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

Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development

Activities and programmes of the United Nations system contributing to the role of good governance in the promotion and protection of human rights

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 31/14 on the role of good governance in the promotion and protection of human rights. It contains responses from United Nations agencies and bodies on activities and programmes that contribute to the role of good governance in the promotion and protection of human rights, including in the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 31/14, the Human Rights Council requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to prepare a compilation of the activities and programmes of the United Nations system that contribute to the role of good governance in the promotion and protection of human rights, including its efforts to support States in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in this context, and to submit it to the Council at its thirty-fourth session.

2. In the same resolution, the Human Rights Council recognized that transparent, responsible, accountable, open and participatory government, responsive to the needs and aspirations of the people, is the foundation on which good governance rests, and that such a foundation is one of the indispensable conditions for the full realization of human rights, including the right to development. The Council also recognized the mutually reinforcing relationship between good governance and human rights, and acknowledged that good governance had a central role in the promotion and protection of human rights, and in preventing and combating corruption at all levels. It welcomed the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its recognition of the need to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies that provide equal access to justice and that are based on respect for human rights, including the right to development, on effective rule of law and good governance at all levels, and on transparent, effective and accountable institutions. The Council also welcomed the commitments made by all States in the Agenda with regard to good governance in the promotion and protection of human rights, including in Sustainable Development Goal 16.

3. Pursuant to the request of the Human Rights Council, the Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR) contacted all organizations of the United Nations system to solicit their inputs. OHCHR invited all organizations to share information on their policies, programmes and activities aimed at strengthening good governance at the national level, in particular in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in this regard, in particular Sustainable Development Goal 16. It invited all respondents to describe the governance areas that they covered and the conceptual, policy and programmatic approach taken, and to share information on activities and approaches for measuring progress in governance reforms, including examples that demonstrated the relationship between good governance and human rights and could serve as best practices and lessons learned in strengthening governance.

4. OHCHR received responses from regional commissions, including the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA); from funds and programmes, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC); from specialized agencies, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the World Bank; from departments and offices of the United Nations Secretariat, including the Department of Political Affairs, the Rule of Law Unit of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, OHCHR-Palestine, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and the United Nations country team in Madagascar; the United Nations Statistics Division; and other bodies, inter alia the secretariats of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

II. Contributions received from organizations of the United Nations system

A. Regional commissions

1. Economic Commission for Africa

5. ECA highlighted the importance of functional institutions, visionary leadership and participatory governance mechanisms as important components of social and economic development. It focuses its work on illicit financial flows, anti-corruption, public financial management and efficient public sector practices for better service delivery. ECA stressed the importance of data collection and analysis, the preparation of pertinent surveys, and profiles and reports on socioeconomic and political conditions, governance and management. It also highlighted the importance of information-sharing, including best practices, and of analysing and monitoring trends. Its policy research and studies, technical support and advisory services are designed to assist Member States in improving economic governance and development management, including by strengthening the rule of law, State legitimacy, trust in governance institutions and reducing corruption, and strengthening private sector management.

6. ECA has been assigned a central role in the areas of illicit financial flows and anti-corruption. It has shared information on the establishment of a high-level panel on illicit financial flows and on proposals relating to the measurement of corruption.

7. Another example of the activities of ECA is a human rights impact assessment of the Continental Free Trade Agreement, which ECA was undertaking jointly with OHCHR and with the support of Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, focusing on food security, decent employment and livelihood, particularly for rural agricultural communities. Building on a scoping study, the assessment will cover (a) the impact on the right to food and agricultural livelihoods, taking into account that agriculture in Africa is an activity mainly conducted by small-scale producers; (b) the impact on agro-industrial development and employment in the light of youth demographics in Africa; and (c) the impact on informal cross-border traders across Africa, and women in particular.

2. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

8. ECLAC seeks to support countries in the region in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, through an integrated and holistic approach, on the basis of (a) regional institutions, (b) an analysis of the means of implementation, (c) national development plans and budget, and (d) indicators and statistics.

9. With regard to regional institutions, ECLAC convened the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development. The Forum promotes coordination and coherence within the United Nations development system and provides countries in the region with opportunities for peer learning, including through voluntary review, the sharing of best practices and discussion of shared targets.

10. Another example of good practice is the ECLAC Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, which measured women's reproductive rights and gender-related violence, compiles information on regulations and fair policies, and provides online training courses on gender equality. An ECLAC database also provides users with data on indicators of violence against women.

