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Promotion and protection of human rights: implementation of human rights instruments

United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, which is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution [46/122](#), describes the recommendations for grants to beneficiary organizations that were adopted by the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery at its seventeenth session, held in Geneva from 3 to 7 December 2012. It also provides information on policy decisions adopted by the Board.

* [A/68/150](#).



I. Introduction

A. Submission of the report

1. The present report was prepared in accordance with the arrangements approved by the General Assembly in its resolution [46/122](#), by which it established the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery (the Fund). It presents the recommendations for grants adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Fund at its seventeenth session, held in Geneva from 3 to 7 December 2012. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights approved those recommendations on behalf of the Secretary-General on 17 December 2012.

B. Mandate of the Fund

2. In line with resolution [46/122](#), the Fund was established in 1991 with the purpose of extending humanitarian, legal and financial aid to individuals whose human rights have been severely violated as a result of contemporary forms of slavery. The Fund receives voluntary contributions from Governments, non-governmental organizations, private or public entities and individuals.

C. Administration of the Fund and Board of Trustees

3. The Secretary-General administers the Fund through the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), with the advice of a Board of Trustees and in accordance with the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations.

4. The Board of Trustees is composed of five members with relevant experience in the field of human rights and, in particular, in issues of contemporary forms of slavery. They serve in their personal capacity and are appointed by the Secretary-General with due regard to equitable geographical distribution and in consultation with their Governments. In June 2011, the Secretary-General renewed the mandates of Ms. Virginia Herrera Murillo (Costa Rica) and Ms. Klara Skrivankova (Czech Republic) for a final term ending on 31 December 2013 and appointed Ms. Asma Jahangir (Pakistan), Mr. George Omona (Uganda) and Mr. Michael Beresford Dottridge (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) as new members for a first term, renewable once, ending on 31 December 2013. At the seventeenth session, Ms. Herrera Murillo was appointed Chair by acclamation for one year.

5. Pursuant to recommendations formulated by the Office of Internal Oversight Services in its audit report on the United Nations Voluntary Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery of 2007, as at 1 January 2012, the secretariats of the Fund and the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture were placed within the Human Rights Treaties Division of OHCHR. During the reporting period the joint secretariat has reviewed and aligned the working methods of both funds with a view to heightening cost-effectiveness, pooling expertise and sharing best practices. In addition, the web page of the Fund has been improved.

II. Management of grants

A. Admissibility criteria

6. In accordance with the mandate of the Fund, as set out in the General Assembly resolution [46/122](#), the beneficiaries of assistance from the Fund would include individuals whose human rights have been severely violated as a result of contemporary forms of slavery. Project admissibility criteria are outlined in the Fund's guidelines.

7. The beneficiary organizations are requested to accept all conditions attached to the grant, such as providing additional documents and/or mid-year and final narrative and financial reports on the use of grants by a given deadline. Upon receipt of this confirmation, the secretariat of the Fund requests the financial services of the United Nations Office at Geneva to disburse funds promptly.

8. As at 31 May 2012, the deadline for submitting applications for project grants for 2013, the Fund had received 364 applications. The admissible applications were examined by the Board of Trustees at its seventeenth session, held from 3 to 7 December 2012. The deadline for submitting applications for project grants for 2014 was 8 May 2013. The admissible applications will be examined by the Board of Trustees at its eighteenth session, to be held in Geneva from 18 to 22 November 2013.

B. Monitoring and evaluation by the Board of Trustees and the secretariat

9. At its seventeenth session, the Board of Trustees expressed appreciation for the increased number of evaluation and monitoring visits to organizations funded by the Fund or to new applicants that had been undertaken by the Fund secretariat, and OHCHR country and regional offices and the human rights components of peacekeeping missions, at times in cooperation with Board members.

10. During the reporting period, the newly established joint secretariat enhanced the methodology for project monitoring evaluation and developed new working tools, including project evaluations and mission report templates.

