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## Seventy-fifth session

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### Programme budget for 2020

## United Nations Office for Partnerships

### Report of the Secretary-General

#### *Summary*

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly decisions 52/466 and 53/475, in which the Secretary-General was requested to inform the Assembly, on a regular basis, about the activities of the United Nations Office for Partnerships. It supplements the information contained in the previous reports of the Secretary-General (most recently, [A/74/266](#)).

The Office serves as a global gateway for public-private partnerships to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It oversees the areas set out below.

The United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP) was established in 1998 to serve as the interface between the United Nations Foundation and the United Nations system. At the end of 2019, the cumulative allocations as approved by the Foundation for UNFIP projects to be implemented by the United Nations system had reached approximately \$1.47 billion. Of this amount, it is estimated that \$0.45 billion (about 30 per cent) represents core funds contributed by Ted Turner and \$1.02 billion (about 70 per cent) was generated as co-financing from other partners. By the end of 2019, the total number of United Nations projects and programmes supported by the United Nations Foundation through UNFIP stood at 667, implemented by 48 United Nations system entities in 128 countries.

The United Nations Democracy Fund was established by the Secretary-General in July 2005 to support democratization around the world. It focuses on strengthening the voice of civil society, promoting human rights and ensuring the participation of all groups in democratic processes. Through the Fund, the Office has channelled some \$178 million to more than 830 projects in over 130 countries that range from strengthening civil society leadership skills and promoting the participation of women and young people to media programmes that enable civil society to project its voice. The Fund's projects have a strong, inbuilt capacity to adapt and pivot to addressing crises such as the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

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\* [A/75/150](#).



As described in the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution [71/243](#) on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, 2019 ([A/74/73-E/2019/14](#)), the Office serves as the global gateway for partnerships and provides a platform for effective partner engagement of public and private sector stakeholders with the United Nations development system.

To support advocacy and engagement related to the Sustainable Development Goals, the Office hosts two initiatives: the Secretary-General's Sustainable Development Goals Advocates and the Sustainable Development Goals Strategy Hub. The pandemic has underscored the importance of enhanced global collaboration and effective partnerships among all sectors and stakeholders, while building back better together. To accelerate coordination of the United Nations partnership ecosystem and help to mobilize all stakeholders to advance the global response to COVID-19 and the recovery from its impact, the Office has strengthened its collaboration with the Development Coordination Office, the United Nations Global Compact and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

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## I. The United Nations Fund for International Partnerships

1. The United Nations Office for Partnerships was established in 2006. It traces its origin to the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP), which was established as an autonomous trust fund on 1 March 1998 by the Secretary-General pursuant to the agreement between the United Nations and the United Nations Foundation. The purpose of the Fund is to serve as the principal interface between the United Nations system and the United Nations Foundation. The United Nations Foundation was established on 2 February 1998 by Ted Turner as a public charity in the United States of America to channel \$1 billion to United Nations causes in support of priorities, capacities, and high-impact projects. The work of UNFIP is overseen by the UNFIP Advisory Board, which is chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General and provides the Secretary-General with advice pertaining to the relationship between the United Nations and the United Nations Foundation.

2. As at 31 December 2019, the cumulative allocations approved by the Foundation for UNFIP projects totalled approximately \$1.47 billion, of which \$0.45 billion (about 30 per cent) represents core funds from Mr. Turner and \$1.02 billion (about 70 per cent) represents co-financing from other partners. Since the Foundation's inception, 667 projects have been implemented or are under implementation by 48 United Nations entities in 128 countries. In 2019, the Foundation disbursed funding for projects totalling \$9.6 million, the majority (\$3.5 million) focused on global health. The Foundation also provides other forms of support, in particular in the areas of advocacy and communications, to build momentum and advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to strengthen support for the United Nations role and work. Major projects and initiatives supported by the Foundation through UNFIP are highlighted in the present report.

3. The Relationship Agreement between the United Nations and the United Nations Foundation, concluded in 1998, has been renewed twice, most recently in 2014 for an additional 10-year period under a revised and restated agreement (see [A/70/202](#)). The Joint Coordination Committee, established under the 2014 Agreement, is the principal forum to ensure strong and timely communication and coordination between the United Nations and the Foundation. The Committee meets twice a year.

### Support for innovative partnerships, campaigns and initiatives

4. The Foundation closely collaborates with the United Nations to foster innovative partnerships, campaigns and initiatives that support United Nations priorities, strengthen United Nations capacities, and, in particular, contribute to the advancement of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The work of the Foundation is overseen by its international Board of Directors.

5. The Foundation relies on the following range of tools to support the United Nations:

(a) **Convening.** The Foundation collaborates with various United Nations entities to bring stakeholders together and foster dialogue on a range of issues, including in the lead-up to milestone events, such as the Global Goals Week during the opening of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development and the high-level political forum on sustainable development;

(b) **Championing.** The Foundation champions the work of the United Nations through advocacy initiatives, both globally and in the United States of America, that connect citizens to the United Nations, while also helping to foster a common understanding of the mission and values of the United Nations and ensuring strong and sustained support by the Government of the United States for the United Nations;

(c) **Communicating.** The Foundation utilizes a diverse set of communication tools to build public support for the United Nations, give wider visibility to and improve the understanding of issues high on the Organization's agenda, reach new constituencies and galvanize action. This work is carried out in close collaboration with the United Nations Department of Global Communications and other communications experts from the United Nations system;

(d) **Collaborating.** The Foundation is an institutional home for several multi-stakeholder initiatives complementing United Nations efforts in support of the Sustainable Development Goals, including the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, Family Planning 2020, the Clean Cooking Alliance, Data2X and the Digital Impact Alliance;

(e) **Channelling.** The Foundation continues to work with a wide range of stakeholders to mobilize and channel financial resources to the United Nations system through UNFIP.

