

## IX. FUNDS AND GRANTS

There are a number of funds and grants, some of which are directly managed by the **Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)**, which directly benefit civil society actors, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), grass-roots organizations, professional associations and individuals. These can provide financial support for civil society activities in certain human rights areas.

**Funds** make available financial grants to support activities within their mandate. OHCHR and other United Nations offices administer several funds and grants to support civil society actors in certain circumstances. The funds receive voluntary contributions from Governments, NGOs, other private or public entities, and individuals for distribution according to their mandate.

Civil society organizations, such as NGOs, grass-roots organizations, community groups and professional associations, are generally eligible to apply for the funds and grants. In some cases individuals may also apply for funding. Civil society actors wanting to apply should carefully review the guidelines and ensure that they meet the administrative and other requirements.

**Consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is not a requirement for NGOs and other civil society actors to participate in or access any of these funds or grants.**

### A. What are the funds and grants?

The funds and grants administered by OHCHR are:

- The **United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture**, which offers grants to civil society actors providing medical, psychological, social, economic, legal, humanitarian or other forms of assistance to victims of torture and members of their families. Eligible civil society actors include, in particular, NGOs, specialized rehabilitation centres, associations of victims, foundations and hospitals, and, less frequently, individual human rights defenders, for example, lawyers acting on behalf of victims;

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The Handbook is available in digital format on the OHCHR website at:

<http://www.ohchr.org/civilsocietyhandbook/>

There you will find the Handbook's chapters available for download, as well as links to all the references contained in the publication.

- The **Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations**, which provides travel grants to facilitate the participation of representatives of indigenous communities and organizations in United Nations meetings relating to indigenous issues;
- The **United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery**, which provides small project grants in particular to civil society organizations, such as NGOs, community and youth groups, trade unions or professional associations assisting victims of contemporary forms of slavery; and
- The **“Assisting Communities Together” (ACT) Project**, which provides small grants to support local human rights training and education initiatives.

Two other funds that support civil society activities on important issues are also addressed in this chapter:

- The **United Nations Democracy Fund**, which provides funding for projects that build and strengthen democratic institutions, promote human rights and ensure the participation of all groups in democratic processes; and
- The **United Nations Voluntary Fund on Disability**, which provides small grants to support activities aimed at building the capacity of civil society organizations to take part in the implementation of the **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**.

While administered by other United Nations offices, OHCHR has a designated role in both these funds.



## Contact details

### *OHCHR-administered funds*

#### **United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture**

United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture  
 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights  
 Palais des Nations  
 8–14, avenue de la Paix  
 CH–1211 Geneva 10 - Switzerland  
 Phone: +41 (0)22 917 93 15  
 Fax: +41 (0)22 917 90 17  
 E-mail: [unvft@ohchr.org](mailto:unvft@ohchr.org)

#### **Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations**

Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations  
 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights  
 Palais des Nations  
 8–14, avenue de la Paix  
 CH–1211 Geneva 10 - Switzerland  
 Phone: +41 (0)22 928 91 64 or +41 (0)22 928 91 42  
 Fax: +41 (0)22 928 90 66  
 E-mail: [IndigenousFunds@ohchr.org](mailto:IndigenousFunds@ohchr.org)

#### **United Nations Voluntary Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery**

United Nations Voluntary Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery  
 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights  
 Palais des Nations  
 8–14, avenue de la Paix  
 CH–1211 Geneva 10 - Switzerland  
 Phone: +41 (0)22 928 93 81 or +41 (0)22 928 91 64  
 Fax: +41 (0)22 928 90 66  
 E-mail: [SlaveryFund@ohchr.org](mailto:SlaveryFund@ohchr.org)

#### **‘Assisting Communities Together’ (ACT) Project**

ACT Project  
 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights  
 Palais des Nations  
 8–14, avenue de la Paix  
 CH–1211 Geneva 10 - Switzerland  
 Fax: +41 (0)22 928 90 61  
 E-mail: [ACTProject@ohchr.org](mailto:ACTProject@ohchr.org)



***Funds administered by other United Nations offices in which OHCHR has a designated role***

**United Nations Democracy Fund**

United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF)  
United Nations  
One UN Plaza, Room DC1-1330  
New York, NY 10017  
United States of America  
Phone: +1 917 367 42 10 or +1 917 367 80 62  
Fax: +1 212 963 14 86  
E-mail: [democracyfund@un.org](mailto:democracyfund@un.org)