11. Fifty-five projects were awarded grants for 2013. Project visits were undertaken to 39 of them in 2011 and 2012 by Board of Trustee members, Fund staff, OHCHR country and regional offices and the human rights components of peacekeeping missions, including projects in Albania, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Cameroon, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, France, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Liberia, Mauritania, Mexico, Nepal, Philippines, Romania, Russian Federation, Senegal, Singapore, South Sudan, Switzerland (for a project in the United Arab Emirates), Thailand, Togo, Uganda, Viet Nam and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. At the time of reporting, 13 project visits had been undertaken in Bulgaria, Cambodia, France, Italy, Lebanon, the Netherlands, the Republic of Moldova and Spain.

III. Financial situation of the Fund

12. Between 2009 and 2012, annual voluntary contributions to the Fund decreased by 50 per cent, from an all-time high of \$886,482 in 2009 to \$493,650 in 2012. This is mainly attributed to the ongoing financial crisis, which makes it difficult for the Fund to meet the ever-increasing demands for assistance.

13. At its seventeenth session, the Board of Trustees noted that the Fund was currently working with the minimum level of required resources to fulfil its mandate.

14. The Board of Trustees estimated that the Fund would need at least \$1.5 million before its eighteenth session in 2013 to satisfactorily meet the demands for assistance.

15. The table below indicates the contributions and pledges received during the reporting period.

Contributions and pledges received from 11 July 2012 to 12 July 2013

<i>Donor</i>	<i>Amount (United States dollars)</i>	<i>Date of receipt</i>
<i>States and other entities</i>		
Germany	325 945	12 July 2013
India	24 982	7 March 2013
Israel	5 000	19 October 2012
Saudi Arabia	50 000	20 September 2012
South Africa	5 363	7 March 2013
Spain	5 172	2 January 2013
Turkey	6 000	3 December 2012
United Arab Emirates	31 646	25 April 2013
Holy See	1 000	7 February 2013
Subtotal	455 108	
<i>Private/public entities</i>		
Ambassadors, European Union	1 258	25 April 2013
Individuals	646	21 November 2012
Subtotal	1 904	
Total, as at 12 July 2013	457 012	

IV. Seventeenth session of the Board of Trustees

16. The seventeenth session of the Board of Trustees of the Fund was held in Geneva from 3 to 7 December 2012.

17. The session was the first one serviced by the newly established secretariat of the Human Rights Treaties Division. A common understanding was reached between the Board of Trustees and the secretariat on a number of key management and policy

issues, including the alignment of the grant implementation cycle with the United Nations financial year. The Board agreed on a new methodology concerning the pre-screening process, providing for three levels of funding recommendations (highly recommended, recommended and not recommended), in order to enhance the in-session selection of project proposals. It also decided that all applications for 2013 would have to be submitted through an online grant management system.

18. The Board of Trustees also undertook a complete revision of the Fund's guidelines including a clearer victim-oriented definition of the objectives and principles of the Fund and a clearer outline of admissibility. The revised guidelines also outline in clear terms the grant cycle, the verification methodology and the new online grant management system of the Fund.

A. Recommendations adopted by the Board of Trustees

19. The Board of Trustees examined 173 admissible applications for project grants, amounting to approximately \$2,304,745, which had been evaluated and scored by the secretariat in preparation of the session. The Board decided to focus its review on 69 projects that were highly recommended for funding and decided to recommend 55 of them, for a total amount of \$607,500. The projects will assist non-governmental organizations in 44 countries in the five regions of the world, as follows: Asia-Pacific States (24); African States (12); Eastern European States (6); Latin American and the Caribbean States (7); and Western Europe and other States (6). The projects address a variety of forms of contemporary forms of slavery, including forced recruitment of children in armed conflict, domestic servitude, forced and early marriage, bonded labour, trafficking for labour and sexual exploitation.

20. Figures I and II below illustrate the breakdown of the 55 approved grants, by region and by type of contemporary slavery.

