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## Seventy-sixth session

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### Programme budget for 2021

## United Nations Office for Partnerships

### Report of the Secretary-General

#### *Summary*

Responding to emerging and long-standing challenges requires inclusive and networked multilateral cooperation. At the core of effective multilateralism are partnerships, both public and private. Under visionary leadership, shared action and resources must be invested in solutions to collective challenges, through building sustainable development, peace and resilience.

By engaging all stakeholders, the United Nations Office for Partnerships serves as the global gateway to catalyse and co-create collaborations that accelerate solutions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The Office is guided by 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](#)).

In accordance with General Assembly decisions 52/466 and 53/475, the Secretary-General informs the Assembly of the activities and impact of the United Nations Office for Partnerships every year. The present report presents the priorities, engagements and initiatives of the Office in 2020. Specifically, the report covers the following areas: Sustainable Development Goals advocacy, engagement and mobilization; the United Nations Democracy Fund; and the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP).

Drawing on the convening power of the United Nations, the United Nations Office for Partnerships has strategically mobilized collaborative initiatives to forge action around key priorities on the Organization's agenda, including equality, climate action and coronavirus disease (COVID-19) response and recovery. The global pandemic has shown how the solutions to the international community's challenges and opportunities are interconnected and interdependent as work is undertaken to advance the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals.

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\* [A/76/150](#).



To enact transformative change and to propel advocacy and engagement for the Sustainable Development Goals, the United Nations Office for Partnerships leverages expertise and networks across its teams. Appointed by the Secretary-General, the Sustainable Development Goals Advocates are a diverse group of 17 influential leaders who use their global platforms to champion the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Advocates are thought leaders across multiple sectors and geographies. Dedicated to accelerating action for the Goals, the Advocates inspire their constituencies to do the same. The Sustainable Development Goals Strategy Hub serves as a one-stop shop to connect United Nations and external stakeholders on the promotion and advancement of the Goals. In 2020, the Strategy Hub continued to mobilize for the decade of action and the creation of a multi-stakeholder collaborative space during the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly.

In 2020, United Nations Democracy Fund continued its work to protect and promote civic space amid increasing measures to shrink or close that space in countries around the world, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Fund's projects, equipped with the strong, built-in ability to adapt to addressing crises, pivoted to respond to the pandemic and plan for recovery. In its fourteenth round of funding, 33 projects from civil society across the globe were funded at a total cost of \$7.5 million. Projects ranged from strengthening leadership skills in civil society to promoting the participation of women and young people and supporting media programmes that enable civil society to project its voice.

UNFIP is the primary interface between the United Nations system and the United Nations Foundation, ensuring strong coordination and strategic alignment on new alliances, collaborative initiatives and the mobilization of key constituencies. In 2020, UNFIP focused on advancing the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the work of the United Nations on inclusive and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, UNFIP disbursed \$9.76 million in funding from the United Nations Foundation for United Nations projects. Of that amount, \$4.98 million was used to address global health crises. Over the past two decades, UNFIP has collaborated with the United Nations Foundation on 676 innovative, cross-sector projects implemented by the United Nations system globally.

## **I. Introduction**

### **A. Seventeen Sustainable Development Goals to transform the world**

1. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was launched in 2015 to ensure a healthy planet, with sustainability, inclusion, equality, peace and prosperity at its core. By catalysing a transformation of the social, economic and political systems that govern societies, the Sustainable Development Goals guarantee human rights to all. Given the scale of the 2030 Agenda, ambitious action and collaboration with all stakeholders are required.

2. Even before the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the international community was falling behind on its mission to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. To get back on track, dynamic, broad-based networks for improved multidimensional cooperation at the global, regional, national and subnational levels are needed.

### **B. Partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals**

3. Underlying Sustainable Development Goal 17, on strengthening the means of implementation and revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development, is a call for global multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize knowledge, technology and financial resources for achieving the Goals.

### **C. United Nations Office for Partnerships**

4. The United Nations Office for Partnerships serves as the global gateway to catalyse and co-create collaborations that accelerate solutions to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals. The Office mobilizes stakeholders, engaging public sector, civil society, the private sector, academia and philanthropic and other entities in the work of the United Nations system.

5. To keep the promise of “leaving no one behind” and to fulfil its mandate, the United Nations Office for Partnerships leverages expertise and networks across its teams and initiatives, which include:

(a) Sustainable Development Goals advocacy, engagement and mobilization. The Office engages global actors to work with the United Nations in support of the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals through the Sustainable Development Goals Advocates, the Sustainable Development Goals Strategy Hub and the Climate Action Team;

(b) The United Nations Democracy Fund. The Fund supports projects that empower civil society and strengthen democracy;

(c) The United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP). The Fund is the primary interface between the United Nations Foundation and the United Nations system in support of projects implemented globally by United Nations agencies.

6. The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the importance of partnerships. Response and recovery efforts have strengthened existing relationships and forged new collaborations, demonstrating the power and potential of partnerships for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

7. To enact transformative change, the United Nations Office for Partnerships collaborates closely with key drivers within the United Nations partnerships

ecosystem, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, the Department of Global Communications, the Development Coordination Office and the United Nations Global Compact.

## **II. Driving the coronavirus disease response and recovery and the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals**

### **A. Year in review**

8. The year 2020 was characterized by uncertainty in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate crisis. COVID-19 spread globally, resulting in not only a critical health crisis, but also a severe crisis on humanitarian and socioeconomic fronts. Years of development progress have been reversed, making it more difficult and more urgent to keep the promise of the Sustainable Development Goals.

9. The United Nations Office for Partnerships has focused on driving expertise and resources towards sustainable and inclusive recovery, with the Sustainable Development Goals as a guiding framework. The Office worked with the Development Coordination Office to support that mission, enhancing engagement with the partnership officers at United Nations country teams and facilitating peer exchange to highlight strong partnerships for the 2030 Agenda, including on advocacy. Engagement by the Offices helped to map country-level needs and determine how to best meet them. Presented below are other key initiatives supported by the United Nations Office for Partnerships.