6. The present report is organized by programmatic area, with all activities designed to contribute in different ways to supporting United Nations leadership, accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and climate action and building new and diverse constituencies to support the Organization's work, both globally and in the United States.

## A. Global health

7. Since its inception, the Foundation has worked in close collaboration with UNFIP, the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other United Nations entities to advance global health priorities, with a particular emphasis on the elimination of preventable diseases that affect children. While the following sections highlight the Foundation's global health grant-making through UNFIP in 2019, the Foundation also works with WHO and other United Nations partners on wider global health advocacy and partner mobilization efforts.

### **Coronavirus disease pandemic response**

8. In 2020, the Foundation mobilized against the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which was unexpected global crisis. At the request of WHO, the Foundation efforts were primarily directed at establishing a fund with WHO and other partners to accept unrestricted financial support for the WHO global public health response. In mid-March, the Foundation established the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund in partnership with the Swiss Philanthropy Foundation to mobilize support for the WHO frontline public health response from non-traditional donors. The mechanism allows companies, philanthropic organizations and individuals, to contribute to the essential work done by WHO and its key partners to prevent, detect and respond to outbreaks of COVID-19. Funds received are allocated to the WHO strategic preparedness and response plan and are disbursed at the discretion of WHO. The Foundation reports regularly on partners and the allocation of funds to UNFIP, directly to partners and on its website.

**Measles and rubella**

9. Established in 2001, the Measles and Rubella Initiative is a global partnership to reduce measles deaths and the number of children born with congenital rubella syndrome. It started as a joint initiative of WHO, UNICEF, the American Red Cross, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the United Nations Foundation and now also works closely with the Gavi Alliance. Its aim is to advance the Global Measles and Rubella Strategic Plan 2012–2020 by helping countries to increase vaccination coverage for measles, rubella and other preventable diseases; fund, plan, implement and monitor high-quality supplementary campaigns; strengthen routine immunization efforts; investigate outbreaks; and provide technical and financial support for effective disease surveillance and outbreak response.

10. The role of the Foundation in connection with the Measles and Rubella Initiative has been to support advocacy and the mobilization of resources and provide fiduciary services for the Initiative. In its 19 years of operation, an amount of \$690,697,188 has been channelled to United Nations partners in connection with the Initiative.

11. In addition, the Foundation engages civil society, policymakers and partners through its Shot@Life campaign to support the broader agenda of reducing the number of preventable childhood deaths by vaccination and to raise additional resources for UNICEF and WHO. The campaign is also leveraged to educate, connect with and empower key constituencies in the United States to champion the global health work of the United Nations and advocate for sustained funding.

12. In 2019, the Foundation, through its Shot@Life campaign partnered with Walgreens-Boots Alliance, a leading pharmacy company, to raise awareness and help to provide vaccines for children in developing countries through the company's "Get a shot. Give a shot" campaign. For every vaccine administered in the United States at a Walgreens pharmacy, an amount equivalent to the price of one vaccine is donated to the Shot@Life campaign, helping to provide more than 50 million life-saving polio and measles vaccines since the campaign's inception in 2013.

13. Overall, in the period 2008–2018, the Measles and Rubella Initiative is estimated to have helped to save over 23 million lives and contributed to a reduction in the annual number of measles deaths worldwide by an estimated 73 per cent. The Efforts to support routine vaccination and supplemental immunization under the Initiative have resulted in the vaccination of 2.9 billion children in 88 countries and helped to raise measles vaccination coverage to 85 per cent globally. However, the number of cases have surged again in recent years.

14. In 2019, the Foundation provided a grant of \$1,757,737 to WHO and UNICEF through UNFIP in support of the latest phase of the Initiative to implement the Global Measles and Rubella Strategic Plan 2012–2020. The grant was aimed at allowing the six WHO regional offices to undertake high-quality supplementary measles immunization activities, strengthen immunization systems and implement case-based measles surveillance systems.

**Poliomyelitis**

15. The Global Polio Eradication Initiative is a public-private partnership led by five core partners: WHO, UNICEF, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Rotary International and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The Foundation has been a long-standing supporter of the Initiative through advocacy, communications and public outreach in the United States and around the world, and by giving grants to United Nations partners. At the time of initiative's inception, in 1988, polio was endemic in more than 125 countries and paralysed 350,000 children every year. Since then, the Initiative has overseen a 99 per cent reduction in annual cases of wild

poliovirus. Until the transmission of wild poliovirus is interrupted, all countries remain at risk of importing polio, especially those with weak public health and immunization services and travel or trade links to countries where polio is endemic.

16. In 2019, the Foundation provided a grant of \$405,000 to WHO through UNFIP to enhance the capacity of the Initiative. In addition, the Foundation provided a grant of \$1,640,000 to UNICEF through UNFIP to support polio eradication initiatives in Pakistan. The funds covered the procurement and delivery of oral polio vaccines for the supplementary immunization campaign.

17. In addition to grant-making, the Foundation continues to provide targeted support to advance elements of the Initiative's high-level advocacy goals, and resource mobilization and communications strategies to ensure that the Initiative's partners have the tools they need to interrupt wild poliovirus transmission. The Foundation leverages its Shot@Life campaign to educate and empower grass-roots advocates in the United States to champion vaccines and government funding for polio eradication initiatives.

### **Malaria**

18. Over the past 15 years, the Foundation, through its Nothing But Nets campaign, has worked with the United Nations and other partners to facilitate the distribution of insecticide-treated bednets and combat the spread of malaria. Nothing But Nets lets individuals join the fight against malaria by making a donation and engaging in advocacy with policymakers of increased United States investment in malaria interventions. Nothing But Nets works primarily with UNICEF, UNHCR and the Pan American Health Organization to support the malaria programmes of those organizations among refugees, internally displaced people, people living in conflict settings and people affected by natural disasters in Africa and the Americas. The resources raised are used to support a range of malaria prevention and treatment solutions.