Figure I
Grants awarded by region in 2013

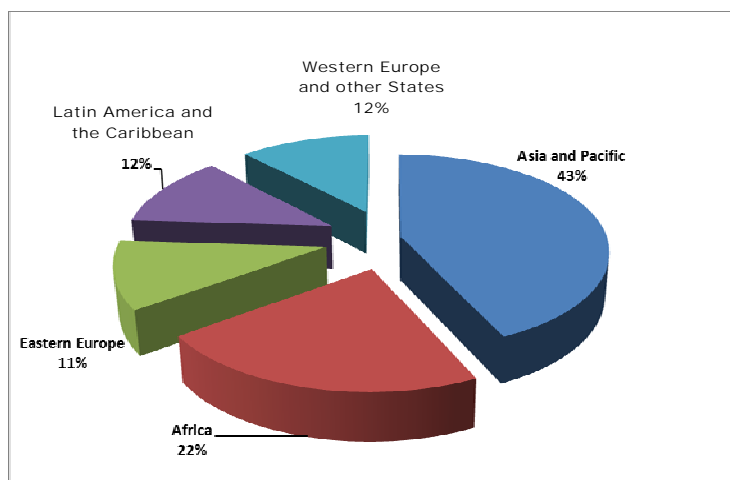
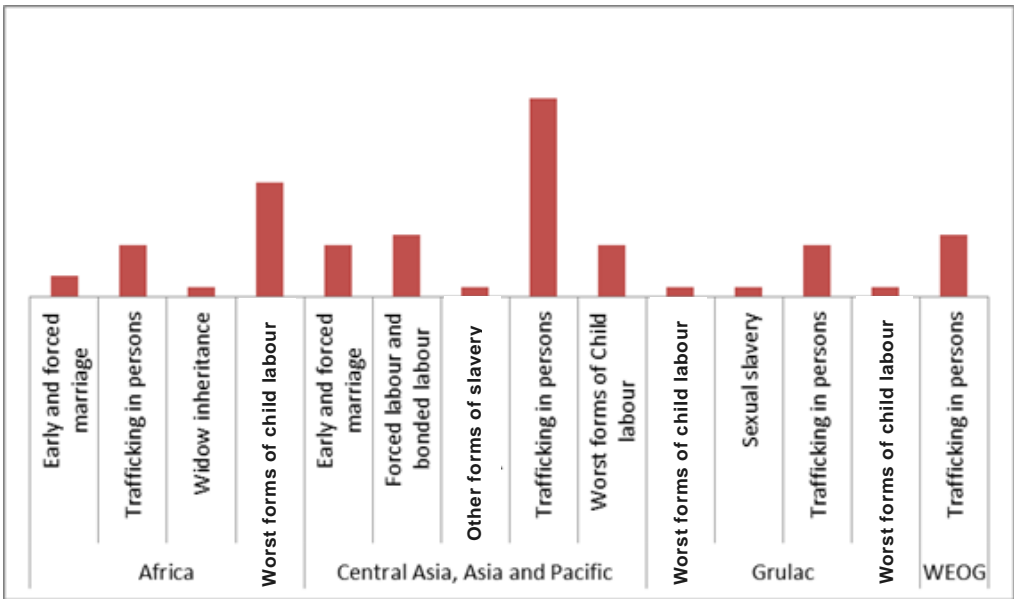


Figure II
Breakdown of contemporary forms of slavery by region



B. Policy decisions

21. The Board of Trustees recommended that projects be selected based on the quality of the project, geographical distribution, type of assistance provided and gender balance. It reiterated the need to prioritize projects in accordance with a strategy that addresses the root cause of the problem, combined with direct assistance and income-generating activities that assist the victims of contemporary forms of slavery.

22. The Board of Trustees endorsed maintaining a one-year funding policy. Subject to funding availability, organizations can receive funding for up to five consecutive years, after which a break of at least one year is required. Of the 55 project grants approved at the seventeenth session, 23 were approved for organizations that had previously received funding.

23. Within the context of the joint secretariat and subject to the availability of funding, it is expected that United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery and the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture will each finance a fellowship in 2014.