### **B. Women Rise for All**

10. The COVID-19 crisis shined a spotlight on the need for collaboration among all sectors and the importance of strategic leadership. On 27 April 2020, the Deputy Secretary-General, supported by the United Nations Office for Partnerships, launched the “Women Rise for All” initiative, which has recognized women as drivers for an inclusive and resilient recovery beyond the COVID-19 pandemic and into the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals. The Deputy Secretary-General has engaged world leaders who advocate for gender equality and has amplified their messages, including the President of Ethiopia, the President of Switzerland, the Prime Minister of Denmark, the Prime Minister of Barbados, the Prime Minister of Norway, Sustainable Development Goals Advocates Sheikha Moza bint Nasser and Graça Machel, philanthropist Melinda Gates and other stakeholders, including Episcopalian minister Betsee Parker and United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Goodwill Ambassador Angélique Kidjo. As the Deputy Secretary-General stated, “Like no other time in recent history, women are on the frontlines of COVID-19. It is time for us to rise as women leaders, taking action to conquer the pandemic and come out stronger.”

11. Key engagements in 2020 included the high-level Women Rise for All event, held on 14 July, which included Heads of State and Government and leaders from all sectors. The Sustainable Development Goals action zone, held on 24 September, and the Reykjavík Global Forum – Women Leaders, held from 9 to 11 November, both highlighted Women Rise for All and the intergenerational leadership of women. In addition, 20 women Permanent Representatives to the United Nations in New York supported the initiative by participating in a series of video messages and events, including Permanent Representatives from Andorra, Argentina, Bangladesh, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ghana, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Monaco,

the Netherlands, Norway, Qatar, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Arab Emirates.

### **C. United Nations research road map for the COVID-19 recovery**

12. To underscore the importance of science-based solutions to COVID-19, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, with the support of the United Nations Office for Partnerships, published the “United Nations research roadmap for the COVID-19 recovery” in November 2020.

13. The document provides a framework for leveraging the power of science in support of improved socioeconomic recovery. The guide was developed in 10 weeks through a global participatory process that drew upon insights from researchers, research funders, government policymakers, civil society leaders and United Nations officials from around the world.

14. In January 2021, the United Nations Office for Partnerships collaborated with the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and the Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations to host an open dialogue on science for development in the context of COVID-19 with the Deputy Secretary-General. Representatives of major global research funding institutions discussed how science could contribute to recovery. They also identified strategies for improving collaboration among the world’s research funding agencies, research institutions and the United Nations.

### **D. COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund**

15. The COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund was established by the World Health Organization (WHO) in collaboration with the United Nations Foundation and the Swiss Philanthropy Foundation to respond to a unique global crisis. Through this unprecedented fund, the United Nations Foundation was able to mobilize substantial and diversified funding for urgent COVID-19 needs in accordance with the WHO Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan. The Fund became one of the largest financial contributors to the COVID-19 response of WHO, with \$242.7 million provided from donors from more than 190 countries as at 31 March 2021 (see table 1).

16. Given the unprecedented nature and urgency posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, UNFIP has agreed, on an exceptional basis, to allow funds to flow directly from the United Nations Foundation to WHO and partners designated by WHO, including UNICEF, the World Food Programme, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

Table 1  
**COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund<sup>a</sup>**

Key partner organizations	World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Foundation and the Swiss Philanthropy Foundation
Location	Global
Amount	\$242.7 million <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$32.3 million has been donated by more than 662,000 individuals in more than 190 countries</li> <li>• In 2020, the United Nations Foundation disbursed more than \$197.7 million to WHO and partners designated by WHO</li> </ul>
Description	The initiative supplied the bulk of start-up capital for WHO work with partners to rebuild the global supply chain for personal protective equipment and support early research collaborations
Key outcome	The COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund contributed 265 million pieces of personal protective equipment to more than 160 countries

<sup>a</sup> Relating to Sustainable Development Goal 3 (good health and well-being).

### III. Sustainable Development Goals advocacy, engagement and mobilization

#### A. Sustainable Development Goals Advocates

17. Since 2018, the United Nations Office Partnerships has served as the secretariat of the Sustainable Development Goals Advocates initiative. The group consists of 17 influential people appointed by the Secretary-General who champion the 2030 Agenda. The Advocates have a combined following of nearly 7 million people on Twitter and more than 6 million on Instagram. They are dedicated to driving awareness and accelerating action for the Sustainable Development Goals. The Advocates are:

- (a) President of Ghana, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo (co-Chair)
- (b) Prime Minister of Norway, Erna Solberg (co-Chair)
- (c) Queen Mathilde of the Belgians
- (d) Emir of Kano, Muhammad Sanusi II
- (e) Founder of the Education Above All Foundation, Sheikha Moza bint Nasser of Qatar
- (f) Screenwriter, producer and film director Richard Curtis
- (g) Coordinator of the Association for Indigenous Women and Peoples of Chad, Hindou Ibrahim
- (h) Co-founder of Alibaba and Founder of the Jack Ma Foundation, Jack Ma
- (i) Founder of the Graça Machel Trust, Graça Machel
- (j) Actress and producer Dia Mirza
- (k) Founder of the Voice of Libyan Women and co-founder of the Omnis Institute, Dr. Alaa Murabit

- (l) Nobel Peace Prize laureate and founder of Nadia’s Initiative, Nadia Murad
- (m) Humanitarian and activist Edward Ndopu
- (n) Co-founder and Chair of IMAGINE, Paul Polman
- (o) Director of the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University, Jeffrey Sachs
- (p) Football player Marta Vieira da Silva
- (q) Actor, Producer, Director and founder of the Whitaker Peace and Development Initiative, Forest Whitaker

18. The day-to-day operations of the group, including engagement with United Nations system counterparts, are facilitated by the United Nations Office for Partnerships. The Sustainable Development Goals Advocates meet annually with the Secretary-General to discuss his strategic vision. The 2020 meeting focused on the United Nations response to COVID-19, the state of multilateralism, the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Organization and other topics. In addition, the Advocates offered advice regarding achieving the Sustainable Development Goals during the decade of action.