121. ECLAC provides Member States with technical assistance in building their capacity for good governance, which also comprises strengthening the rule of law and fostering

efficient, responsible and responsive institutions allowing the innovative use of data to service and facilitate public participation in the design and implementation of public policies.

12. ECLAC also assists Governments in their efforts to strengthen public administration, the design and implementation of open government and citizen engagement strategies, in access to public information, data and innovation, taxation, budgets and public investments and public planning, monitoring, evaluation and management, and the identification and application of strategic tools for mainstreaming the Sustainable Development Goals in national and subnational development institutions, policies and plans across and between sectors.

13. ECLAC has worked to develop a regional observatory on planning for sustainable development to provide tools and information, including sharing of data and good practices, to empower the public and private sectors and civil society to achieve the SDGs.

3. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

14. ESCWA worked to promote and protect human rights within the larger goal of strengthening good governance and public administration systems. Efforts included participation in international and regional forums addressing human rights and producing research studies.

15. The Commission has participated in human rights forums in collaboration with various United Nations entities, intergovernmental organizations and stakeholders to address human rights violations through transitional justice mechanisms; to draft an Arab human rights strategy; to provide input in the periodical review process of the Arab human rights charter committee; to address governance challenges to the promotion of human rights in the context of fragility and conflict, with weak State institutions; and to consider the risks and challenges posed by activities of private military and security companies, the oil and extractive industry, and refugee displacement.

16. Research conducted by ESCWA has addressed a number of topics, including the promotion of human rights, through the establishment of transitional justice mechanisms, in countries transitioning out of conflict; a study of early warning systems with a view to establishing a conflict prevention tool that takes into account human rights violations; and a study on security sector reforms in the region.

B. Funds and programmes

1. United Nations Development Programme

17. UNDP promotes democratic governance in various ways, including by supporting constitutional reform and elections, strengthening parliaments and supporting reconciliation efforts and measures to foster empowerment and inclusion. UNDP highlighted the mutually reinforcing the relationship between good governance and human rights.

18. The ultimate goal of UNDP support in the area of good governance is to bring effective and equitable delivery of services to people and to reinforce the rule of law and citizen security through appropriate policy, legal and regulatory frameworks and the strengthening of local governance institutions. UNDP provides assistance in bridging the gap between humanitarian, peacebuilding and longer-term development efforts and in the interest of enabling environments for development, peaceful dispute settlements and progress towards democratic governance.

19. The efforts made by UNDP are focused on interrelated areas of work, namely, conflict prevention; the rule of law, justice, security and human rights; inclusive political processes; responsive and accountable institutions; and gender, youth and anti-corruption.

20. UNDP applies a human rights-based approach to its anti-corruption work, which results in a four-pronged approach to preventing corruption: (a) corruption risk mitigation; (b) social accountability through monitoring and oversight by communities and civil society organizations and information and communications technology; (c) empowerment to enhance transparency and accountability; and (d) building institutional capacity.

21. UNDP gave several examples of its activities, such as support for open and democratic institutions, the rule of law, civil society capacity, e-government, and the integrity and accountability mechanisms of the judiciary.

22. Another example is the UNDP global project on supporting core government functions to address fragility and build resilience, which has a human rights-based approach to good governance. The project is aimed at reducing the risk of citizen grievances and a resurgence in violence by mainstreaming human rights principles in core government functions, particularly in crisis and post-crisis environments.

23. Other projects are aimed at promoting respect for rule of law principles and gender equality in public administration or strengthening indigenous peoples' representation and the positioning of indigenous issues in national parliaments.

24. The conceptual approach taken by UNDP to supporting the delivery of public services is based on the recognition that public service sets the policy framework necessary for the delivery of services essential to human rights; in turn, human rights principles contribute to guiding and improving public service. UNDP focuses on three dimensions of public service: (a) the intrinsic motivation of public officials, not systems, to uphold and promote the public interest and common good, to protect the rights of marginalized and vulnerable segments of society and to ensure service delivery in accordance with the ethos of public service; (b) strategic foresight to incorporate public interest in a more inclusive manner; and (c) whole-of-government approaches.

25. UNDP also supports national efforts to promote and protect human rights by strengthening the capacities of national human rights institutions, supporting engagement with international human rights mechanisms, enhancing respect for human rights within the security sector, and advising Governments on rule of law and transitional justice issues, including reparations for victims of grave human rights abuses.