19. In 2019, under the Nothing But Nets campaign, the Foundation provided a grant of \$161,500 to UNHCR through UNFIP to enable the continuation of malaria prevention and treatment activities for refugees and displaced persons in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other countries in the region and to support the UNHCR stockpile fund for long-lasting insecticidal nets. The project helps to protect and reduce the incidence and impact of malaria on refugees and displaced persons through malaria case management with the help of, among other things, rapid diagnostic tests and treatment courses, and preventive treatment. As part of the project, 187,000 preventive doses were distributed through seven clinics in four refugee camps.

## **B. Women, girls and population**

20. The Foundation has prioritized the rights and dignity of girls and women since its inception, working closely with a range of United Nations partners, including the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), UNICEF, UNHCR, the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and the Spotlight Initiative, with a dedicated focus on advancing progress towards Goal 5. The Foundation has provided targeted support through grant-making, communications and advocacy capacity, convening, and partnership building. The Foundation's grant-making through UNFIP in 2019 is summarized below. In addition, the Foundation works with United Nations partners on wider advocacy and partner mobilization efforts to advance the rights of girls and women.

**Adolescent girls**

21. Since 2010, the Foundation, through its Girl Up campaign, has partnered with the United Nations to fund programmes that give adolescent girls access to education, health services, social and economic opportunities and a life free from violence. The campaign's leadership development programmes have had an impact on the lives of more than 65,000 girls through 3,500 clubs in 120 countries. Its model for creating leaders is rooted in a transformative experience for girls that builds their confidence and is focused on action.

22. In 2019, through the fundraising efforts of Girl Up partners and girls, the Foundation provided two grants to the United Nations through UNFIP, including a grant of \$200,000 to support the UNHCR Educate a Child initiative, which is aimed at providing access to quality primary education for out-of-school refugee children in Uganda. The Foundation also provided a grant of \$50,000 to UNICEF through UNFIP to support local communities in Liberia in promoting the rights of adolescent girls and addressing issues such as teenage pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, and sexual and gender-based violence.

**Family planning**

23. The Foundation's Universal Access Project for Women, Families and Communities brings donors and partners together to advocate for, protect and strengthen United States funding to advance global sexual and reproductive health and rights. Through the Universal Access Project, in partnership with Merck for Mothers, the Foundation provided a grant of \$227,500 to UNFPA for a programme in the Philippines known as the "Expanded business action for women's health programme", the objectives of which were to develop implementation models that support private sector companies in giving their employees accurate family planning information and ensuring that employees have better access to family planning commodities.

24. Family Planning 2020 is a global partnership that was launched in 2012 and works together with Governments, civil society, multilateral organizations, the private sector and the research and development community to advance rights-based family planning in the world's poorest countries. In 2019, the Foundation provided a grant of \$226,946 to UNFPA through UNFIP to make family planning in Myanmar more available and accessible to women in mobile and hard-to-reach population groups.

**C. Climate, energy and the environment**

25. Since its inception, the Foundation has worked closely with the United Nations to advance towards a life-sustaining climate and a healthy planet. In 2019, the Foundation focused its efforts on accelerating progress towards the implementation of the Paris Agreement, including by helping to support the 2019 Climate Action Summit and providing strategic communications support to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The Foundation also continued to support the work of Sustainable Energy for All, an initiative launched by the Secretary-General in 2011 that has since become an independent international organization. It serves as a primary platform for furthering Goal 7 and is led by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sustainable Energy for All.

### **2019 Climate Action Summit**

26. In the lead-up to the 2019 Climate Action Summit, the Secretary-General called for a range of transformational climate actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including setting more ambitious national climate targets, ending fossil subsidies and pricing carbon. The Summit resulted in a range of new announcements and pledges, including commitments by countries and subnational actors to cutting greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2050. The Foundation worked closely with the climate team of the Secretary-General and served on the advisory committee for the Summit. In that capacity it provided strategic planning support and issue expertise, helped to build and execute a communications strategy and designed and hosted briefings with key stakeholders. The Foundation also provided strategic planning and communications support for the Youth Climate Summit.

### **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change**

27. The Foundation has been deeply invested in a partnership with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change for more than a decade. In 2019, it continued to partner closely with the secretariat of the Panel on communications and outreach around three major special reports: *Global Warming of 1.5°C* (released in 2018), *Climate Change and Land* (released in August 2019), and *Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate* (released in September 2019). All three reports received broad attention and acted as critical amplifiers of climate science in the lead-up to and during the 2019 Climate Action Summit.

### **Sustainable electrification of health-care facilities**

28. In 2013, at the request of the leadership of Sustainable Energy for All, the Foundation launched an initiative to promote clean energy solutions for health facilities in developing countries to improve the availability and quality of health-care services for, in particular, women and children. The Foundation, WHO and the Governments of Ghana and Uganda initiated a pilot project aimed at using innovative solar photovoltaic technology to bring power to 62 under-electrified primary health-care facilities in both countries. As a key partner of the project, WHO carried out an independent study to determine the impact of the improved access to power on the quality of health-care services. The Foundation, with the aid of the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, provided a grant of \$500,000 to WHO through UNFIP covering the period 2016–2019 to support the study. By the end of 2019, the work was transferred to Sustainable Energy for All.

## **D. Advocacy and communications**

29. In 2019, the Foundation continued to deploy, test, and develop a range of innovative advocacy and communications tools to build diverse and robust constituencies for the Goals, climate action, and broader United Nations leadership, both globally and within the United States, working in close collaboration with the Department of Global Communications and other United Nations system entities.