19. Owing to the spread of COVID-19, the Sustainable Development Goals Advocates undertook virtual engagements for the most part. In response to the pandemic, they authored an open letter in which they emphasized that the Goals must be the framework for building back better. In addition, the co-Chairs, who are Heads of State and Government, participated in a number of intergovernmental and high-level forums, where they advanced messaging regarding the Sustainable Development Goals as part of their contributions.

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

20. The Sustainable Development Goals Strategy Hub serves as an agile consultative and collaborative platform by convening quarterly meetings with a wide range of actors.

21. In 2020, the Hub played an important role in mobilizing for the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals. It convened senior strategy, policy and communication officers across sectors and regions. The goal was to design a more deliberate development strategy for advocacy for the Goals. In its work around the decade of action, the Strategy Hub also mobilized external partners to co-develop the campaign narrative, assets and structure.

## **C. Climate action**

22. In 2020, climate action remained one of the top priorities for the United Nations. COVID-19 has not stopped the existential climate crisis; rather, it has demonstrated the scale of change that is needed. Given this crucial juncture, the United Nations Office for Partnerships supports the mobilization work of the Climate Action Team and the Secretary-General’s Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change to drive ambitious action. Specifically, the Office mobilized support for several major United Nations reports (e.g., the “United in science 2020” report, the *State of the Global Climate 2020* report and the synthesis report on nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement (FCCC/PA/CMA/2021/2)) and convenings, such as the 2020 Climate Ambition Summit and the “State of the planet” address. Through these and other collaborative activities, the Office has played an essential role in mobilizing key stakeholder groups behind United Nations calls-to-action, ensuring alignment

with the Secretary-General's climate strategy for 2020–2021, as well as reinforcing the interlinkages of climate action within the broader 2030 Agenda.

#### **D. Open brief: a global call to the creative community**

23. Early in the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a major gap in public health messaging on COVID-19. Very little content was available across platforms to help people to protect themselves and their communities from the virus. During that time, the Sustainable Development Goals Strategy Hub focused on engaging the creative community and other entities to flatten the COVID-19 curve. With support from the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, the Department of Global Communications, WHO and the United Nations Foundation, the Strategy Hub developed an open brief. It galvanized the creative community, influencers and distributors to help to unite the world through life-saving content on COVID-19 and messages of personal hygiene, physical distancing, knowing the symptoms, myth-busting, spreading kindness and solidarity.

24. Thousands of people invested their time and talent, sending in more than 16,800 submissions of creative work from 140 countries and in 20 languages. The initiative benefited from media companies and platforms offering to share and spread content. As a result of the open brief, a unifying COVID-19 logo was created and is in use globally. Open brief content continues to appear across social media, news sites and in campaigns worldwide.

#### **E. World Economic Forum**

25. In January 2020, a number of Sustainable Development Goals Advocates participated in the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, including in the panel discussion on “averting a climate apocalypse”. The Advocates also participated in the Forum's “Sustainable Development Goals Media Zone”, organized by the Department of Global Communications and the United Nations Global Compact. Several Advocates participated in panels, interviews and other activities promoting the Goals to business and government officials.

#### **F. Svalbard Global Seed Vault event**

26. At the invitation of co-Chair, the Prime Minister of Norway, in February 2020, a group of Sustainable Development Goals Advocates visited the Arctic archipelago of Svalbard, Norway, to discuss food security and climate change. They, along with the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the 2021 Food Systems Summit, attended a seed deposit event at the Svalbard Global Seed Vault and adopted the Arctic Call to Action on Food Security and Climate Change.

#### **G. Pacific Unite concert**

27. On 15 August 2020, the “Pacific Unite: Saving Lives Together” concert was organized by United Nations country teams throughout the Pacific and brought together entertainers, politicians and leaders. Through that collaboration, the United Nations Office for Partnerships facilitated a video message from Sustainable Development Goals Advocate Forest Whitaker.



## H. International Day to Protect Education from Attack

28. On 9 September 2020, Sheikha Moza bint Nasser and the Permanent Mission of Qatar to the United Nations hosted a virtual event, supported by the United Nations Office for Partnerships, to highlight General Assembly resolution [74/275](#), by which the Assembly established the International Day to Protect Education from Attack.

## I. General Assembly high-level segment engagements

### 1. Sustainable Development Goals Moment

29. Pursuant to the political declaration of the 2019 high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the General Assembly (General Assembly resolution [74/4](#)), the Secretary-General was tasked with organizing “an annual moment to highlight inspiring action on the [Sustainable Development] Goals, in the context of the general debate of General Assembly.” For the 2020 Sustainable Development Goals Moment, a number of Sustainable Development Goals Advocates, including the President of Ghana and the Prime Minister of Norway, recorded a conversation in which they discussed equitable delivery of the Goals, in particular in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

30. One of the first elements of the Sustainable Development Goals Moment was the global broadcast of “Nations United”, spearheaded by the Sustainable Development Goals Strategy Hub. The 30-minute film was a special, first-of-its-kind programme, created by the United Nations to mark five years since the adoption of the Goals. Premiering on 19 September 2020 on the United Nations YouTube channel, the production took the audience on a dynamic exploration of the current times, the planet’s challenges and the solutions that could transform the world in the coming 10 years (see table 2X). The film quickly became the second-most watched video on the United Nations YouTube channel for 2020.

31. Sustainable Development Goals Advocate Richard Curtis was the artistic director of “Nations United”. Other key participants included the Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General, Sustainable Development Goals Advocate Forest Whitaker, Goodwill Ambassadors, Messengers of Peace and influencers from around the world. “Nations United” has been screened globally, with subtitles in all official United Nations languages and the radio version voiced by actress Julia Roberts. Distribution efforts are ongoing, given that it is a priority for the United Nations to have the film reach every community.

