics in September 2023, with the aim of strengthening the integrated monitoring of human rights and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, with a view to enhancing the human rights-based approach taken to measure progress made.

74. In its strategic plan, 2024–2028, the Office of the Ombudsman of Costa Rica added cross-cutting thematic and multidisciplinary approaches to prioritize accurate collection and effective analysis of data to influence public policies, to strengthen the protection of human rights and the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals.

75. In September 2023, the Danish Institute for Human Rights hosted an expert group meeting with the Statistics Division of the United Nations Secretariat, which led to the development of a tool that elevates the data collected by rights holders and communities and sets standards for their engagement in national data efforts.

76. The National Human Rights Commission of Nigeria played a strategic role in ensuring the adoption of a successor national action plan for the promotion and protection of human rights (2024–2028) aligned with the national framework for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the country.

77. The Human Rights and Equality Institution of Türkiye organized the Human Rights Symposium on the 100th anniversary of the Republic on 25 and 26 October 2023 in Ankara, with a presentation on the historical trace of sustainability and women's rights and the transformation and change of the Sustainable Development Goals.

D. Integrating human rights into policymaking and legislation addressing climate change

78. During the reporting period, the Office of the Human Rights Advocate of Guatemala developed specific training programmes that address the intersection between human rights and environmental and climate change policies.

79. The National Human Rights Commission of India put in place a core group meeting on the impact of climate action on employment, with the participation of human rights defenders.

80. The High Commission on Human Rights of Iraq prepared a study on ways to confront the challenges of climate change by the specialized legislative and executive authorities, approved by several stakeholders.

81. The Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights of Poland successfully engaged with national authorities in April 2024 to enable organizations focusing on environmental rights protection to challenge forest management plans before the administrative courts.

82. The National Human Rights Committee of Qatar organized an international conference on climate change and human rights in 2023 and is currently partnering with civil society to implement the Gulf sustainability initiative.

83. The Office of the Ombudsman of Spain recommended that the national authorities reinforce forest fire prevention measures and improve the resistance and recovery of forests against fires.

IV. Support provided by the United Nations Development Programme and other United Nations agencies, funds and programmes to national human rights institutions

84. During the reporting period, OHCHR, UNDP and the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions began implementing a joint programme to operationalize country level support to 13 national human rights institutions, in the Comoros, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Georgia, Jordan, North Macedonia, Malawi, Maldives, the Republic of Moldova, Nigeria, Peru, Timor-Leste and Ukraine. The programme is focused on strengthening the capacities of those national human rights institutions on human rights monitoring, business and human rights, environmental protection, women's rights and gender equality, early warning and prevention and strategic planning.

85. In September and October 2023, UNDP provided financial and technical support to the Malawi Human Rights Commission to participate in the review of the report of Malawi submitted under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Commission's involvement in the development of a national action plan on business and human rights.

86. In August and September 2023, UNDP supported the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone in monitoring human rights in the context of elections, including its elections situation room that received and addressed 129 election related complaints. In the same period, UNDP supported the Commission in conducting five regional community engagement events on the protection of the rights of women and children and training for staff on treaty body mechanisms, migration and combating trafficking in persons.

87. In December 2023, UNDP provided financial support to the National Human Rights Commission of Djibouti to develop a communication action plan. UNDP is currently collaborating with the Commission to facilitate its involvement in the development of a national action plan for business and human rights.

88. UNDP supported the Office of the Ombudsman of the Plurinational State of Bolivia in the context of the 2024 annual meeting of the regional network of national human rights institutions in the Americas, which was focused on environmental justice, emphasizing the respect for Indigenous communities' right to a healthy environment within the framework of sustainable development.

89. UNDP continued to provide financial support to the National Human Rights Commission of Bangladesh to expand its redress mechanisms, to enhance the capacity of its thematic and subnational committees with a view to increasing public dialogue on human rights and to expand its human rights database to comprehensively record human rights violations.

90. Since August 2023, UNDP has supported the National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia in developing its annual human rights report, in particular where issues on gender equality and political rights of persons with disabilities have been identified and presented to the parliament. In November 2023 and March 2024, UNDP organized training sessions on business and human rights to strengthen its capacity in handling complaints related to human rights abuses by businesses. UNDP also supported the Commission in September and October 2023 to raise awareness on the right to privacy and data protection and integrating

human rights into law enforcement practices. UNDP and the Commission are currently conducting an assessment to ensure the responsible and rights-compliant usage of surveillance cameras in public spaces.