30. The Foundation is a core member of the Sustainable Development Goals Strategy Hub and is a founding partner – along with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Project Everyone – of the Global Goals Week, a collective effort that was undertaken to maximize the impact of events and convenings during the opening of the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly to drive progress towards attaining the Goals. In September 2019, the Foundation gave communications support, including by helping to develop an overarching narrative

for the high-level moments during the Week, amplifying messaging for the launch of the decade of action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals and crafting a social media and digital engagement strategy for the Youth Climate Summit.

## **E. Capacity development**

31. The Foundation provides catalytic support for United Nations leadership initiatives and priorities that can have a transformative impact. In 2019, the Foundation provided direct and indirect capacity-building support to the United Nations to help the Organization to advance several timely initiatives, including in relation to the reform of the United Nations development system and the Organization's seventy-fifth anniversary.

### **High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation**

32. In July 2017, the Secretary-General established the High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation to advance proposals aimed at strengthening international cooperation among all relevant stakeholders in the area of digital technology. The purpose of the Panel's work is to realize the transformational potential of digital technologies so as to contribute to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda while safeguarding against risks and unintended consequences. In 2019, the Foundation, along with the Bosch Foundation, provided a grant of \$209,510 to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General through UNFIP to support the Panel in its work. The Foundation also provided advisory, communications and convening support to inform the work of the Panel and to publicize its report and recommendations.

### **Review of multi-country offices**

33. In 2019, the Foundation supported the reform of the United Nations development system by providing a grant of \$425,000 to the United Nations Secretariat through UNFIP aimed at facilitating the review of multi-country offices and examine their effectiveness, efficiency and impact. The project helped to strengthen the work of the United Nations development system to accelerate country progress towards realizing the 2030 Agenda.

### **Mainstreaming and scaling innovation in the United Nations system**

34. The Foundation provided a grant of \$100,000 to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs through UNFIP to support a project managed by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination aimed at accelerating institutional innovation among United Nations system organizations and interested Member States and operationalize actions aimed at promoting and scaling innovation so as to better support progress towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. One of the outputs was the interactive online United Nations innovation toolkit, which included five modules: strategy, partnerships, architecture, culture and evaluation. The Foundation also leveraged its network of private sector and non-profit partners to provide guidance on best practices for strategic communications to the secretariat of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination.

### **Seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations and beyond: forward-looking, people-driven dialogues in 2020**

35. In 2020, to mark its seventy-fifth anniversary, the United Nations launched a series of dialogues on ways to build a partnership aimed at realizing the shared aspirations for a just, peaceful and sustainable future. In 2019, the Foundation had provided a grant of \$770,498 through UNFIP to the Special Adviser on Preparations

for the Commemoration of the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the United Nations. The Foundation also provided strategic planning, communications and convening capacity to support the work of the Special Advisor.

## **F. Fiduciary agreements**

36. Several United Nations entities have requested the assistance of the Foundation as a fiduciary or fiscal agent to receive and disburse contributions from corporations and private individuals in support of their specific campaigns and programmes. In 2019, the Foundation provided, through UNFIP, a total of \$1,551,461 in funding to United Nations system entities through fiduciary channels. A grant of \$1,213,068 was provided to the voluntary trust fund for assistance in mine action at the Mine Action Service. The second fiduciary grant, in the amount of \$294,315, was provided to the Central Emergency Response Fund of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to enable more timely and reliable humanitarian assistance to victims of natural disasters and armed conflicts.

## **G. Multi-stakeholder alliances**

37. The Foundation serves as an incubator and institutional host for a small number of multi-stakeholder initiatives that accelerate progress on the Goals. Those include:

### **Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data**

38. The Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data is a worldwide network set up to ensure that the new opportunities offered by the data revolution are used to achieve the Goals. The Partnership has a growing network that currently stands at 250 partners. It is committed to ensuring access to data needed to implement the 2030 Agenda. Since 2015, the Foundation has served as the institutional home of the secretariat of the Partnership. The Deputy Secretary-General is the honorary Chair of the Partnership's Board of Directors.

### **Data2X**

39. An initiative of the Foundation, Data2X is a collaborative technical and advocacy platform working through partnerships to improve the quality, availability and use of gender data with a view to making a practical difference in the lives of women and girls worldwide. It receives support from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and works with United Nations agencies, Governments, civil society, academics and the private sector to close gender data gaps. In 2019, through Data2X, the Foundation provided a grant of \$350,018 through UNFIP to the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to support the modernization of the collection and use of time-use data.

40. In addition, through Data2X, the Foundation provided a supplemental grant of \$300,000 through UNFIP to the International Labour Organization for a project on statistics about women's work, employment and time-use that is aimed at ensuring a more consistent application of newly agreed standards in household surveys.

### **Clean Cooking Alliance**

41. The Clean Cooking Alliance works with a global network of partners to build an inclusive industry aimed at making clean cooking accessible to the 3 billion people who live each day without access to clean cooking solutions. Launched in 2010, the

Alliance works in close collaboration with WHO, UNDP, the United Nations Environment Programme, UNHCR, UN-Women, the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and other United Nations system entities to promote universal access to clean cooking solutions, which improve health outcomes, protect the climate and the environment, empower women and help consumers to save time and resources. In 2019, the Foundation provided a grant of \$215,440 to WHO through UNFIP to reduce exposure to household air pollution in urban Nepal and thereby maximize the health benefits of clean cooking by promoting smoke-free kitchen communities.