**United Nations Voluntary Fund on Disability**

Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities  
Department for Economic and Social Affairs  
United Nations  
Two UN Plaza, DC2-1372  
New York, NY 10017  
United States of America  
Fax: +1 212 963 01 11  
E-mail: [enable@un.org](mailto:enable@un.org)

## **B. How do the funds and grants work?**

### **1. United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture**

The **United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture's** mandate is to provide **grants** to projects for humanitarian assistance (medical, psychological, legal, social and financial) to victims of torture and members of their families through established channels of assistance, usually civil society actors such as NGOs, specialized rehabilitation centres, associations of victims, foundations and hospitals, and less frequently, individual human rights defenders. Applications from governmental, parliamentary or administrative entities, political parties or national liberation movements are inadmissible.

The Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture is the largest managed by OHCHR, contributing to projects implemented by civil society actors in more than 60 countries. It is administered by the United Nations Secretary-General on the advice of a Board of Trustees. The Board meets twice a year, in February on policy issues and October to award grants. It reviews reports on the use of previous grants and adopts recommendations on

new grants, and also meets with regular donors to the Fund, as well as other institutional donors, and discusses policy issues relating to assistance to victims of torture.

The Fund's secretariat and Board are based at OHCHR in Geneva. The secretariat determines the admissibility of applications for project grants, while it is the role of the Board to judge the applications on their merits. The Board considers a number of elements including:

- The number of victims of torture and members of their families to be assisted by a project;
- The type of torture endured and after-effects suffered;
- The type of assistance needed;
- The professional experience of the project staff in assisting victims of torture;
- Case studies of victims to be assisted; and
- The need to assist small projects for humanitarian assistance to victims of torture, most of which have very little funding, in priority regions: Africa, Asia, Central Asia and Eastern Europe.

Grants from the Fund cover a 12-month period. New applications for the continuation of a project can be submitted and a new grant recommended provided the Board receives satisfactory **narrative, financial and audit reports on the use of the previous grant.**

The grant cycle is the following each year:

- Deadline for the reception of applications and reports on the use of previous grants: **1 April;**
- Analysis by the secretariat of the applications, as well as pre-screening visits to admissible applicants: **April to September;**
- Meeting of the Board of Trustees: **October;**
- Information to applicants on the recommendation of the Board: **November;**
- Payment of grants: **January of the year following application.**

[How to access the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture<sup>76</sup>](#)

### **Who is eligible for a grant?**

- Only non-governmental entities can apply; this includes NGOs, specialized rehabilitation centres, associations of victims, foundations and hospitals, and, less frequently, individual human rights defenders, for example lawyers acting on behalf of victims.
- Applications from Governments, national liberation movements or political parties are not admissible.

<sup>76</sup> Governments, NGOs and other private or public entities can contribute to the Fund. For information on how to contribute, please contact its secretariat.

- The projects' direct beneficiaries must be victims of torture, as understood in article 1 of the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Being Subjected to Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, or their direct family members.
- The staff involved in the project should have experience in direct assistance to victims of torture and the project should already be in place at the time of the submission of the grant request.
- Applications must be made using the Fund's online application form, which is available on the OHCHR website.
- Applications must be submitted to the Fund's secretariat before 1 April each year.

First-time applicants to the Fund should:

- Provide background information on their organization;
- Demonstrate that its staff has relevant experience in providing direct assistance to victims of torture (the curriculum vitae should be attached);
- Explain the aims of and justification for the project; and
- Provide the statutes of the organization.

#### **What types of projects are accepted?**

- Applications for grants should aim at providing medical, psychological, social, economic, legal, humanitarian or other forms of assistance to victims of torture and members of their families;
- Applications for projects concerning social or economic reintegration of victims of torture into society, including vocational training for the victims themselves, are accepted;
- Subject to the availability of funds, a limited number of grants could also be given for the training of professionals or for the organization of conferences and seminars with a special focus on the treatment of victims of torture;
- Applications for projects aiming at campaigning against torture, preventing torture or providing financial assistance to other projects will not be accepted;
- Applications for projects concerning investigations, studies, research, the publication of newsletters or similar activities will not be accepted;
- As a rule, applications for projects aiming at financing the establishment of a new NGO or other civil society organization will not be accepted;
- NGOs and other civil society actors submitting applications for projects to provide direct legal assistance to victims of torture should submit information on whether the judiciary can provide free legal aid to defend the victims, in conformity with domestic law. The list of the victims to be assisted under legal aid should be provided together with the application form;
- The Fund does not provide financial compensation to victims.