26. Even though democratic governance and human rights are not specifically mentioned in the targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Agenda nonetheless calls for equal access to justice, human rights, the rule of law, and inclusion. The targets of Sustainable Development Goal 16 reflect values and principles that prioritize respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and promote the rule of law, accountability and transparency, and participatory decision-making, which are critical for promoting social cohesion, preventing conflict and ensuring peaceful, just and inclusive societies. Examples of UNDP work in supporting Members States on Goal 16 include support in monitoring its implementation, and in particular in the development of national indicators. UNDP also supports the Global Alliance for Reporting Progress in Promoting Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies and the Praia Group on Governance Statistics, which aims to develop methodologies to measure governance.

2. United Nations Industrial Development Organization

27. UNIDO has developed intelligence and governance mechanisms for policy design and implementation with regard to industrial development. These efforts have been aimed

at integrating good governance in industrial development to ultimately strengthen inclusive and sustainable industrial development based on human rights principles, such as gender equality and the empowerment of women, and to operationalize the Sustainable Development Goals.

28. The Strategic Industrial Intelligence and Governance programme exemplified these efforts by providing States with advice, capacity-building and facilitation services on industrial policymaking. The programme has resulted in a network of intelligence competitiveness units that use UNIDO methodologies and standard publications to drive the industrial policy debate at the global level.

29. Another example was the Country Partnership Programme, which provided support by aligning national industrialization priorities and development plans supporting critical capacity-building and technology transfer and conducting feasibility studies for industrial projects. Technology and skill-upgrading programmes and environmental sustainability interventions have been found to be essential to ensure adequate and equitable wage levels and benefits.

30. Through National Cleaner Production Centres, UNIDO, together with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), provides support for professionalization and institutionalization, as well as services to businesses, Governments and other national stakeholders for the promotion and implementation of resource efficient and cleaner production methods, practices, technologies and policies. The centres are expected to become increasingly independent of UNIDO-UNEP funding and support, aiming to provide nationally recognized organizations with managerial, administrative and financial independence and organizational and institutional stability and sustainability.

3. United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime

31. UNODC works in four areas relevant to the role of good governance in the promotion and protection of human rights: (a) crime prevention and criminal justice; (b) anti-corruption; (c) terrorism prevention; and (d) combating organized crime and human trafficking.

32. UNODC contributes to good governance and the rule of law by supporting fair, effective and humane criminal justice systems that are transparent, provide for oversight and accountability, and reduce impunity.

33. By focusing on crime prevention, UNODC supports efforts to reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere. In particular, it is increasing its efforts to assist States in the prevention of youth crime by developing the life skills of marginalized and at-risk youth. Together with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNODC is implementing a global programme on violence against children. UNODC has also supported legislative development and training in the area of juvenile justice. It uses international standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice to develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions within the criminal justice sector. UNODC is prioritizing activities addressing global prison challenges in order to reduce the scope of imprisonment, improve prison management and prison conditions, and to support the social reintegration of offenders upon release.

34. UNODC also promotes gender equality in criminal justice systems through work on preventing and responding to violence against women. In 2015, under the lead of UNODC, a United Nations inter-agency task force finalized a set of integrated technical guidance notes on transnational organized crime and security sector reform, with the aim of providing practitioners with effective recommendations in the implementation of security sector reform.

35. UNODC adopted a human rights-based approach to its work, including in its anti-corruption activities. It supports government experts in conducting peer-to-peer country reviews as part of the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption. UNODC provides States parties with technical assistance to implement the Convention, including policy formulation and legislation drafting support, capacity assessments of anti-corruption bodies, capacity-building and training to conduct anti-corruption investigations and self-assessment of anti-corruption preventive measures, focusing on judicial integrity, whistle-blower protection, anti-corruption strategies and public procurement. UNODC has issued numerous publications in these areas. In the area of asset recovery, it established, jointly with the World Bank, the Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative, which provides States parties with support during stolen asset recovery efforts, engages in capacity-building and promotes international cooperation.

36. Good governance is essential to the prevention of terrorism. To that end, UNODC works with States to strengthen the rule of law and their compliance with the human rights standards of legal and criminal justice measures taken against terrorism. Besides technical assistance, UNODC has developed an online counter-terrorism learning platform and two training tools, *The Criminal Justice Response to Support Victims of Acts of Terrorism* and *Good Practices in Supporting Victims of Terrorism within the Criminal Justice Framework*.