Table 2  
“Nations United” in numbers, as at 31 December 2020 (unless otherwise specified)

<i>Type of coverage</i>	<i>Output/outcome</i>
Broadcast	<p>More than 35 broadcasters showed the film</p> <p>Premiered on the United Nations YouTube channel and reached 137,000 views (as at 17 November 2020)</p> <p>United Nations webcast on-demand video of the film received 105,000 views</p>

<i>Type of coverage</i>	<i>Output/outcome</i>
Print coverage across various regions (as at 2 October 2020)	More than 155 print articles  739 million individuals reached
Radio coverage across various regions	10 radio stations aired the programme  Available on numerous podcast platforms

## 2. Sustainable Development Goals action zone

32. The Sustainable Development Goals Strategy Hub mobilized various partners during the high-level segment of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly, in September 2020. Working with the Deputy Secretary-General, the Strategy Hub designed and executed a number of activations, including the Sustainable Development Goals action zone, to raise the profile of the Goals. The action zone was convened from 22 to 24 September and galvanized multi-stakeholder partnerships on action for the Goals. Government, United Nations, civil society, youth and business leaders all added to the collaborative nature of the space (see table 3).

Table 3  
**Sustainable Development Goals action zone in numbers, 2020**

93 sessions	268 speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 64 per cent women</li> <li>• 50 per cent from the global South</li> <li>• Youth representation in every session</li> </ul>
26,000 live viewers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 50 per cent from the Global South</li> <li>• 28 per cent under 24 years of age</li> </ul>	Social media presence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 750 000 individuals actively engaged with action zone content (i.e., posting, sharing and commenting)</li> <li>• More than 90 million people viewed the content</li> </ul>

33. The Sustainable Development Goals Advocates opened the action zone and curated one session each day. The opening plenary conversation focused on cross-sector collaboration and discussions on the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, as well as details on progress towards achieving each Goal. In the first session by Advocates, Edward Ndopu and Hindou Ibrahim discussed the importance of inclusivity. Advocate Dia Mirza hosted an intergenerational climate dialogue with various young leaders for the Goals who had been appointed by the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth. Advocate Dr Alaa Murabit curated a third session, "Policies to change the world," which featured three women detailing specific policies needed to accelerate action on the Goals.

## IV. United Nations Democracy Fund

34. The United Nations Democracy Fund was established during the 2005 World Summit as a United Nations general trust fund and officially launched in April 2006. Since then, the grant-making body has come to be identified as a fund for civil society organizations. Its projects are intended to strengthen the voice of civil society, promote human rights and encourage the participation of all groups in democratic processes.

35. Most project funds go to local civil society organizations in countries that are in both the transition and consolidation phases of democratization. By supporting the “demand” rather than the “supply” side of democratization, the United Nations Democracy Fund plays a distinct role in complementing the more traditional work of the United Nations, namely, its work with Governments, to strengthen democratic governance globally.

36. The United Nations Democracy Fund protects and promotes civic space amid increasing measures to shrink or close such space in countries around the world. While COVID-19 has exacerbated these constraints, it has also created an opportunity for civil society to explore new modalities in practising democracy. This includes filling the gaps in public services by providing essential services, disseminating health information, protecting marginalized groups, forming partnerships, holding Governments accountable and furthering economic and social recovery for local communities. Through judicious project generation, design, management and monitoring, the Fund supports civil society on all these fronts.

37. The United Nations Democracy Fund’s projects have the strong, built-in ability to adapt to crises. In working with its civil society partners to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and plan for recovery, examples of funded projects include:

- (a) Developing media literacy and digital safety, which are more critical than ever as democratic participation is forced online;
- (b) Combating misinformation, disinformation and hate speech, which have mushroomed during the crisis;
- (c) Training journalists remotely to report on the impact of the crisis with in-depth, fact-checked coverage, while staying safe on the front lines;
- (d) Empowering women in the face of gender-based violence, which has surged amid lockdowns, quarantines and social and economic pressures;
- (e) Addressing the challenges of inequality and weak service delivery, made worse by the crisis, with specific focus on the needs and rights of women, young people, minorities and other marginalized populations.

38. Since its creation, the United Nations Democracy Fund has experienced considerable growth in its portfolio, donor base, impact and visibility. In its 14 rounds of funding, the Fund has supported more than 800 projects in more than 130 countries, with a total disbursement of approximately \$185 million.

### A. Fourteenth round of funding

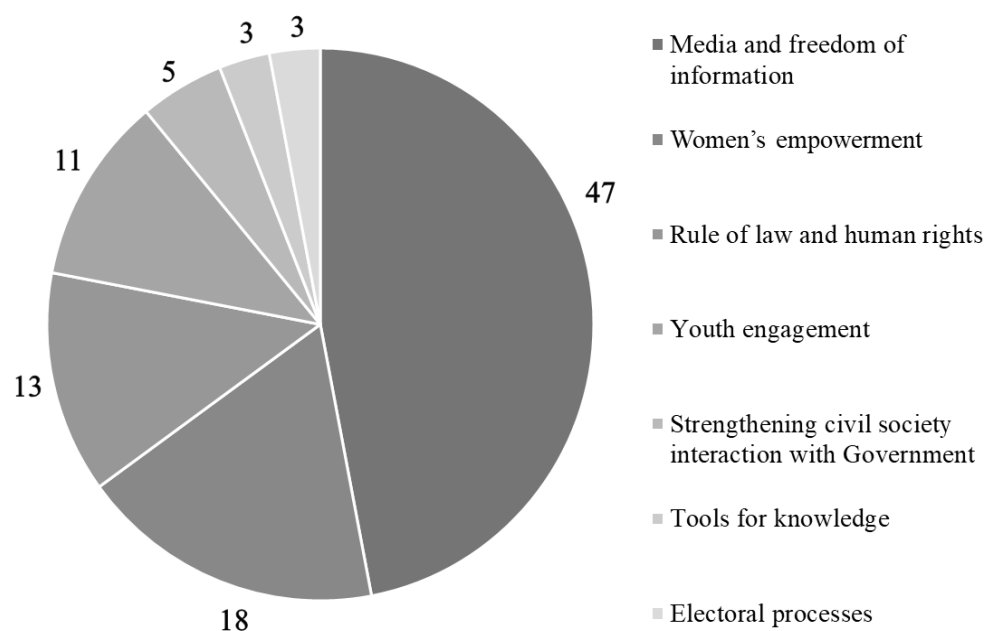
39. The call for project proposals for the fourteenth round of funding for the United Nations Democracy Fund was open from 22 November 2019 to 6 January 2020. The Fund received 2,551 project proposals, reflecting the continued high demand for its support. In particular, the Fund welcomed proposals that focused on media and freedom of information as a priority theme. This covered a range of topics, such as

promoting citizen journalism, including in conflict and post-conflict settings; training journalists on legal know-how and on 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; and developing public media literacy, with a focus on learning to digest material critically and to evaluate sources. These topics have become of increasing importance during the COVID-19 crisis.

