

28 February 2020

To: All permanent missions in New York and Geneva

CC: António Guterres, members of the 5th and 3rd Committee of the UN General Assembly and Ms. Michelle Bachelet

Your Excellency,

In recent years, the United Nations Human Right System has grown exponentially. The number of states ratifying human rights treaties continued to increase, getting us closer to the ambitious goal of universal ratification. Such growth represents a great achievement of the peoples' struggle for justice and social progress and at the same time, it poses some challenges that need to be addressed.

Our organizations are particularly concerned by the lack of adequate funding to the UN Human Rights System. Human Rights, Peace and Development are the three pillars of the United Nations. These pillars are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. It is unacceptable that, as underlined by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, human rights received less than the 8% of the regular budget and the Office of the High Commissioner just received 3.7 per cent of the total UN regular budget¹ for 2018-2019 and 3.3% for 2020².

In 2019, the financial constraint of the OHCHR resulted in the potential cancellation of the third session of six different treaty bodies. The decreasing budgetary allocation to UNOG forced the Human Rights Council to reduce its meetings and, consequently, the Council suppressed all general debates during its next June session and it further reduced speaking time for all stakeholders. Special Procedures, as well as the OHCHR, heavily rely for their functioning on 'voluntary contributions' by states, private institutions and even business enterprises. This situation is unacceptable and it seriously threaten the independence and impartiality of the UN work in the field of human rights. Such developments negatively affect the right of participation of civil society organizations and peoples' movements.

Despite its limits and defects, the UN Human Rights System plays a fundamental role in the promotion and protection of human rights all over the world. It is crucial to preserve it and to guarantee its efficacy and efficiency. For many groups the UN Human rights system remains one of the few international spaces to which they can turn seeking justice and accountability. These institutions are especially relevant in the current environment, in which i.a. authoritarian forces are fueling racism, xenophobia, misogyny and nationalism; repression and criminalization of human rights defenders are on the rise; and outrageous inequalities are deepened by the dominant economic model. Armed conflicts affect many regions of the world and environmental destruction and climate change harm the livelihoods of the most marginalized groups of the population and threat to destroy our common house.

¹ <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/AboutUs/Pages/FundingBudget.aspx>

² Human Rights Appeal 2020: <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/AnnualAppeal2020.pdf> p.40

In accordance with resolution 68/268, in April 2020 the General Assembly will review the functioning of the UN human rights treaty body system. In Geneva, the so-called “Human Rights Council Long Term efficiency process” is ongoing. **We urge all UN member states to actively participate in these important debates and to make sure that adequate recourses are allocated to the human rights system through the UN regular budget.**

More than 70 years ago, we, the peoples of the United Nations, decided to unite our strength to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and to create better conditions of living for all, i.a through promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all. We have come a long way since then but there is still a long way to go.

Confident in the active support of your Delegation to our common effort to improve and strengthen the UN human rights system, please accept, Excellency, the assurance of our highest considerations.

Signatures:

1. Conselho Indigenista Missionário – CIMI
2. FIAN International
3. Franciscans International
4. Movimento Nacional de Direitos Humanos MNDH Brasil
5. FIAN International
6. MAB
7. Central de Cooperativas Unisol Brasil
8. La Sabana University – Federico Carrillo
9. Peace Brigades International
10. REDIM - Red por los Derechos de la Infancia en México
11. Asistencia Legal Por los Derechos Humanos A.C. (ASILEGAL)
12. CUT COLOMBIA
13. Articulação para o Monitoramento dos Direitos Humanos no Brasil
14. Al-Haq
15. Center for Women's Global Leadership
16. Dominicans for Justice and Peace
17. Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Francisco de Vitoria, O.P, A.C
18. Collectif GRITO

19. Urban Morgan Institute for Human Rights, University of Cincinnati College of Law
20. Society for International Development (SID)
21. Indonesia for Global Justice (IGJ)
22. Centro de Documentación en Derechos Humanos "Segundo Montes Mozo S.J." (CSMM)
23. FIAN Colombia
24. Participatory Research Action Network- PRAN
25. Food Security Network- KHANi, Bangladesh
26. Inpade intituto de participacion y desarrollo. FOCO Foro ciudadano de participacion y derechos humanos
27. Saluteglobale.it
28. ISCOS CISL
29. FIAN Indonesia
30. Global Policy Forum Europe
31. Honduras Forum Switzerland
32. Viva Salud
33. Solsoc
34. Frères des Hommes Belgique
35. Peace Watch Switzerland (PWS)
36. Grupo de Trabajo Suiza Colombia (ask!)
37. University of Essex - Professor Clara Sandoval
38. Rural Poor Institute for Land and Human Rights Services (RIGHTS), Inc.
39. Asociación de Investigación y Especialización sobre Temas Iberoamericanos
40. FIAN Austria
41. Plataforma Internacional contra la Impunidad
42. Foro Honduras-Suiza
43. KM2207 Guatemala Suisse