37. UNODC has provided assistance to address human trafficking and migrant smuggling in the interest of building the capacity of and supporting national justice and related institutions. One practical example is the UNODC pre-assistance assessment procedure that customizes technical assistance, by evaluating adherence to a broad range of existing international human rights obligations, considered directly relevant to the governance of responses to human trafficking and migrant smuggling. Further support is provided by UNODC through its production of standard-setting technical materials promoting good governance and rights-based responses by actors working to prevent and combat human trafficking and migrant smuggling.

C. Specialized agencies

1. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

38. FAO defines governance as the processes through which public and private actors articulate their interests, frame and prioritize issues, and make, implement, monitor and enforce decisions. FAO has included governance as a cross-cutting theme in its strategic framework in the interest of increasing operational effectiveness and of progress towards eradicating hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition, eliminating poverty and achieving the sustainable use and management of natural resources.

39. In the experience of FAO, the success of efforts to achieve the above-mentioned goals depends on whether the efforts are informed and accepted by all the public and private actors concerned.

40. FAO relies on institutional, political economy and stakeholder analyses to identify governance challenges relating to food and agriculture, and to improve the inclusiveness of policies and programmes. Its approach to governance does not imply a set of criteria to be applied universally as a precondition of success. It focuses on understanding the “politics” around a given technical issue or problem related to food and agriculture in order to be able to support Member States in designing solutions that will be considered legitimate in the eyes of the persons concerned, and have a chance of being effectively implemented and being sustainable. Looking at governance issues is generally linked to an initial assessment of a State and an analysis of the political economy context in which a specific intervention

is conducted, while remaining sensitive to general human rights principles, such as participation, accountability, transparency, equality and the rule of law.

41. FAO measures progress on governance in relation to its strategic goals, and provides legal advisory services to Governments in the preparation of laws, regulations, agreements and other legal texts and institutional structures. It pays close attention to procedural rights in draft legislation and to multi-stakeholder approaches in the legislative process. One element of most advisory projects is capacity-building through the participatory training of national officials.

42. For FAO, a human rights-based approach to food security and nutrition is necessary to tackle the root causes of hunger and malnutrition. Its *Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security* provide an overall framework for achieving food security and nutritional objectives. In the Plurinational State of Bolivia, for example, the Government, with the support of FAO, has applied a right-to-food approach to its national food and nutrition policy.

43. The *Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication*, which are based on international human rights standards, provide a framework for the governance of small-scale fisheries and their contribution to food security and eradication of poverty. FAO is undertaking research, developing indicators and guidance materials for the application of a human rights-based approach to small-scale fisheries. With the support of FAO, Indonesia has adopted a law on protecting small-scale fisheries, while Costa Rica has approved a decree on the application of the *Guidelines*.

44. FAO also supports States in the implementation of the *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security* within a broader human rights framework. In Guatemala, a new land governance policy incorporates the principles of the *Guidelines* with the objective of improving food security and nutrition in rural areas, particularly among indigenous communities, and promoting stability, investment and growth in agriculture.

45. The *Global Framework for Action to achieve the Vision on Groundwater Governance* consists of policy and institutional guidelines, recommendations and best practices designed to improve groundwater governance and management at the local, national and transboundary levels. FAO is currently supporting Morocco, Tunisia and Jordan in the development of more inclusive and sustainable governance structures and mechanisms for groundwater resources.

2. International Maritime Organization

46. The work of IMO in the area of good governance with respect to human rights is focused on the protection of seafarers and of persons rescued at sea, and on the safety of passenger ships and maritime security.

47. With regard to the abandonment of seafarers, IMO reported on the database, set up at the International Labour Office and efforts to better protect abandoned seafarers and to provide financial security or compensation to seafarers and their families in the event of the death of seafarers or long-term disability.

48. IMO also reported on the development of guidance on the implementation of a resolution and guidelines on fair treatment of seafarers in the event of maritime accident, where seafarers may be detained by public authorities, to respond appropriately.

49. Lastly, IMO reported on a high-level meeting to address unsafe mixed migration by sea, specifically with regard to the large number of lives lost in unsafe craft in the

Mediterranean Sea, on dangerous and unregulated sea passages. The aim of the meeting was to promote cooperation between United Nations agencies, international organizations, civil society, States and the shipping industry.