40. The proposals originated from organizations in 139 countries, the vast majority of which were local civil society organizations in Africa (27 per cent), Asia and the Pacific (31 per cent), the Arab States (18 per cent), Eastern Europe (12 per cent), and Latin America and the Caribbean (12 per cent). Overall, 33 projects were funded at a cost of \$7.5 million. Information on the disaggregation of the projects is shown in figure I.

Figure I  
**Thematic focus of projects funded through the fourteenth round of the United Nations Democracy Fund**

(Percentage)



41. The cumulative total amount of donor contributions received by United Nations Democracy Fund from 2005 to 2020 exceeded \$214 million.

## B. Governance

42. The governing mechanism of the United Nations Democracy Fund, the Advisory Board, continued to play an active and guiding role during 2020. It 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 is comprised of those United Nations Member States that have made the seven largest cumulative financial contributions to the Fund over the previous three years, six United Nations Member States reflecting geographical diversity, two international civil society organizations and three individuals serving in a personal capacity.

43. United Nations resident coordinators and United Nations country teams in the field provided crucial input to the project selection process and support for monitoring the implementation of projects. The United Nations Democracy Fund continued to build deeper relationships with resident coordinators, partnerships officers and country teams, utilizing United Nations system reforms. The Programme Consultative Group of the Fund was also invited to provide input to the project selection process, making use of the specific expertise of each of its entities: the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the Department of Peace Operations, UNHCR, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).

### **C. Fifteenth round of funding**

44. The Advisory Board of the United Nations Democracy Fund approved the fifteenth round of funding in September 2020, welcoming, in particular, projects that addressed challenges to civic space and democracy as a result of the COVID-19 crisis.

45. The call for project proposals was open from 1 November to 1 December 2020. The United Nations Democracy Fund received 1621 proposals, the vast majority of which were from local or regional civil society organizations in Africa, Asia, the Americas, the Arab States and Eastern Europe. In accordance with the Fund's annual timetable, the applications were assessed by February 2021. The Board recommended a shortlist in March, and the Fund advised the relevant permanent missions of Member States in which listed projects were to be undertaken. The shortlist was then submitted to the Secretary-General for approval. Short-listed applicants were asked to submit draft project documents by the middle of 2021 for negotiation with the Fund. The first tranches of project funding are to be disbursed beginning in September 2021, again on a timeline that compares favourably with international standards.

### **D. Democracy in action**

46. During 2020, the United Nations Democracy Fund worked closely with its network of civil society project organizations to address and counteract the COVID-19 crisis. Some of the key projects are presented below.

#### **1. Building gender-sensitive media in Kyrgyzstan**

47. The project builds the capacity of young women in shaping media discourse on women's issues and prevailing gender norms. Activities include setting up online media camps to enable young women to explore media careers and to develop the technical and business skills for success in multimedia storytelling. Media camp graduates organize as gender media activists with the mission of launching a media collective that produces local language content on critical issues confronting women and their communities, such as COVID-19 gender-based violence.

#### **2. Increasing participation of young people in El Salvador**

48. The project trains young leaders to participate in spaces for civic dialogue, holding institutions accountable and defending the democratic system with civil society and key political actors. Through a three-month "democracy academy", youth leaders acquire advocacy skills and develop action plans that they can adapt for subsequent campaigns, advancing the interests of young people. The project enhances the participation of young people in democratic governance through traditional media, town hall meetings and digital platforms. Amid the COVID-19 crisis,

in-person classes have been adapted to a virtual format, allowing the project to double its graduating class.

### **3. Building inclusive local budget processes in Nigeria**

49. The project increases the capacity of civil society and Chairs of local governments to fulfil their roles and responsibilities in a democratic system more effectively. It establishes an inter-state forum for exchanging best practices in promoting democratic accountability at the local level and enhancing cooperation between civil society actors and elected leaders. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the project adapted its financial literacy training for civil society organizations, the media, women's groups and youth groups to include risks posed by the COVID-19 crisis.

### **4. Empowering young people to build local democracy in Tunisia**

50. The project builds the capacity of young people to engage in community affairs and local governance. It creates two groups of young people: one trained to conduct social audits to be published on dedicated platforms and a second to set up a social innovation unit to identify community projects that address local needs. The work of both groups is used to promote awareness and accountability among local elected officials, while also bringing young people and the larger community closer together. This project is highly relevant during COVID-19 because it advances understanding of the impact of the crisis on women and young people. In doing so, the project ensures that the recovery upholds their rights and is inclusive of their needs.

## **V. United Nations Fund for International Partnerships**

51. For more than two decades, UNFIP has worked in close collaboration with the United Nations Foundation on hundreds of innovative, cross-sector partnerships implemented by the United Nations system across the globe. The role of UNFIP is to serve as a trust fund that manages extrabudgetary donor contributions supporting projects, campaigns, fiduciary grant-making and grant management activities of the United Nations system. As the primary interface, UNFIP also ensures strong coordination, communication flow and strategic alignment between the United Nations and the United Nations Foundation on new alliances, collaborative initiatives and the mobilization of key constituencies. In doing so, UNFIP works to keep the promise of the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals and of an inclusive COVID-19 recovery to leave no one behind.