91. In March 2024, UNDP collaborated with the Office of the Ombudsman for Human Rights and Justice of Timor-Leste in the development of informational and educational materials on human rights and good governance for the capacity development of public institutions. Since January 2024, UNDP has supported the Office in monitoring public policies and their compliance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

92. During the reporting period, UNDP and OHCHR provided support for a workshop for the National Human Rights Commission of Pakistan on engaging with human rights defenders and on treaty body reporting. In September and December 2023, UNDP supported the Commission in dialogues and relief efforts for minority communities, following mob violence in Jaranwala, as part of broader efforts to protect vulnerable populations. In March 2024, UNDP facilitated linkages between the Commission and business and human rights stakeholders to align business practices with the national action plan on business and human rights.

93. From October 2023 to January 2024, UNDP provided support to the Office of the Human Rights Defender of Armenia to enhance its capacity for human rights impact assessments and the related review of legislation. UNDP also supported the development of terms of reference for an electronic platform to monitor the recommendations of the national preventive mechanism and a needs assessment to establish a human rights academy that is envisioned to provide training on human rights.

94. In October and December 2023, in Uzbekistan, UNDP supported the Authorized Person of the Oliy Majlis for Human Rights with training on the rights of persons with disabilities, methodologies for conducting a preventive visit by national preventive mechanisms, strategies for the protection of human rights defenders and the promotion of an enabling environment for civil society.

95. UNDP supported the National Human Rights Commission of Lebanon in drafting its annual report on the state of human rights.

V. Cooperation between United Nations human rights mechanisms and national human rights institutions

A. Human Rights Council

96. OHCHR, in coordination with the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, continued to support the engagement of national human rights institutions with the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms.

97. At the fifty-fourth and fifty-fifth sessions of the Human Rights Council, in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Council, which allow for the participation of national human rights institutions that are compliant with the Paris Principles, representatives of 27 national human rights institutions,⁶ the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions and the regional Network of National Human Rights Institutions in Africa delivered 73 statements (nine written submissions, 24 video statements and 40 in-person statements). The majority of statements were made or issued under agenda item 3 (45 statements), during annual and panel discussions (11 statements) and under agenda item 6 on the outcomes of the universal periodic review (seven statements).

⁶ National human rights institutions of Armenia, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Colombia, Cyprus, Denmark, Ethiopia, France, Georgia, Germany, Haiti, Honduras, India, Luxembourg, Mali, Mauritania, Mongolia, Morocco, the Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Nigeria, the Philippines, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Scotland, Ukraine and the State of Palestine.

1. Universal periodic review

98. At the forty-sixth session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, held in April and May 2024, stakeholder submissions were received from three national human rights institutions with A status (Chile, New Zealand and Uruguay) and one institution with B status (Slovakia). For the forty-seventh session, to be held in October and November 2024, submissions have been received from eight institutions with A status (Albania, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Norway, Portugal and Qatar).

99. In accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 16/21, national human rights institutions with A status are entitled to make an intervention immediately after the State under review, during the adoption of the outcome by the Council plenary. At the fifty-fourth session of the Council, four national human rights institutions with A status (Burundi, France, Luxembourg and Mali) made statements during the adoption of the outcomes. At the fifty-fifth session of the Council, three national human rights institutions with A status (Cameroon, Canada and Germany) made statements during the adoption of the outcomes.

100. In February 2024, OHCHR and the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions held three pre-session briefings for 20 national human rights institutions from countries scheduled for review at the forty-seventh, forty-eighth and forty-ninth sessions of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review. Topics included the stages of the universal periodic review cycle, the role of national human rights institutions at each stage of the review cycle and support available from OHCHR and the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions. Representatives of the national human rights institutions shared their experiences in drafting implementation plans, participating in consultations on recommendations, supporting civil society and the government, advocating in parliament, drafting submissions and midterm reporting.

2. Special procedures of the Human Rights Council

101. During country visits, national human rights institutions support special procedure mandate holders by sharing independent analysis and information on issues relevant to the mandate and on the situation of the persons and groups concerned. They also facilitate contact and convene meetings with civil society and, in some cases, host press conferences for the mandate holders at the end of the visit. When preparing reports, many special procedure mandate holders request input from national human rights institutions.

102. In November 2023, during a country visit to Côte d'Ivoire, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences, engaged with the National Human Rights Commission of Côte d'Ivoire to address such issues as child labour and trafficking in persons. The Special Rapporteur, in the end of mission statement, recommended that the national authorities bolster the Commission with additional support and resources to enhance its effectiveness in combating modern forms of slavery.

103. In November 2023, the Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy engaged with the National Human Rights Commission of Mauritius during her country visit to address concerns about law enforcement practices that violated the right to privacy.

104. In February 2024, the National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia engaged with the Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy, confirming its interest and readiness to facilitate an official visit of the Special Rapporteur to the country in 2024. Following the engagement with the Commission, the Special Rapporteur followed up with the Government of Mongolia, which has accepted the visit request.