## Emergency grants

Civil society actors can exceptionally submit a request for emergency assistance between two sessions of the Board for projects currently subsidized by the Fund which encounter financial difficulties. Civil society actors should send their requests for emergency funding on the secretariat's application form, as well as a detailed letter explaining why they need emergency financial assistance. Applications will be considered eligible only in cases where an unpredictable situation has resulted in a sudden increase in the number of victims assisted (e.g., as a result of an influx of torture victims due to a humanitarian crisis).



### How to submit an application to the Fund

As a rule, applications should be made through the online grant management system. Exceptionally, applications can be sent in paper form by airmail or by e-mail. The application form is available upon request from the secretariat.

### Where to submit an application

#### **United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**

Palais des Nations  
8–14, avenue de la Paix  
CH–1211 Geneva 10 - Switzerland  
Phone: +41 (0)22 917 93 15  
Fax: +41 (0)22 917 90 17  
E-mail: unvft@ohchr.org

#### **When submitting an application, please note:**

- The Fund's secretariat will not accept applications that do not use the Fund's application form, do not provide all the requested information, are not signed and dated by the project leader, or in any manner do not comply with the guidelines of the Fund.
- The application may be in English, French or Spanish.

**For more information on the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture** visit OHCHR's website.

## 2. Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations

The **Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations** seeks to facilitate the participation of representatives of indigenous communities and organizations in the two United Nations bodies working on indigenous rights:

- The **Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**; and
- The **Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues**.

The Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is a new mechanism of the **Human Rights Council**<sup>77</sup> which replaced the **Working Group on Indigenous Populations** of the former Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights.



For more information on the **Expert Mechanism**, please refer to **chapter V (Human Rights Council)** of this *Handbook*.

The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Rights, an advisory body to the United Nations **Economic and Social Council**, is a high-level body based in New York that contributes to inter-agency cooperation on indigenous issues. The Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations, managed by OHCHR, provides **travel grants** for representatives of indigenous peoples and organizations working with them to participate in these bodies. In this way indigenous civil society actors can contribute their expertise and take home the lessons learned.

The Fund is administered by the United Nations Secretary-General in accordance with the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations with the advice of a Board of Trustees, all of whom have experience on indigenous issues.

### How to access the Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations<sup>78</sup>

The contribution and active engagement of local, national and international civil society actors have significantly helped to advance indigenous issues on the world stage. The United Nations bodies on indigenous populations are important tools of action for civil society actors working with indigenous people and for indigenous civil society groups themselves. The Fund's travel grants aim to increase the number and diversity of indigenous peoples participating in these bodies.

<sup>77</sup> Established by resolution 6/36 of 14 December 2007.

<sup>78</sup> Governments, NGOs and other private or public entities can contribute to the Fund. For information on how to contribute, please contact its secretariat.

### Who is eligible for a grant?

Indigenous representatives of indigenous populations' organizations and communities:

- Who would not otherwise be able to attend the sessions of the Expert Mechanism or the Permanent Forum; and
- Who can contribute to a deeper knowledge on the part of the Expert Mechanism or the Permanent Forum of the problems affecting indigenous populations, and who would also secure a broader geographical representation.

### Application requirements

- Travel grants are given on an individual basis—an organization or beneficiary cannot request that a beneficiary be replaced by another;
- Applications by individuals must be accompanied by a letter of recommendation signed by an executive of their indigenous organization. The Board will not examine letters signed by the applicants themselves;
- A maximum of two applicants per organization may apply;
- Applicants are requested to submit application forms and recommendation letters in the working languages of the Board's secretariat (English, French or Spanish);
- Applicants are requested to indicate their responsibility in their organization or community;
- The Board's recommendation in favour of an applicant to attend a session of the Permanent Forum does not exclude another recommendation to attend the Expert Mechanism and vice versa.