3. World Bank

50. The World Bank contributes to the promotion of good governance by supporting States in building capable, efficient, open, inclusive and accountable institutions in the interest of promoting sustainable growth, eradicating poverty and promoting shared prosperity.

51. The World Bank has, particularly by means of the International Development Association fund for the poorest countries, supported the creation of opportunities for citizen engagement and building and maintaining trust between the State and citizens. By strengthening governing systems and fostering transparent and participatory public sector involvement, countries are better able to address past and existing problems and to respond to future needs. In its World Development Report 2017, the World Bank analyses the role of governance and the law in the economic advancement of nations. It examines the institutional foundations of a well-functioning State, and addresses the interaction between economic development and the underlying factors that influence the quality of governance, and the gaps between intended and achieved governance reforms.

52. The World Bank pursues four strategic priorities in supporting the efforts of States to strengthen their governance: (a) public financial management; (b) public sector performance; (c) accountability in service delivery; and (d) open, inclusive and accountable governance.

53. With regard to public financial management, the World Bank supports States in the formulation of policies and in implementing procedures to improve revenue collection, administration and the efficient use of resources.

54. With regard to public sector performance, the World Bank supports States in improving the performance of civil servants; strengthening public administration capacity and quality; enhancing the performance and transparency of State-owned enterprises; strengthening the checks and balances systems used in the public sector; improving the effectiveness of supreme audit and accountability institutions and the judiciary; and building the capacity of policy coordination and delivery entities.

55. With regard to accountable service delivery, the World Bank supports States in setting up citizen feedback mechanisms, enhancing financial accountability, and establishing transparent and effective systems of procurement.

56. Lastly, the World Bank supports States in ensuring more open and inclusive government and in efforts to combat corruption.

57. In the United Republic of Tanzania, for example, the Government has joined the Open Government Partnership to promote transparency and citizen participation. It has also adopted a new delivery results model, including in the education, health and water sectors. In Bangladesh, the World Bank has supported the establishment of a procurement data centre, and training in public procurement and professional certification. In Pakistan, it has supported the establishment of a call centre, which allows citizens to give feedback on government services with a view to fighting petty corruption and assessing the quality of service delivery.

58. In addition, through the Nordic Trust Fund, the World Bank conducts activities focusing specifically on strengthening good governance through a human rights lens. The activities were centred on evaluating and analysing the impact of governance interventions aimed at increasing participation, transparency and accountability and reducing corruption.

59. In Colombia, for example, the World Bank has supported data collection to obtain an insight into how displaced persons and other victims of human rights violations committed during the armed conflict in the country seek to enforce their rights, the impact of enforcement of their rights, and the effectiveness of different service delivery models in helping displaced persons and other victims to exercise their rights.

60. In Uganda, the World Bank is supporting a community-driven development programme that includes a transparency, accountability and anti-corruption component, implemented by the Inspectorate of Government of Uganda in partnership with civil society and non-governmental organizations. The Nordic Trust Fund supports an impact evaluation to document how social accountability interventions can promote participation in public affairs, service delivery and the quality of development projects. It is expected that the evaluation will provide information on how promoting human rights and participation in public affairs can accelerate development.

D. Departments and offices of the United Nations Secretariat

1. Department of Political Affairs

61. The Department of Political Affairs plays a central role in fulfilling the conflict prevention and resolution mandate of the United Nations. The Department provides the Secretary-General and his envoys with support in carrying out their “good offices” and preventive diplomacy efforts. The special political missions and regional offices deployed around the world conduct peacemaking and preventive diplomacy, and sustain peace efforts in support of inclusive, nationally owned, regionally-supported, comprehensive societal frameworks, including constitutions, peace agreements, electoral systems and other inclusive political processes.

62. The Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process has, for example, contributed to a diagnosis of the public administration sector to guide reforms and to the formulation of the national policy agenda for the period 2017-2022.

63. The Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon has supported the restoration of State institutions and other legislative efforts, including legislation to combat torture and on the establishment of a national human rights commission. The Office also supported the holding of presidential and parliamentary elections, and the work of the executive branch. It has also provided technical assistance to modernize public administration, in particular taxation and customs systems. The Office has also provided assistance for electoral reform and promoted the political representation of women. Other support includes decentralization to foster local economic development, advocacy efforts to combat torture, the adoption of a due diligence policy for United Nations support for the security sector, and assistance for efforts to prevent violent extremism.