### **A. United Nations Fund for International Partnerships and United Nations Foundation**

52. The United Nations Foundation is a private, not-for-profit organization that provides both direct and indirect support to the United Nations and United Nations causes. It is independently guided by an international board of directors.

53. The United Nations Foundation deploys its core capacities to connect people, ideas and resources to the United Nations to deliver a better world for all. The core capacities of the United Nations Foundation include providing a trusted space for dialogue; advocating for the United Nations and its priorities; using communications and public engagement to reach new audiences; incubating initiatives across sectors to advance the Sustainable Development Goals and solve challenges at scale; and mobilizing new and diverse resources for the United Nations and United Nations priorities.

54. The relationship between the United Nations and the United Nations Foundation is governed by the Relationship Agreements of 1998, 2007 and 2014. The principal governing mechanisms between the two parties are the UNFIP Advisory Board, chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General, and the Joint Coordination Committee, co-chaired by the United Nations and the United Nations Foundation. Table 4 presents the timeline of the United Nations-United Nations Foundation relationship.

Table 4  
**Timeline of the United Nations-United Nations Foundation relationship**

<i>2 February 1998</i>	<i>1 March 1998</i>	<i>18 April 2007</i>	<i>23 October 2014</i>
Ted Turner establishes the United Nations Foundation as a public charity to channel \$1 billion to the United Nations.	The Secretary-General establishes the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships as an autonomous trust fund pursuant to the Relationship Agreement between the United Nations and the United Nations Foundation.	The Relationship Agreement between the United Nations and the United Nations Foundation is renewed.	The Relationship Agreement is renewed for another 10 years. It is amended to establish the Joint Coordination Committee.

## **B. United Nations Fund for International Partnerships project grants funded by the United Nations Foundation in 2020**

55. In 2020, the United Nations Foundation disbursed \$9.76 million in funding through UNFIP for various United Nations initiatives. Global health projects were prioritized and received the majority of funding, totalling \$4.98 million. Table 5 provides details on United Nations Foundation grants to the United Nations system through UNFIP, both in 2020 and cumulatively since 1998. While annual funding from the United Nations Foundation has been gradually reduced since 2014, it has strengthened its indirect support for United Nations initiatives and causes.

Table 5  
**United Nations Fund for International Partnerships in numbers**

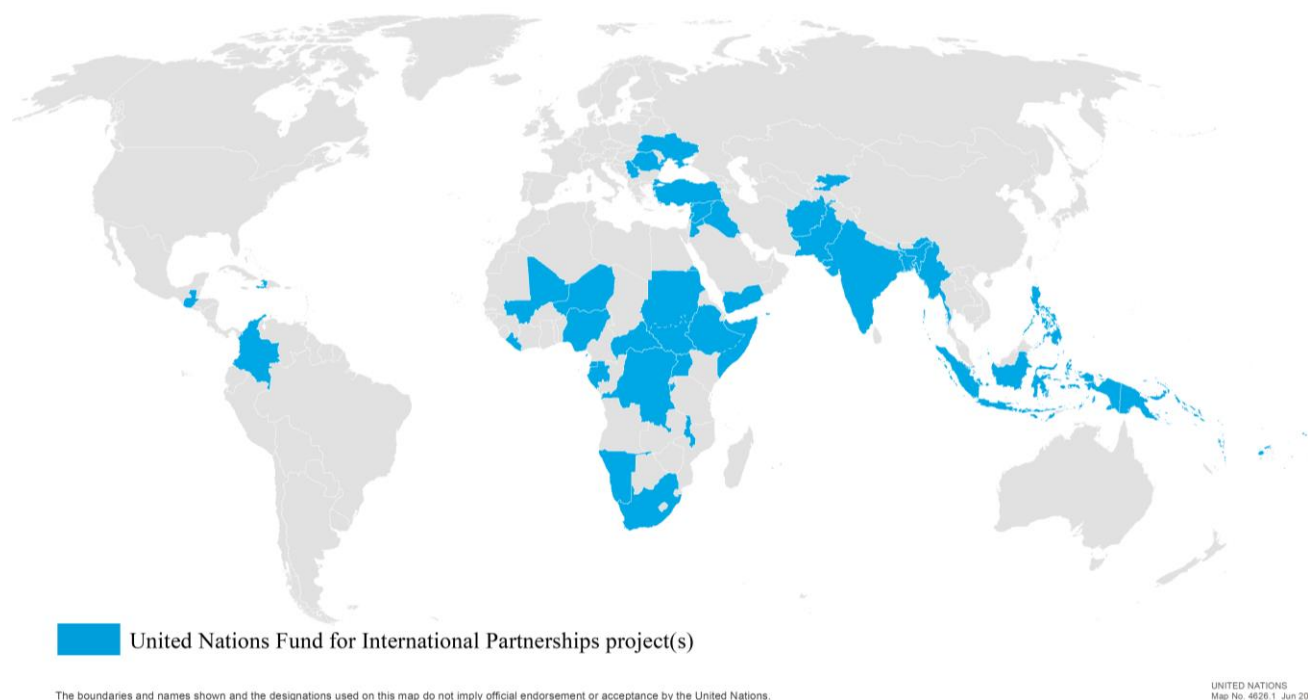
(United States dollars)

<i>Period</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Details</i>
2020	\$9.76 million	A total of 20 projects on global health (\$4.98 million), United Nations initiatives (\$2.07 million), women and girls ((\$1.82 million) and United Nations fiduciaries (\$890,000)
1998–2020	\$1.47 billion	A total of 676 projects, 128 participating countries and 48 United Nations implementing partners

56. In 2020, the United Nations Foundation adapted to the urgency of the COVID-19 pandemic and focused on the response to it, in particular through the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund (see paras. 15–16 above and table 1). In addition to COVID-19 related work, the United Nations Foundation continued efforts to build momentum for the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals, mobilize climate action and work towards networked and inclusive multilateralism.

57. The following section is organized by programmatic area and details key grants from the United Nations Foundation that were disbursed by UNFIP in 2020. Figure II shows the geographic locations of UNFIP projects and its fiduciaries.