C. Cooperation and developments in the United Nations system concerning relevant mandates

24. At its seventeenth session, the Board of Trustees held a dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences, Gulnara Shahnian. The Special Rapporteur updated the Board on developments relating to her mandate, including the challenges faced and

advancements made during her missions to several countries. The Special Rapporteur and the Board reaffirmed their commitment to collaborating with each other regarding the dissemination of information and support for country missions.

25. Pursuant to the commitment to cooperate with the Special Rapporteur, the Board supplied information on projects providing assistance to victims of contemporary forms of slavery in countries visited by the Special Rapporteur while maintaining the necessary level of confidentiality. Information was also provided on organizations that continued to or had previously received support from the Fund in the respective States.

26. The Board of Trustees further contributed to the work of the Special Rapporteur by providing input for her final thematic report on challenges and lessons learned in combating contemporary forms of slavery, which is to be presented at the twenty-fourth session of the Human Rights Council.

V. International Day for the Abolition of Slavery and twentieth anniversary of the Fund

27. In a statement issued on 2 December 2012 to commemorate the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, the Board of Trustees said that slavery persisted in all regions of the world and had acquired new and complex forms. The Board referred to a recent study by the International Labour Organization, which indicated that each year nearly 21 million women, children and men were forced into bonded labour, held as slaves for ritual or religious purposes or trafficked within their countries or across borders, often to be sold into prostitution. Children accounted for more than a quarter of the victims. Such lucrative trafficking in human beings yielded about \$32 billion to traffickers every year. In its statement, the Board of Trustees described slavery as a complex and global phenomenon and stated that its elimination required addressing the root causes, including poverty, class polarization, racial discrimination, gender inequalities, exclusion and/or illiteracy. It quoted the Secretary-General of the United Nations as saying that everyone had a role to play in the global fight against slavery. While Governments bore the primary responsibility for eradicating contemporary forms of slavery, it was also vital that business actors ensured that slavery practices did not occur in their workplace and supply chains.

28. The Board indicated in its statement that, within a week, it would be holding its annual meeting to allocate small grants to organizations, including grass-roots groups in remote areas, which assist victims of contemporary forms of slavery. The Board of Trustees stated that the Fund had been established by the General Assembly in 1991 and was administered by the Secretary-General through the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner; it was a unique victim-oriented and cost-effective mechanism striving to achieve concrete impact on the ground. Over the past 21 years, the Fund had supported over 460 projects in 95 countries to assist tens of thousands of victims, helping them to break free and recover their lives. The projects included the establishment of rescue centres for children and women victims of forced marriages, vocational training for forced and bonded labourers, and family reunification and re-integration support for victims of trafficking.

29. The Board of Trustees concluded its statement by expressing that, while it was grateful for the financial contributions already received, additional financial support was needed to respond to increasing requests for assistance, echoing the appeal of the Secretary-General to States and private donors to contribute further to the Fund.

VI. How to contribute to the Fund

30. The Fund depends on contributions from Governments, non-governmental organizations and other private or public entities. Donors should indicate “For the Slavery Fund, account SH” on a payment order. For information on how to contribute, donors are requested to contact the secretariat of the Fund at: Secretariat of the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations, CH 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland; E-mail: slaveryfund@ohchr.org; Telephone: 41 22 917 9376; Fax: 41 22 917 9017.

VII. Conclusions and recommendations

31. **Owing to the continuing funding constraints, the Board of Trustees, at its seventeenth session, was able to recommend only 55 grants amounting to \$ 607,500. The Board is concerned that the Fund is currently working with the very minimum level of required resources to fulfil its mandate and estimates that the Fund would need at least \$1.5 million before its eighteenth session, to be held from 18 to 22 November 2013, in order to meet the demand in a satisfactory manner.**

32. **Donors and potential donors are encouraged to increase their support to the Fund so that it can expand its crucial assistance to victims of slavery and are invited to contribute to the Fund before November 2013 in order for the contributions to be duly recorded by the United Nations Treasurer in advance of the eighteenth session of the Board of Trustees.**