64. The United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau has supported the establishment of an interministerial committee for the implementation of human rights obligations, the establishment of an independent human rights commission and the revision of legislation. It has also promoted the participation of women in political processes and supported efforts to strengthen civil society.

65. The United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel has addressed a number of governance challenges related to elections, such as efforts to prevent and reduce electoral violence, political transitions, constitutional reform, political dialogue, violent extremism and transnational organized crimes. In addition to addressing conflict-related issues, it has also addressed key human rights issues relating to good governance, including freedom of expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and association, and women’s rights.

66. Good governance and human rights are central to the work of the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia when supporting efforts to address violent extremism and terrorism, and in the management of transboundary water resources.

67. The Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region supported the Governments in the region in the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework and the promotion of good governance, the rule of law and human rights. Activities have included support for the establishment of a judicial cooperation network with the aim of preventing and suppressing transboundary organized crimes, and efforts to facilitate exchange and expertise, for example, on access to justice for victims of sexual and gender-based violence or election-related violence.

68. Other examples of activities undertaken can be found in Papua New Guinea, the Southern Caucasus and Comoros, include training of police officers on integrating human rights in law enforcement, support and advice in the context of the establishment of a national human rights commission and the promotion of national and regional dialogue.

2. Rule of Law Unit of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General

69. The Rule of Law Unit of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General has contributed to good governance through a rule of law-based approach. Its efforts to promote and protect human rights include providing support to Member States in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

70. The Unit supported Member States in the process leading to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through, inter alia, its contribution to the preparation of an issues brief on conflict prevention, post-conflict peacebuilding and the promotion of durable peace, the rule of law and governance. It also organized panel discussions focusing on the rule of law as a driver of inclusive development opportunities and on ways to measure rule of law institutions and services to inform programming and decision-making. The Unit continues to provide input in support of the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 16, as well as on its measurement and reporting.

71. The rule of law has been promoted throughout the United Nations Organization as a principle of governance linked to human rights, specifically relating it and transitional justice to international human rights norms and standards. This priority has been exemplified by the development of guidance notes for the engagement of the United Nations in specific areas of the rule of law, and the Unit's work to incorporate the rule of law into system-wide policies, including in support for Member States in countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism.

72. The Unit has also supported a number of informal briefings in order to encourage dialogue between the United Nations entities and States on the rule of law, facilitated the sharing of national practices to advance the rule of law and convened events to address prison reform, watchdog institutions and e-justice.

3. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

73. Although the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs does not have policies, programmes or activities aimed specifically at strengthening good governance or directly engaging in peacebuilding, its humanitarian activities support peace consolidation efforts and the protection of civilians, and their return and reintegration following displacement. The Office supports shared analysis and effective coordination among humanitarian, human rights, development and peace consolidation actors.

74. The Office also uses its advocacy role to engage with Governments and parties to conflict to uphold their obligations to protect civilians and to ensure that humanitarian priorities are defined on the basis of needs alone, and that assistance and protection are given as a matter of priority to those in the most vulnerable situation.

75. The Office is currently implementing the Agenda for Humanity, including in maintaining the Platform for Action, Commitments and Transformation, in which commitments will be monitored.

4. Office of the High Commissioner-Palestine

76. OHCHR-Palestine has provided technical advice on the alignment of national priorities with the legal obligations of the State of Palestine under human rights treaties and its political commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals. These efforts have been furthered by the United Nations country team, which supported the Government in its implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. To support the integration of human rights treaty obligations and the Sustainable Development Goals in national sector strategies, OHCHR and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have developed a matrix illustrating the linkages between treaty obligations, the Sustainable Development Goals and potential priorities for each government sector. In addition, OHCHR-Palestine has engaged with civil society organizations on using the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals and its processes to promote human rights and to hold the Government accountable.

5. Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict

77. The Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict reported on several initiatives connected to good governance, such as the signing of plans of action with Government and non-State armed actors to reduce violations against children; military to civilian handover protocols; and work with regional organizations on children and armed conflict and advocacy with regard to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The plans of action have included commitments to take measures to strengthen institutional responses in fulfilling the rights and needs of children affected by armed conflict. The Children, Not Soldiers campaign had the aim of supporting national security forces in ending the recruitment and use of children in their forces in conflict-affected countries.