## **II. United Nations Democracy Fund**

42. The United Nations Democracy Fund was established during the 2005 World Summit as a United Nations general trust fund and launched in April 2006. Since then, the grant-making body has become clearly defined as a fund for civil society organizations. The large majority of project funds go to local civil society organizations in countries in both the transition and consolidation phases of democratization. By supporting the “demand” rather than the “supply” side of democratization, the Fund plays a distinct and unique role in complementing and enhancing the more traditional work of the United Nations – the work with Governments – to strengthen democratic governance around the world.

43. The Fund works on the forefront of protecting and promoting civic space amid increasing measures in countries around the world to shrink or close that space. As the COVID-19 crisis has brought further constraints, the Fund’s support for civic space has become even more relevant. The crisis also opens a window for civil society to explore new modalities of practicing democracy, for example by filling in gaps in public services, providing essential services, disseminating information about the coronavirus, protecting marginalized groups, partnering with businesses and public authorities to support local communities for economic and social relief and forming alliances to hold Governments to account. The Fund is able to support civil society on all these fronts thanks to the judicious generation, design, management and monitoring of projects.

44. Through its projects, the Fund has a strong, inbuilt capacity to adapt and pivot to addressing crises, in particular the pandemic. It does so by developing media literacy and digital safety, which are as critical as ever as democratic participation is forced to go online; fighting misinformation, disinformation and hate speech, which have mushroomed in the crisis; training journalists remotely to report on the impact of the pandemic with in-depth, fact-checked coverage while staying safe on the front line; empowering women against gender-based violence, which has surged amid lockdowns, quarantines, and social and economic pressures; and addressing the challenges of inequality and weak service delivery made worse by the pandemic, with a specific focus on the rights and needs of women, young people, minorities and other marginalized populations. The aim is to help to hold Governments to account.

45. In the years since its creation, the Fund has experienced considerable growth in its portfolio, donor base, impact and visibility. The aim of its projects is to strengthen the voice of civil society, promote human rights and encourage the participation of all groups in democratic processes. In its first 13 rounds of funding, the Fund supported over 830 projects in more than 130 countries, with a total disbursement of some \$178 million. The projects ranged from supporting civil society efforts for accountability and transparency to building capacity for strengthening good governance and the rule of law.

## **A. Thirteenth round of funding**

46. The call for project proposals for the thirteenth round of funding was open from 15 December 2018 to 15 January 2019. The Fund received 2,307 project proposals from civil society, which reflected the continued high demand for support from the Fund to finance projects that strengthen the voice of civil society, promote human rights and encourage the participation of all groups in democratic processes. The proposals originated from organizations in 141 countries, the vast majority of them local non-governmental organizations in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean.

47. The response added to the considerable growth that the Fund has experienced since its creation in 2005, with initiatives that reflect a focus on strengthening the voice of civil society, thereby increasing concentration on the demand side of democracy, rather than on the supply side.

48. In the thirteenth round, 49 projects were funded at a total cost of \$10,131,000. As defined by their key activities, the projects are disaggregated as follows:

- (a) Rule of law and human rights (23 per cent);
- (b) Empowerment of women (21 per cent);
- (c) Youth engagement (15 per cent);
- (d) Strengthening civil society interaction with Governments (14 per cent);
- (e) Community activism (11 per cent);
- (f) Electoral processes (11 per cent);
- (g) Media and freedom of information (3 per cent);
- (h) Tools for knowledge (2 per cent).

## **B. Donor base**

49. The cumulative total amount of contributions received from 2005 to 2019 exceeded \$203 million.

## **C. Governance**

50. The two governing mechanisms of the Fund, the Advisory Board and the Programme Consultative Group, continued to play an active and guiding role during 2019. The Advisory Board provided policy guidance for the development of programme frameworks and funding guidelines, considered proposals for funding and recommended funding proposals for approval by the Secretary-General. The Board comprises those Member States that have made the seven largest cumulative financial contributions to the Fund over the previous three years; six Member States reflecting geographical diversity; two international civil society organizations; and three individuals serving in a personal capacity.

51. United Nations resident coordinators and country teams provided crucial input to inform the selection of projects and supported the monitoring of their implementation. The Programme Consultative Group was also invited to provide input for the selection process, given the specific expertise of each of its members, in particular the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the Department of Peace Operations, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNDP, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and UN-Women.

## **D. Fourteenth round of funding**

52. In November 2019, the Fund agreed with its Advisory Board to make media and freedom of information a priority theme for its fourteenth round of funding. The theme covered a range of topics, such as promoting citizen journalism, including in conflict and post-conflict settings; training journalists in legal know-how and personal safety and security, both physical and online; building peer support networks for freelance journalists; developing investigative journalism skills; understanding and advancing legislation for access to information; combating hate speech; developing public media literacy with a focus on learning to digest material critically and to evaluate sources, both online and in other media. These topics all acquired critical importance with the onset of the COVID-19 crisis three months later.

53. The Fund launched its fourteenth round of calls for project proposals on 22 November 2019. When applications closed, on 6 January 2020, the Fund had received 2,551 proposals, the vast majority of applications from local or regional civil society organizations in Africa, Asia, the Americas, the Arab region and Eastern Europe. In accordance with the annual timetable adhered to by the Fund, the applications had been assessed by March 2020 and the Advisory Board recommended a shortlist in May, after which the Fund advised the permanent missions of those Member States in which listed projects were to be implemented. The shortlist was then submitted to the Secretary-General for approval. Shortlisted applicants were asked to submit draft project documents by the middle of 2020 to be negotiated with the Fund. The first tranches of project funding are to be disbursed as from September, once again in a timeline that compares favourably with international standards.

## **E. Democracy in action**

54. Examples of the Fund's many projects that were adapted swiftly to address the impact of the COVID-19 crisis are set out below.