### Where to submit an application

Application forms for grants are available on the OHCHR website and should be submitted by **1 October each year** to:

#### **Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations**

#### **Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**

Palais des Nations

8–14, avenue de la Paix

CH–1211 Geneva 10 - Switzerland

Phone: +41 (0)22 928 91 64 or +41 (0)22 928 91 42

Fax: +41 (0)22 928 90 66

**E-mail: [IndigenousFunds@ohchr.org](mailto:IndigenousFunds@ohchr.org)**

**To learn more about OHCHR work on indigenous peoples** visit OHCHR's website.

### 3. United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery

The **United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery** provides small **project grants** in particular to civil society organizations, such as NGOs, community and youth groups, trade unions or professional associations, assisting victims of contemporary forms of slavery (e.g., child labour, trafficking, forced labour). The aim of the project grants is to extend, through established channels of assistance, humanitarian, legal and financial aid to individuals whose human rights have been severely violated as a result of contemporary forms of slavery. It provides an opportunity for civil society actors, often working at the grass-roots level, to assist a large number of victims directly, with relatively small funds.

#### How to access the United Nations Voluntary Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery

Many civil society actors today are combating and protecting victims of contemporary forms of slavery in various parts of the world. Slavery-like practices are often clandestine and civil society actors may have a crucial role in uncovering hidden human rights violations linked to contemporary forms of slavery. The word “slavery” today covers a variety of human rights violations. In addition to traditional slavery and the slave trade, these abuses include the sale of children, child prostitution, child pornography, the exploitation of child labour, the sexual mutilation of girls, the use of children in armed conflicts, debt bondage, the traffic in persons and the sale of human organs, the exploitation of prostitution, and certain practices under apartheid and colonial regimes.

The **project grants** in particular for civil society organizations, such as NGOs, community and youth groups, trade unions or professional associations, aim to increase the participation of civil society in eliminating slavery around the world.

#### Who is eligible for project grants?

- Organizations that provide direct assistance to individuals whose human rights have been violated as a result of contemporary forms of slavery. This direct assistance accounts for the majority of the grants awarded. The funds are passed to the recipient through approved and established civil society organizations or grass-roots networks that provide humanitarian, legal and financial assistance to victims;
- Organizations that provide indirect assistance to victims through preventive measures and training. Many of the projects selected involve rehabilitation and education programmes to help the victims become self-sufficient and less vulnerable to exploitation.

### Application requirements

- The original application form, available online, must be submitted by airmail and should be signed and dated. Applications can be submitted in English, French or Spanish;
- An organization can request maximum US\$ 15,000 per grant from the Fund;
- Projects will be selected from all the geographical regions in order to provide the widest possible view of contemporary forms of slavery in the world;
- The project should take gender balance into consideration;
- Project grants should be allocated for direct assistance to victims and to local civil society organizations. Grants can be channelled via an international NGO, provided that it does not keep any part of the grant for its activities;
- The Board will not consider an application for which the secretariat has not received, at its request, additional satisfactory information after a second reminder.



### Projects benefiting from the Voluntary Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery

#### **Mahila Seva Samithi,**

**India:** In 2005, US\$ 2,000 worth of aid helped 88 victims of child labour to be admitted to elementary and primary schools and supplied with study

materials. The project ensured follow-up evaluations every four months to track the children's progress.

#### **Jadakris, Nigeria:**

In 2006, 30 victims of human trafficking received support worth US\$ 6,400 for rehabilitation and retraining to enable them to earn a livelihood.



## Where to submit an application

Application forms for grants should be submitted by **15 September each year** to:

**United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery  
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**

Palais des Nations

8–14, avenue de la Paix

CH–1211 Geneva 10 - Switzerland

Phone: +41 (0)22 928 93 81 or +41 (0)22 928 91 64

Fax: +41 (0)22 928 90 66

E-mail: [SlaveryFund@ohchr.org](mailto:SlaveryFund@ohchr.org)

**Applicants should submit a fully completed application form available on the OHCHR website.**



For more information, please also consult the **United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery brochure**.

## 4. “Assisting Communities Together” Project

In 1998 OHCHR and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) established the **“Assisting Communities Together” (ACT) Project**, which provides small grants to civil society actors, such as NGOs, local associations, educational institutions and professional groups carrying out **human rights education and training activities in local communities**. Throughout the years, it has focused on supporting activities in the context of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004) and of the World Programme for Human Rights Education (2005-ongoing). Since 1998, OHCHR and UNDP have supported more than 800 projects in 73 countries.