78. The Office has also prioritized partnerships with regional organizations to advance the children and armed conflict agenda, and to promote regional ownership of the protection of children, including by providing support for the development of the work plan of the African Union on children and armed conflict. The plan operationalized good governance through policies and decisions that promoted peace and the rights of children in armed conflict.

79. Other partnerships have included work with the League of Arab States, on a cooperation agreement to enhance coordination and information-sharing in the interest of mainstreaming child protection; with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, focusing on the use of practical experience to inform training courses on the issue of children and armed conflict; with the European Union, in the protection of children in conflict in the political and human rights dialogue; and with individual member States, to further child protection and to encourage the ratification and enactment of related international and national legislation.

80. The Special Representative has continued to advocate for the signing and ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of

children in armed conflict and for the enactment of legislation criminalizing the recruitment and use of children for military purposes.

6. United Nations country team in Madagascar

81. The support of the United Nations country team in Madagascar for good governance in the promotion and protection of human rights is set on four pillars: (a) decentralization and local resilience; (b) combating impunity and strengthening accountability and the rule of law; (c) peacebuilding and conflict prevention; and (d) electoral assistance.

82. The country team has provided support in developing and implementing a legal and strategic framework conducive to decentralization and local development. It has supported the drafting of local development plans and the establishment of inclusive consultation mechanisms with a particular focus on women, youth and disaster-risk reduction.

83. The country team has also supported a number of initiatives to combat impunity and to strengthen accountability and the rule of law by means of awareness-raising campaigns, and capacity-building on international human rights standards and principles; by ensuring coordination among justice and anti-corruption bodies; and by adjusting legal frameworks and structures, including by providing technical assistance on legal reforms for the prevention of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, and supporting access to justice for vulnerable groups. The country team has supported, for example, the establishment of a case management platform on human rights violations and abuses; provided advice on upholding human rights in security operations; and helped to draft legislation on alternatives to the death penalty, the law decriminalizing media offences and the enabling law establishing a national human rights commission.

84. In addition, the country team has supported the national reconciliation process by advocating for the importance of upholding and promoting the rights to truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence, and the participation of women in that process. It also supported the design of a reform strategy for the national security sector. The country team highlighted two projects undertaken in this area. The first project is aimed at creating stronger democratic institutions that can fight corruption effectively and foster dialogue between the population and their elected representatives. In this case, the country team focuses on supporting the national human rights commission. In the second project, the team sought to support security sector reform by training on human rights for members of the security forces.

85. Lastly, the United Nations country team in Madagascar has also provided assistance in building national capacity for monitoring human rights during elections, assessing the legal framework governing elections, upgrading the information technology system for the development of voter lists, and building the capacity of key stakeholders in the election process.

7. United Nations Statistics Division

86. The United Nations Statistics Division provided information on the Statistical Commission and the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal indicators.

87. At its forty-seventh session, the Statistical Commission agreed, as a practical starting point, on the proposed global indicator framework for the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The framework includes indicators to measure the targets of Sustainable Development Goal 16. The Commission furthermore expressed its support for the road map proposed by the Praia Group on Governance Statistics and its actions to develop a handbook on governance statistics for national statistical offices.

88. As part of the process to agree on Goal indicators, the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal indicators agreed on a chapeau on disaggregation to be applied for all indicators.

E. Other bodies

1. United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

89. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification promotes a human rights-based approach and good governance by facilitating the establishment of enabling frameworks for good governance, and by supporting gender equality.

90. Participation, partnership and decentralization are core principles of the Convention secretariat, and have been critical in promoting and maintaining good governance in the policies, programmes and activities undertaken under the Convention from the global to the local levels. National action programmes are designed on the basis of these principles, through a consultative, multi-stakeholder process. These principles have strengthened the transparency and accountability of governmental institutions at all levels, which has in turn enhanced the commitment to and sustainability of the programmes.

91. As an example, at the local level, the Convention secretariat reported on the promotion of dialogue on gender equality in Ethiopia. The State had designated gender and livelihoods as indicators for measurement of progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 15, target 3 and in support of Goal 5, allowing it to raise awareness of the importance of land degradation neutrality (namely, maintaining a balance between the amount of land degraded and restored each year), to mobilize local ownership of the target, and to identify region-specific needs and learn how to address them. The promotion of these techniques and mechanisms required a rights-based approach to fostering good governance.