### **Developing media in the Gambia**

55. The project is aimed at promoting an enabling environment for free and responsible journalism, including in response to the COVID-19 crisis. It includes remote training for journalists on providing in-depth, fact-checked coverage of the crisis and its impact while staying safe on the front line. Other aims are to help to establish a self-regulating body for media; equip media personnel with skills to enhance their professionalism; create platforms for dialogue between media and government; and strengthen the relations of the media with civil society and the private sector.

### **Empowering youth for cohesion in Lebanon**

56. The project is aimed at promoting the participation of young people in public life without discrimination and to increase social cohesion and democratic practices, breaking free of mindsets shaped by the civil war. It works through equipping youth from all communities, including Syrian refugees, with skills to create forums in which they can make their voices heard. It also creates standing mechanisms aimed at ensuring the sustainability of initiatives undertaken by young people and building bridges to overcome sociopolitical, religious and ethnic division. The project is well placed to support vulnerable young people amid the pressures and challenges of the COVID-19 crisis.

### **Promoting the public's right to know in Moldova**

57. The project's aim is to ensure that full use is made of the legal framework on freedom of information and engage underrepresented groups in claiming their right to access to information in a crisis. Activities include strategic litigation, work regarding judicial practice, advocacy campaigns, training, study and the analysis of cases in which information of public interest is kept classified by means of cumbersome declassification procedures and obsolete provisions. The project has high relevance in a crisis, in particular the COVID-19 crisis, when access to information is crucial.

### **Young people against gender-based violence in Ecuador**

58. The project is aimed at engaging young leaders as civic activists against gender-based violence and for the promotion of peaceful and respectful attitudes towards women, especially given the surge of violence against women amid the COVID-19 crisis. Young men and women are trained to utilize tools such as murals, videos, TEDx talks, concerts and rallies for advocacy and outreach. The result becomes part of an awareness-raising campaign to reach at least 10,000 citizens in Quito, motivating positive new attitudes, engaging public and private stakeholders and designing a sustainability strategy and roadmap.

### **Participation of persons with disabilities in Afghanistan**

59. The project is aimed at improving the participation of persons with disabilities in democratic processes through awareness-raising and capacity-building. The project takes a participatory approach to develop coordinated efforts aimed at increasing political participation at the local level and raising awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities. Thanks to the project, persons with disabilities, including women, have been given support and protection amid the pressures of the COVID-19 crisis.

### **Young Chepang women leaders for gender-responsive Governance in Nepal**

60. The project is aimed at empowering young Chepang women leaders to mount a strong presence in local political processes and governance, including with regard to local budget planning and increasing by a third their representation in the next local elections. Other aims are to help municipalities in demonstrating gender-responsive local governance by adopting social accountability tools; create a local action platform for Chepang women leaders; and foster favourable attitudes among men as well as among media representatives towards increasing the participation of Chepang women in the political mainstream. The project is well-equipped to support indigenous women amid the pressures of the COVID-19 crisis.

## **III. Partnership advisory and outreach services**

61. Partnerships for sustainable development are multi-stakeholder initiatives that are voluntarily undertaken by Governments, intergovernmental organizations, major groups and other stakeholders. Efforts under the initiatives contribute to the achievement of intergovernmentally agreed development goals and commitments included in the 2030 Agenda. The scope and complexity of the transformations required to implement the 2030 Agenda are unprecedented, especially given the social and economic impact of the pandemic. To meet the universal pledge made in the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind, it is essential to leverage the vast potential of multi-stakeholder partnerships across and in all countries, both developed and developing.

62. Non-State actors, such as philanthropic organizations, companies, and non-governmental organizations, can contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in many ways. As advocates, they can support awareness-raising by integrating the Goals into their programming efforts. As impact drivers, they can catalyse change and generate impact through their investments, collective action and cross-Goal partnerships. As innovators, they can test and adopt innovative approaches, forge new coalitions and help de-risk investments. As described in the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, 2019 (A/74/73-E/2019/14), the United Nations Office for Partnerships serves as the global gateway for partnerships and provides a platform for effective partner engagement of public and private sector stakeholders with the United Nations development system.

63. In 2019, numerous companies, foundations and civil society organizations approached the Office to seek guidance regarding partnership opportunities and paths of engagement with the United Nations. The inquiries were mostly related to mapping specific collaborative opportunities and identifying relevant partners within the United Nations system with a view to advancing the Goals. To explore ways to support the Member States in fostering more inclusive and results-based country-level partnership platforms and to highlight innovative work of non-State actors committed to advancing the Goals, the Office, together with other United Nations entities, also convened several initiatives and events.

#### **A. Sustainable Development Goals advocacy and outreach**

64. Since 2018, the secretariat of the Sustainable Development Goals Advocates has been hosted by the United Nations Office for Partnerships. In 2019, the Advocates continued to be engaged with and act as vocal champions for the 2030 Agenda. They highlighted the need to accelerate action, raise ambitions and achieve the world we want by 2030, a task that has grown more urgent in the wake of the worldwide health, economic, and social crises resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Among the highlights of the engagement of the Advocates in 2019 was a video in which they called on Member States to be more ambitious about the decade of action to deliver the Goals, which was shown at the opening of the Sustainable Development Goals Summit. Other highlights included keynote speeches given at the Summit, the 2019 Climate Action Summit, the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development, the high-level meeting on universal health coverage, and the high-level mid-term review of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway.

65. The Sustainable Development Goals Advocates have been at the forefront of promoting the Goals and the Paris Agreement as the guiding platforms for when the world builds back better from the pandemic.

#### **B. Sustainable Development Goals Strategy Hub**

66. In September 2018, the Sustainable Development Goals Strategy Hub was revitalized and relocated from the Department of Global Communications to the United Nations Office for Partnerships. The Hub serves as a one-stop shop to proactively engage, convene and leverage stakeholders and existing initiatives in support of the Goals. Chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General, the Hub is guided by a core member group comprising United Nations and external entities. Since its inception, the Hub has played an integral role in raising public awareness around the Goals by helping to enhance, connect and align the efforts of various stakeholders.