Figure II  
Projects of the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships in 2020<sup>a</sup>



*Note:* The dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the Parties. The final boundary between South Sudan and the Sudan has not yet been determined. A dispute exists between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning sovereignty over the Falkland Islands (Malvinas).

<sup>a</sup> Total amount disbursed: \$9.76 million. The projects shown are not inclusive of those with a global reach.

## 1. Global health

58. In its work to advance global health priorities, the United Nations Foundation works in close collaboration with UNFIP, WHO, UNICEF, UNHCR and other United Nations entities. Tables 6 to 8 highlight global health projects funded by the United Nations Foundation through UNFIP in 2020.



Table 6  
**Measles and rubella<sup>a</sup>**

Implementing partners	WHO and UNICEF
Location	Global
Amount	\$2.7 million (\$1.2 million to WHO and \$1.5 million to UNICEF)
Description	In the most recent implementation phase of the Global Measles and Rubella Strategic Plan 2012–2020, the Measles and Rubella Initiative aimed to reduce global measles mortality by 95 per cent, and undertake high-quality supplementary measles immunization programmes, strengthen immunization systems and implement measles surveillance systems in the face of increased challenges produced by the COVID-19 pandemic.
Outcome	Contributed to the global delivery of more than 5.5 billion doses of the measles vaccine to children worldwide.

<sup>a</sup> Relating to Sustainable Development Goal 3 (good health and well-being).

Table 7  
**Poliomyelitis<sup>a</sup>**

Implementing partners	WHO and UNICEF
Location	Global
Amount	\$1.2 million
Description	The Global Polio Eradication Initiative is a public-private partnership led by the following core partners: WHO, UNICEF, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Rotary International, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Gavi Alliance. The United Nations Foundation and the Shot@Life campaign aim to support this initiative by: (a) educating and empowering grassroots advocates in the United States of America who champion vaccine uptake and government funding for polio eradication initiatives; (b) ensuring the delivery of high-quality, large-scale immunization campaigns through United Nations partners; and (c) providing global advocacy, communications and resource mobilization support to the Initiative's external relations arm.
Outcome	Supported the Initiative's essential role in reducing polio cases through the procurement of oral polio vaccine and support for front-line polio eradication efforts.

<sup>a</sup> Relating to Sustainable Development Goal 3 (good health and well-being).

Table 8  
**Malaria<sup>a</sup>**

Implementing partners	UNICEF and UNHCR
Location	Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Niger
Amount	\$962,930 (\$801,430 to UNICEF, in the Niger, and \$161,500 to UNHCR, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo)
Description	<p>The United Nations Foundation's Nothing But Nets global grassroots campaign raises awareness, fundraises and advocates for increased investment in malarial interventions. It is intended to enable the continuation of malaria prevention and treatment, and ensure that vulnerable populations, including pregnant women, children and refugees and displaced persons, have access to comprehensive prevention and treatment services.</p> <p>In the Niger, the project is aimed at aiding in the provision of 135,255 long-lasting insecticide treated nets and preventive malaria treatment for pregnant women. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the project is intended to distribute 18,000 long-lasting insecticidal bed nets and support a range of malaria prevention and treatment activities for 36,000 beneficiaries in refugee communities.</p>

<sup>a</sup> Relating to Sustainable Development Goal 3 (good health and well-being).

## 2. Women, girls and population

59. Since its inception, the United Nations Foundation has prioritized the dignity and rights of girls and women, providing targeted support to a range of United Nations partners through grant-making, convening, building partnerships and strengthening communications and advocacy capacity. Its grant-making through UNFIP in 2020 is summarized in tables 9 to 11.

Table 9  
**Gender data<sup>a</sup>**

Implementing partner	International Labour Organization
Location	Global
Amount	\$1.2 million
Description	<p>Data2X is a gender data alliance, working with partners to improve the production and use of gender data through convening, research, advocacy and communications.</p> <p>This project is intended to: (a) support the monitoring of the 2030 Agenda by closing the data gap for unpaid care and domestic work related to gender; and (b) support the establishment of modularized labour force survey systems through the development and dissemination of evidence-based tools and resources for participating countries.</p>

<sup>a</sup> Relating to Sustainable Development Goals 5 (gender equality), 8 (decent work and economic growth) and 10 (educated inequalities).

Table 10  
**Adolescent girls<sup>a</sup>**

Implementing partner	United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
Location	Guatemala and India
Amount	\$350,000
Description	<p>The United Nations Foundation's Girl Up initiative develops, mobilizes and activates a generation of girl changemakers who advance gender equality. Through Action for Adolescent Girls, the project supports Governments in making targeted investment to empower thousands of adolescent girls, specifically to delay the girl's age at first marriage and first childbearing.</p> <p>In Guatemala, the project focused on reaching indigenous adolescent girls with an asset-building approach through safe spaces, advocacy at the national policy level and access to sex education. In India, the project focused on strengthening systems and health services to reach adolescent girls.</p>

<sup>a</sup> Relating to Sustainable Development Goals 3 (good health and well-being), 5 (gender equality) and 10 (reduced inequalities).

Table 11  
**Family planning<sup>a</sup>**

Implementing partner	UNFPA country offices
Location	Indonesia and Kyrgyzstan
Amount	\$219,082 (\$148,458 to UNFPA, in Kyrgyzstan, and \$70,624 to UNFPA, in Indonesia)
Description	<p>The United Nations Foundation's family planning 2020 rapid response mechanism provides small grants to fund time-sensitive projects that increase access to contraceptives for women and girls.</p> <p>In Kyrgyzstan, the project is intended to empower women and girls by investing in rights-based family planning. In Indonesia, the project is aimed at developing an operative guideline for the provision of contraceptive services in crisis situations.</p>

<sup>a</sup> Relating to Sustainable Development Goals 3 (good health and well-being), 5 (gender equality) and 10 (reduced inequalities).