92. Another example aimed at increasing the participation of women in decision-making can be witnessed in a watershed development project in Uttarakhand, India. The initiative has not only enhanced watershed management but also improved social stability and participation in the project, and resulted in an increase in household income and reduction in the time women spend to reach water sources.

93. The policies and programmes of the Convention also promote gender equality. The Convention advocates for women's participation in all decision-making processes in the development of national action programmes and for building the capacity of women to address inequalities. In order to understand how to achieve land degradation neutrality without exacerbating gender inequality, the Convention supports a number of relevant initiatives.

94. In Namibia, for example, the Government has worked to achieve gender equality through the creation of formal positions in rural land registration boards, thereby strengthening women's land ownership. In Ethiopia, local Governments have been empowered to create registration mechanisms that allow rural women and men to own land individually.

95. A final example can be found in the Convention's Oasis du Sud programme, which has helped to create jobs for women in the tourist industry. The programme has resulted in the economic empowerment of women, strengthening their confidence and ability to participate to a greater extent in society, and ultimately leading to the establishment of a network of elected women officials to build the capacity and strengthen the role of locally elected women in governance and decision-making processes.

2. Convention on Biological Diversity

96. The Convention on Biological Diversity imposes obligations on contracting parties to develop national biodiversity strategies and plans of action, to integrate the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity into relevant sectoral and cross-sectoral plans, programmes and policies, and also into national decision-making, which implies integrating the conservation of biodiversity into the field of human rights.

97. The Convention and the two protocols thereto – the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization – together with guiding principles, guidelines, work programmes and tools adopted by the parties contain important obligations and commitments to raising awareness and promoting civil society participation to protecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, and to promoting gender equality, poverty eradication and development, including food security and sustainable agriculture, biodiversity financing mechanisms and protected areas.

98. The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 affirms that biological diversity underpins ecosystem functioning and the provision of ecosystem services essential for human well-being.

99. Numerous measures have been taken to ensure the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities, in particular of women, such as the establishment of a voluntary fund for participation in meetings, and enhanced participation mechanisms. Parties are required to take measures to ensure that traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources held by indigenous peoples and local communities, and the genetic resources over which they have established rights, are only accessible with the prior informed consent of indigenous and local communities, and that benefits arising from their use are shared in a fair and equitable way with them. Specific voluntary guidelines have been developed for the conduct of cultural, environmental and social impact assessments of development proposed on, or which are likely to have an impact on, sacred sites and lands and waters traditionally occupied or used by indigenous and local communities.

100. Another example concerns the importance attached by the Convention and subsequent instruments to the full participation of women at all levels of policymaking and implementation, and in gender mainstreaming.

101. The Voluntary Guidelines on Safeguards in Biodiversity Financing Mechanisms point to the need to address the potential impact of biodiversity financing mechanisms on different elements of biodiversity, and their potential effect on the rights and livelihoods of local and indigenous communities. Other guidelines on biodiversity financing and safeguards proposed at the Conference of the Parties to the Convention emphasize the emerging role of safeguards in biodiversity financing mechanisms in supporting equitable biodiversity and ecosystem governance, including the participation of local populations and the recognition of their rights.

102. One of the most challenging subjects in the implementation of the Convention concerns the relationship between people and protected areas. Some standards have the specific aim of preventing conflicts and providing for the equitable distribution of costs and benefits by emphasizing diverse governance types of protected areas, and participatory decision-making and management processes that incorporate and respond to the interests of a broad range of stakeholders, particularly indigenous peoples and local communities.

IV. Conclusions

103. The contributions received by OHCHR reaffirmed that human rights and good governance are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. They also reiterated that transparent, responsible, accountable, open and participatory government, responsive to the needs and aspirations of the people, is the foundation on which good governance rests, and constitutes an indispensable condition for the realization of human rights.

104. The conceptual, policy and programmatic approaches described and the numerous examples provided extend far beyond a narrow conception of governance understood merely in terms of economic or administrative efficiency.

105. Human rights norms and principles provide a set of standards to guide governing processes and assess performance outcomes. Good governance is necessary for establishing and maintaining an environment conducive to the protection of human rights.

106. Respondents consequently underscored the importance of a human rights-based approach to good governance and to development cooperation in support of governance, with a focus on the protection of the human rights of those most vulnerable to violations, and on their participation.
