



## WHO WE ARE

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) represents the world's commitment to universal ideals of human dignity. Headed by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, a position established by the General Assembly in 1993 to spearhead the United Nations' human rights efforts, OHCHR offers leadership, works objectively, educates and takes action to empower individuals and assist States in upholding human rights. The UN human rights office, a part of the United Nations Secretariat, has its headquarters in Geneva.



Palais Wilson, OHCHR headquarters in Geneva

Through its unique access, OHCHR works with Governments to help promote and implement human rights worldwide. Since Governments have the primary responsibility to protect human rights, OHCHR provides assistance, such as expertise and technical trainings in the areas of administration of justice, legislative reform, and electoral process, to help implement international human rights standards on the ground. It also assists other entities with responsibility to protect human rights to fulfil their obligations, and individuals to realize their rights, and speaks out objectively in the face of human rights violations.

As we face ever-changing challenges in the new millennium, the international community unequivocally puts human rights at the centre-stage in addressing various pressing issues worldwide. At the United Nations World Summit in 2005, world leaders reaffirmed the leading role and mandate of OHCHR.

## UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS SYSTEM

OHCHR also supports the work of the United Nations human rights mechanisms, such as the Human Rights Council and its Special Procedures, and the core treaty bodies set up for monitoring State Parties' compliance with international human rights treaties; promotes the right to development; coordinates United Nations human rights education and public information activities; and strengthens and mainstreams human rights across the United Nations system. It also works to ensure the enforcement of universally recognized human rights norms, including through promoting both the universal ratification and implementation of the major human rights treaties and respect for the rule of law.

High Commissioner Navi Pillay took office in September 2008. Her Office's priorities are set out in a six-year Plan of Action for the period 2006-2011. Key priorities include greater country engagement, which involves working closely with OHCHR partners at the regional, country and local levels in order to ensure that international human rights standards are implemented on the ground; a stronger leadership role for the High Commissioner; and closer partnerships with civil society and UN agencies.

## OUR STRUCTURE

Besides its Headquarters in Geneva, OHCHR has an office at the United Nations in New York and, as of December 2008, eight regional offices and ten country offices. Additional country offices are planned for 2008.

At the end of 2007, OHCHR implemented an internal restructuring, upgrading its four main substantive branches to divisions: the Human Rights Council and Treaties Division, which provides substantive secretariat support to the Human Rights Council, the treaty bodies and various working groups; the Special Procedures Division, which supports the work of the Council's independent experts assigned different thematic or country-specific mandates (special procedures mandate holders); the Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division, responsible for overseeing and implementing OHCHR's work in the field; and the Research and Right to Development Division, which carries out thematic research on human rights issues and provides expert advice. Core administrative, planning, coordination and outreach functions are handled separately by dedicated sections reporting directly to the Deputy High Commissioner (see OHCHR Structure).

To implement its comprehensive mandate, as of 31 December 2008 OHCHR employed 990 members of staff – of whom, 498 were based in the field, 473 in Geneva, and 19 in New York. It also supported an additional workforce of over 420 international human rights officers serving in 16 United Nations peace missions, and 14 human rights advisors in UN country teams.

OHCHR is funded from the United Nations regular budget and from voluntary contributions from Member States, intergovernmental organizations, foundations and individuals. Total resource requirements for 2008-2009 have been set at US\$

312.7 million. With regular budget funding expected to provide some US\$ 115.3 million in 2008-2009, the Office will rely on its donors to provide the remaining US\$ 197.4 million to implement its programme of work in full.



The OHCHR's office in Uganda facilitates effective human rights protection and monitoring

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