67. During the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly, the Hub held multiple events in New York and online to foster global engagement with the Goals. The Hub also secured the donation of billboards to advocate for the Goals, including at Times Square in New York and on the LinkNYC digital publicity screens across the city. With support from other partners, the Hub held the inaugural event of the Sustainable Development Goals Action Zone initiative during the high-level week of the General Assembly, which served to promote and accelerate transformative action on the Goals by drawing on the expertise of diverse sectoral leaders and collaborating with them. The week-long programme included a range of events to encourage multilateral cooperation, shared learnings and novel partnerships among Member States and other stakeholders. The daily thematic focus mirrored the discussions of the high-level summits. Sessions were programmed to complement intergovernmental events and enable continued and deeper conversations in relevant areas. The programme consisted of 68 sessions with over 300 speakers, 16 exhibits and 18 virtual reality experiences.

68. The Hub was also actively involved during the conceptualization phase of the decade of action: it coordinated with United Nations entities and mobilized and engaged with various activists, civil society leaders, organizations and media outlets. A special Action Zone session was held to respond to the Secretary-General's call to action regarding the decade. Following the launch event, the Hub continued to work in close collaboration with various actors to raise ambitions, mobilize everyone everywhere, surface solutions for the decade and realize the Goals.

## C. Events

69. Selected key partnership events convened by the United Nations Office for Partnerships are listed below.

### **Partnership forum of the Economic and Social Council**

70. The partnership forum of the Economic and Social Council, which was co-organized by the Office, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Global Compact, was held at Headquarters on 11 April 2019 under the theme "Partnerships driving inclusive implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals". The objective was to showcase innovative multi-stakeholder partnerships and partnership platforms that were led by national Governments and were aimed at recommending ways to address existing gaps in efforts to attain the Goals and catalysing value additions by and ensuring the accountability of various stakeholders.

### **Partnerships for transformation: philanthropy and the Sustainable Development Goals**

71. On the occasion of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, the Office, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the SDG Philanthropy Platform, the European Foundation Centre, Synergos and the United Nations Foundation on 16 July 2019 jointly held a special event at Headquarters under the theme "Partnerships for transformation: philanthropy and the Sustainable Development Goals". The event brought together representatives of foundations, Governments, United Nations system entities and other stakeholders to discuss current models of philanthropic engagement to implement the 2030 Agenda and identify opportunities to scale up philanthropic leadership and transformational action to further accelerate progress towards the Goals.

## IV. Conclusions

72. Mr. Turner's unprecedented philanthropic contribution through the United Nations Foundation and UNFIP has contributed significantly to an increased mobilization of resources and multi-stakeholder partnerships in support of the Sustainable Development Goals. To address the current unprecedented global health crisis, the Foundation has leveraged its expertise and network to mobilize support from non-traditional donors for the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund led by WHO.

73. The United Nations Democracy Fund has proved to be an innovative and effective initiative. By focusing on the demand side of democracy and supporting civil society, it has successfully complemented the work of many United Nations system entities that concentrate on the supply side, the side of democratic institutions. COVID-19 further underlines the relevance of the Fund's support for civil society in response to undue restrictions on the civic space. The United Nations Office for Partnerships, as the designated global gateway for partnerships for the Goals, engaged and brought together United Nations-system actors, Member States, private sector actors, civil society actors, and philanthropic actors to identify opportunities for partnerships to drive efforts to attain the Goals. Achieving the level and quality of partnerships required to achieve the Goals requires a significant and targeted effort to create an enabling environment for partnering, in particular the institutional capacities, the convening and supporting infrastructure and the policy environment that, taken together, can support mainstream collaboration.

74. Building on existing partnership efforts, the United Nations is uniquely placed to offer the platforms needed for all actors to come together, build relationships and mobilize their respective assets to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 crisis and use the Goals as the framework for recovery. COVID-19 has accelerated the Office's ability to collaborate and coordinate with the Development Coordination Office, the Department of Global Communications and other partners across the United Nations system to help to mobilize all stakeholders to advance the global response to COVID-19 and recovery from its impact.

75. The scope and complexity of the transformations required for implementing the 2030 Agenda and building back better from COVID-19 are unparalleled. To honour the universal pledge made in the Agenda to leave no one behind, it is essential to leverage the vast potential of multi-stakeholder partnerships across and in all countries.

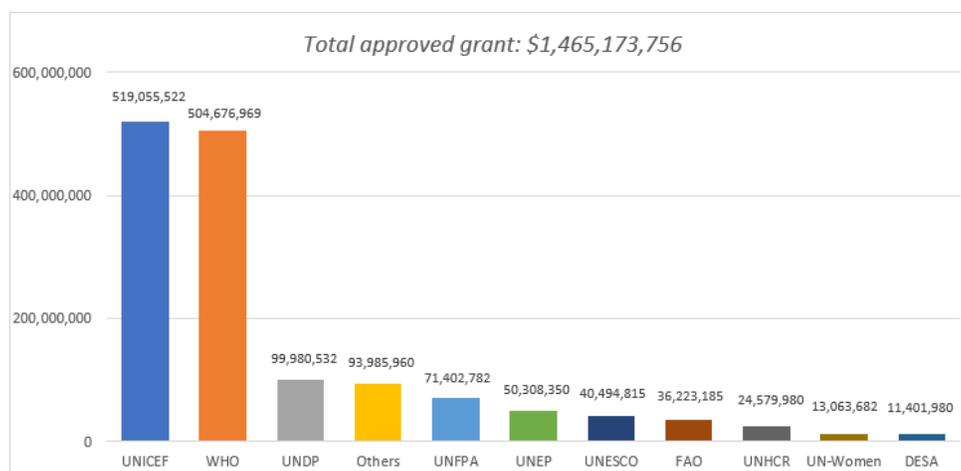
76. The Office's involvement and expected contribution to the decade of action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals is testimony to the depth of its coordinating role in the context of the United Nations partnership ecosystem. In 2020, the Office will continue and expand its work to proactively engage and convene stakeholders and leverage existing initiatives in support of reaching the Goals.