44. Group-FIAN Haiti
45. Fian Brasil
46. Instituto Plurais
47. RCA - Rede de Cooperação Amazônica
48. Iepé -Instituto de Pesquisa e Formação Indígena
49. InspirAction
50. UPR Info
51. SWISSAID
52. Brazilian Campaign for the Right to Education
53. ETIS
54. Jóvenes Argentinos por el Derecho a la Educación
55. Forum Syd
56. Coalición Colombiana por el Derecho a la Educación
57. Frente Amplio por la Educación los Derechos y la Paz
58. FIAN Ecuador
59. Confederación Sindical de Comisiones Obreras
60. "Red europea de Comités Oscar Romero" y Comité belga 'Solidair met Guatemala"
61. CLADEM El Salvador
62. Campaña Boliviana por el derecho a la educación
63. Campaña Latinoamericana por el Derecho a la Educación
64. PODER Proyecto sobre Organización, Desarrollo, Educación e Investigación (PODER, por sus siglas en inglés)[®] Méxicol
65. CNCD-11.11.11
66. INPADE / FOCO
67. Espacio Público
68. 11.11.11 – The Coalition of the Flemish North-South Movement
69. ASOCIACION PRO DERECHOS HUMANOS DE ESPAÑA

70. Ligue Burundaise des droits de l'homme Iteka
71. WomanHealth Philippines
72. Fundación para el Desarrollo de Comunidades Rurales y Urbanas de El Salvador
73. International Institute on Race, Equality and Human Rights
74. ICID (Iniciativas de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo)
75. Mundubat
76. Instituto de Derecho Ambiental A.C.
77. ORGANIZACION CONTRA LS DISCRIMINISACION DE IDEOLOGIA LIBERAL REPUBLICANA
78. Robert F Kennedy Human Rights
79. El Proyecto sobre Organización, Desarrollo, Educación e Investigación (PODER, por sus siglas en inglés)[®] MéxicoPODER
80. Red de Educación Popular entre Mujeres – REPEM
81. Comunidad de Derechoa Humanos
82. Fundación Levántate y Anda
83. Plataforma Internacional contra la Impunidad
84. Campaña por el derecho a la educación en México CADEM
85. WhyHunger
86. PASO global
87. Instituto de Desenvolvimento e Direitos Humanos - IDDH
88. Corporate Accountability
89. Centro de Gestion Cultural PUKAÑAWI
90. Asociacion de Mujeres JUMAMPI LURATA
91. Andrea Bolaños Vargas Defensora y Consultora Internacional
92. Red Global/glocal por la calidad educativa
93. Comité Cerezo México
94. Frontera con Justicia AC - Casa del Migrante de Saltillo

95. Consejo de Educación Popular de América Latina y el Caribe - CEAL
96. MARUAH, Singapore
97. Círculo de Mujeres Intelectuales de Panamá. CIMIP
98. Südwind, Austria
99. Südwind, Austria
100. Confédération Paysanne
101. CEAR-Euskadi
102. Kilusan para sa Tunay na Repormang Agraryo at Katarungang Panlipunan (KATARUNGAN)
103. Society for International Development
104. Friends of the Earth Sweden/Jordens Vänner
105. Katarungan Negros Occidental
106. Katarungan Negros Occidental
107. APRASE - Asociación Profesional de Abogados Saharais en España
108. Fondazione Lelio e Lisli Basso Onlus
109. ARTICLE 19
110. CCFD-Terre Solidaire
111. Katarungan (kilusan para sa repormang agraryo at katarungan panlipunan)
112. Transnational Institute TNI
113. Campaña Argentina por el Derecho a la Educación (CADE)
114. Coordinadora de la Mujer
115. Mexiko Forum Schweiz
116. Trocaire
117. 5 Elementos - Instituto de Educação para a Sustentabilidade
118. Association for Human Rights in Ethiopia (AHRE)
119. Fundación Tierra de Paz

120. FIAN Suisse
121. Presbyterian Peace Fellowship
122. Mujeres Libres COLEM A.C
123. Grupo de Mujeres de San Cristóbal Las Casas AC
124. FEDERACIÓN INTERNACIONAL DE FE Y ALEGRIA
125. FIAN Sweden
126. CENTRO DE APOYO SOLIDARIO, DOCUMENTACIÓN Y ESTUDIO, A.C.
127. Sindicato de Trabajadores del Ministerio de Salud
128. Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Montaña "Tlachinollan"
129. Servicios y Asesoría para la Paz A.C.