3. Open-ended intergovernmental working group on transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights

105. In October 2023, the National Consultative Commission on Human Rights of France participated in the tenth session of the open-ended intergovernmental working group on transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights.

B. Human rights treaty bodies

106. OHCHR continued to support the engagement of national human rights institutions with the United Nations treaty bodies. During the period under review, OHCHR circulated information notes to 34 national human rights institutions and encouraged them to provide written or oral information and to attend sessions of the treaty bodies.

107. During the reporting period, OHCHR prepared 249 briefing notes for the attention of treaty bodies. The briefing notes were to inform members of the treaty bodies about the existence of national human rights institutions and their relevant activities within the State under review. The goal was to ensure that States parties established or strengthened national human rights institutions in line with the Paris Principles with the technical support of OHCHR. The briefing notes also highlighted the recommendations of the Subcommittee on Accreditation, where necessary.

108. In March 2024, OHCHR organized three webinars to inform national human rights institutions on ways they could promote the ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, the work of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances and to raise awareness regarding the World Congress on Enforced Disappearances. A total of 60 representatives from 28 national human rights institutions participated in the webinars. National human rights institutions shared their experiences on advocacy initiatives towards the ratification of the Convention and expressed interest in further promoting cooperation with the Committee.

109. In May 2024, on the margins of the annual meeting of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, OHCHR launched the practical guide on independent monitoring mechanisms and the web-based directory of existing mechanisms, with the participation of several national human rights institutions.

110. During the reporting period, 63 national human rights institutions provided written information to 30 sessions and pre-sessional working groups of the treaty bodies that were held during the reporting period.

C. Other United Nations mechanisms and processes

111. National human rights institutions also engaged with bodies based in New York. In that regard, 33 national human rights institutions participated in the twelfth session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing that took place at United Nations Headquarters in May 2024.

VI. Conclusions

112. OHCHR continues to play a key role in advising States on the establishment of national human rights institutions and has continued its technical cooperation activities focused on strengthening national human rights institutions in line with the Paris Principles and the general observations of the Subcommittee on Accreditation.

113. National human rights institutions play an essential role in advancing a culture of human rights at the country level. Therefore, it is important to support efforts to strengthen their independence in compliance with the Paris Principles. This role has been reflected in several recommendations by international human rights bodies and mechanisms.

VII. Recommendations

A. Recommendations to States

114. Recalling pledges made by States within the context of the human rights 75 initiative to establish and strengthen national human rights institutions and reiterating

the recognition made of their role in advancing human rights at the national level in the call to action for human rights, the Secretary-General encourages States:

(a) To establish national human rights institutions compliant with the Paris Principles and strengthen the structures and independence of existing institutions to enable the effective fulfilment of their mandates;

(b) To seek technical support and advice from OHCHR, including when drafting the enabling legislation, as well as when building and strengthening the capacity of these institutions;

(c) To continue to provide financial contributions to OHCHR to reinforce its technical cooperation programme in support of national human rights institutions;

(d) To provide additional financial resources for the continuation and expansion of the fellowship programme currently offered by OHCHR to staff of national human rights institutions with A status to include further activities, including study tours aimed at the peer-to-peer exchange of knowledge and experience with national human rights institutions with A status at the country level;

(e) To ensure that national human rights institutions are provided with a broad mandate to protect and promote all human rights, including economic, social and cultural rights, and are granted adequate powers of investigation into allegations of human rights violations, including the competency to visit places of deprivation of liberty;

(f) To take all measures necessary, as a matter of urgency, to protect the staff of national human rights institutions and individuals who cooperate or seek to cooperate with them against threats and harassment. Any cases of alleged reprisals or intimidation should be promptly and thoroughly investigated and the perpetrators brought to justice.

B. Recommendations to national human rights institutions

115. Underscoring the essential role that national human rights institutions play as key actors for the promotion and protection of national human rights at the national level, the Secretary-General encourages their continued close engagement and cooperation with OHCHR, UNDP and other United Nations entities at the country level, as well as through their regional and global networks. He further encourages national human rights institutions:

(a) To seek advisory services and technical cooperation from OHCHR to enhance their capacity, with a view to being able to fully perform their mandate in line with the Paris Principles and the recommendations of the Subcommittee on Accreditation;

(b) To continue to engage with international and regional human rights mechanisms, as well as with relevant State bodies, to promote the inclusion of human rights issues in legislation, policies and programmes and promote the effective implementation of their recommendations;

(c) To continue to advocate for their independent participation in relevant United Nations mechanisms and processes, including the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

C. Recommendation to the United Nations system

116. OHCHR, in coordination with the United Nations system, should continue to provide support to establish and strengthen national human rights institutions, as well as their global and regional networks, to facilitate experience sharing.