## Annex I

## United Nations Fund for International Partnerships: distribution of funds and projects

### A. Cumulative allocations approved by the United Nations Foundation, 1998–2019, distributed by implementing partners

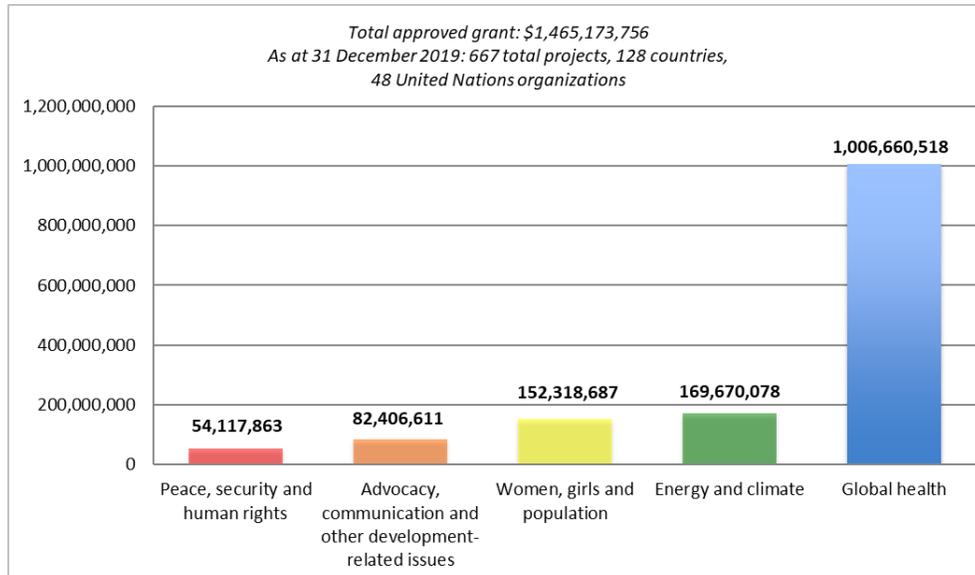
(United States dollars)



*Abbreviations:* DESA, Department of Economic and Social Affairs; FAO, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; UNDP, United Nations Development Programme; UNEP, United Nations Environment Programme; UNESCO, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; UNFPA, United Nations Population Fund; UNHCR, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; UNICEF, United Nations Children’s Fund; UN-Women, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women; WHO, World Health Organization.

## B. Thematic distribution of projects approved by the United Nations Foundation, 1998–2019

(United States dollars)



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**Annex II****Composition of the 2019 Advisory Board of the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships**

Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General (Chair)

Inga Rhonda King, President of the Economic and Social Council (until 24 July 2019)

Mona Juul, President of the Economic and Social Council (since 25 July 2019)

Jorge Skinner-Klée Arenales, Chair of the Second Committee of the General Assembly (until 16 September 2019)

Cheikh Niang, Chair of the Second Committee of the General Assembly (since 17 September 2019)

Liu Zhenmin, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs

Jan Beagle, Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance (until 31 August 2019)

Catherine Pollard, Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance (since 1 September 2019)

Luis A. Ubiñas, President of the Board of Trustees, Pan American Development Foundation

Robert Skinner (ex officio), Executive Director, United Nations Office for Partnerships

## Annex III

**Financial contributions to the United Nations Democracy Fund, by donor, as at 31 December 2019**

(United States dollars)

<i>Donor</i>	<i>Cumulative contribution received</i>
Algeria	100 000
Argentina	30 000
Australia	9 212 424
Bulgaria	10 000
Canada	746 380
Chile	390 000
Croatia	71 000
Cyprus	5 000
Czechia	245 223
Denmark	265 018
Ecuador	5 000
Estonia	10 395
France	4 793 716
Georgia	24 943
Germany	25 787 310
Hungary	75 000
India	32 112 543
Iraq	5 000
Ireland	658 724
Israel	57 500
Italy	2 947 800
Japan	10 180 000
Latvia	15 000
Libya	15 000
Lithuania	49 332
Madagascar	5 000
Malta	11 347
Mongolia	10 000
Morocco	5 000
Panama	41 580
Peru	100 676
Poland	1 134 619
Portugal	150 000
Qatar	10 000 000
Republic of Korea	1 300 000
Romania	472 860
Senegal	100 000
Slovakia	92 147

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<i>Donor</i>	<i>Cumulative contribution received</i>
Slovenia	127 924
Spain	5 043 311
Sri Lanka	5 000
Sweden	26 732 836
Turkey	290 000
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	683 653
United States of America	69 076 000
Other	127 230
<b>Total</b>	<b>203 318 720</b>

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## **Annex IV**

### **Composition of the Advisory Board of the United Nations Democracy Fund in 2019**

#### **Member States**

##### *Donors*

United States of America  
Sweden  
Germany  
Canada  
Poland  
India  
Algeria  
Republic of Korea

##### *Non-donors*

Botswana  
Dominican Republic  
Ecuador  
France  
Mongolia  
Tunisia

#### **Non-governmental organizations**

CIVICUS  
International Center for Not-for-Profit Law

#### **Individuals**

Aracelly Santana  
Patrizio Civili  
Wairimu Njoya

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