### 3. Capacity development

60. The United Nations Foundation provides catalytic support for United Nations leadership initiatives that have a transformative impact. It provided capacity-building support towards the reform of the United Nations development system and marking the Organization's seventy-fifth anniversary (see table 12).

Table 12

**United Nations at 75 and beyond: forward-looking dialogues to mark the Organization's seventy-fifth anniversary**

Implementing partner	Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Preparations for the Commemoration of the United Nations 75th Anniversary
Location	Global
Amount	\$2.025 million
Description	The project was intended to launch a conversation on how to create a global partnership, building understanding and support for multilateralism across a wide range of constituencies, and gather public perspectives and possible solutions to global challenges.
Outcome	The results of the project were presented by the Secretary-General to world leaders at the high-level segment of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly. More than 1.5 million people from all United Nations Member States and observer States, more than 3,500 dialogues were registered in more than 120 countries, and 50,000 organizations, including youth and civil society organizations, businesses, media groups and authorities from the local and national levels, provided support.

**4. Fiduciary agreements**

61. The United Nations Foundation is a tax-exempt charitable entity in the United States. A number of United Nations entities have requested the assistance of the United Nations Foundation to serve as a fiduciary or fiscal agent to receive and disburse contributions from American corporations and private individuals in support of their campaigns and programmes.

62. In 2020, the United Nations Foundation provided, through UNFIP, \$893,000 in funding to United Nations system entities through fiduciary channels, specifically, \$305,828 to the country-based pooled funds of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; \$86,653 to the Central Emergency Response Fund; \$71,183 to the Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, South Sudan and the Sudan humanitarian funds of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; \$301,380 to the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund of UN-Women; and \$128,175 to the Stop TB Partnership managed by the United Nations Office for Project Services.

**VI. Conclusion**

63. The year 2020 was unlike any other in recent history, and it called for a united response to COVID-19 rooted in solidarity and innovative collaboration. New, transformational alliances are needed to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals and deliver sustained recovery from COVID-19. From the green economy and gender equality to social inclusion, greater ambition is needed.

64. This is the time to be bold to successfully confront current challenges and build resilience to new ones, while taking the steps necessary to ensure that the United Nations remains fit-for-purpose for partnerships with an array of traditional and non-traditional stakeholders. Transparency, accountability and inclusivity are at the centre of mission of the United Nations Office for Partnerships to catalyse and co-create collaborations for the Sustainable Development Goals.

65. As the primary interface between the United Nations and the United Nations Foundation, UNFIP ensures strategic alignment and coordination between the two actors. In 2020, UNFIP, in collaboration with the United Nations Foundation, advanced United Nations work on inclusive and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic with the Sustainable Development Goals as the guiding framework.

66. 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 (i.e., the side of democratic institutions). COVID-19 further underlines the relevance of United Nations Democracy Fund support for civil society in response to undue restrictions on civic space.

67. The United Nations Office for Partnerships continues to foster inclusive and transformative engagement of partners, including diverse and marginalized voices, in multi-stakeholder collaborative spaces. In 2020, its advocacy initiatives, the Sustainable Development Goals Strategy Hub and Sustainable Development Goals Advocates drew on dynamic and broad-based networks to champion the 2030 Agenda to global audiences.

68. In doing so, these initiatives accelerated action for the Sustainable Development Goals, convening and leveraging all stakeholders of the United Nations. The key advocacy events of the United Nations Office for Partnerships were centred on the high-level segment of General Assembly, including the Sustainable Development Goals action zone and the Sustainable Development Goals Moment.

69. Through the Sustainable Development Goals Advocates, the Sustainable Development Goals Strategy Hub, UNFIP and the United Nations Democracy Fund, the United Nations Office for Partnerships has delivered innovative and creative content to propel action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 and to sustain resilient response and recovery from COVID-19. Going forward, the Office will continue to invest in its capacity to deliver results and to take partnerships to scale.

## Annex I

### Financial contributions to the United Nations Democracy Fund, by donor, October 2005 to December 2020

(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	263 421
Denmark	265 018
Ecuador	5 000
Estonia	10 395
France	4 793 716
Georgia	24 943
Germany	30 156 630
Hungary	75 000
India	32 262 543
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	41 559
Peru	107 313
Poland	1 187 563
Portugal	150 000
Qatar	10 000 000
Republic of Korea	1 380 000
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	30 130 095
Turkey	300 000
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	683 653
United States of America	72 576 000
Other	127 230
<b>Total</b>	<b>214 905 827</b>

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## Annex II

### **Composition of the Advisory Board of the United Nations Democracy Fund in 2020**

#### **Member States that have made the largest cumulative financial contributions to the Fund over the previous three years**

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

#### **Member States appointed by the Secretary-General to reflect diverse geographical representation**

Chile  
Greece  
Maldives  
Morocco  
Nepal  
Senegal

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

CIVICUS  
Transparency, Accountability and Participation Network

#### **Individuals**

Chair, Advisory Board: Aracelly Santana (Ecuador), former Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Nepal and former Deputy Director of Electoral Assistance Division (retired)

Irene Braam (Netherlands), Executive Director, Bertelsmann Foundation, North America, and First Vice-President and Board Director, Bertelsmann Stiftung Board, Germany

Mahmood Mamdani (Uganda), professor of Government, Anthropology, Political Science and African Studies, Columbia University, Chancellor, Kampala International University, and Director, Makerere Institute of Social Research, Uganda



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**Annex III****Composition of the Advisory Board of the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships in 2020****Chair**

Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General

**Member States**

In the capacity of the President of the Economic and Social Council:

Mona Juul (until 22 July 2020)

Munir Akram (since 23 July 2020)

In the capacity of the Chair of the Second Committee, General Assembly:

Cheikh Niang (until 14 September 2020)

Amrit Bahadur Rai (since 15 September 2020)

**United Nations**

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

Catherine Pollard, Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance

Annemarie Hou, acting Executive Director, United Nations Office for Partnerships (ex officio)

**Civil society**

Penny Abeywardena, New York City Commissioner for International Affairs

Yassine Fall, economist

Luis A. Ubiñas, member of the Board of Directors, AT&T

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