The overall administration of the ACT Project is coordinated by OHCHR headquarters. In each participating country, a local “ACT Task Force”, composed of staff of the UNDP country office and the OHCHR field presence (when applicable) as well as other United Nations entities, disseminates the application forms, selects the activities to be granted and is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the activities through direct contacts with the grant recipients.

The ACT Project takes a bottom-up approach by encouraging action at the community level with a view to improving respect for human rights in practical ways, relevant to people’s specific conditions. The ACT Project is principally aimed at strengthening local capacities for human rights education, training and public information. For instance, it has funded:

- Human rights workshops and training courses for various groups, including teachers, women, social workers, public officials and indigenous peoples;
- Human rights awareness campaigns with cultural events, such as theatre performances, art exhibits and rock concerts;
- The production/translation of human rights materials and their dissemination through the media;
- The creation of information centres for the promotion and protection of human rights;
- Education programmes for specific vulnerable groups, such as prisoners, sex workers, HIV-positive persons, orphans, internally displaced persons; and
- Human rights education activities for children and youth, such as school competitions and the establishment of human rights youth clubs.

### How to access the ACT Project

The ACT Project provides financial support to grass-roots civil society actors, in particular local NGOs, educational institutions, professional groups, local media and women's organizations that carry out human rights education activities.

#### **Application requirements**

- The applicant must be a civil society organization or association with institutional capacity to carry out the project it is proposing;
- The proposed project should be innovative, replicable and designed to provide maximum sustainable impact locally;
- Projects should last no longer than six months and have a maximum budget of US\$ 5,000;
- Applications are disseminated and collected by the national United Nations focal point for the ACT Project in participating countries, within deadlines set nationally. The grantee enters into a grant agreement with the UNDP country office or with OHCHR;
- Project applications and reports can be submitted in English, French or Spanish.



## Examples of ACT Project funding

In **Madagascar**, the ACT Project supported an initiative focused on the rights of children with disabilities, which included a puppet show and the preparation and distribution of a related manual. The project reached more than 6,000 pupils in 14 schools. School directors have recommended that the event should be repeated at the beginning of each school year.

**The South Women's Media Forum** in Rafah, southern Gaza Strip, occupied Palestinian territory, was set up in 2005, for young women, particularly those working in the media. The founders believed it was important to provide a forum for women media workers who found it more difficult than their male counterparts to meet, network and share ideas regarding their work, and recognizing that women's

rights were not adequately addressed by the media. The ACT grant supported human rights training, focusing on women's rights, for 15 women journalists from the southern Gaza Strip; the production of the first issue of a specialized magazine for women in the media, which focused on human rights; and five workshops for women from different areas in the southern Gaza Strip.



## How to contact the ACT Project

### ACT Project

#### Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Palais des Nations

8–14, avenue de la Paix

CH–1211 Geneva 10 - Switzerland

Fax: +41 (0)22 928 90 61

E-mail: [ACTProject@ohchr.org](mailto:ACTProject@ohchr.org)

**For more information on the ACT Project consult the *ACT Project, Assisting Communities Together* brochure for Phases I and II of the Project on OHCHR's website.**

## 5. United Nations Democracy Fund

The **United Nations Democracy Fund** (UNDEF) was established in July 2005 as a result of the 2005 World Summit.<sup>79</sup> Its primary purpose is to support democratization throughout the world by providing assistance to governmental, non-governmental, national, regional and international organizations, including relevant United Nations departments, offices, funds, programmes and agencies. UNDEF finances projects that build and strengthen democratic institutions, promote human rights and ensure the participation of all groups in democratic processes. Eligible activities include:

- Democratic dialogue and support for constitutional processes;
- Civil society empowerment;
- Civic education, voter registration and strengthening political parties;
- Citizens' access to information;
- Human rights and fundamental freedoms; and
- Accountability, transparency and integrity.

UNDEF is administered by the **United Nations Office for Partnerships**, at United Nations headquarters in New York. An Advisory Board of 19 members was established to provide policy guidance and to recommend funding proposals for approval by the Secretary-General. The Advisory Board consists of Member States, representatives from international NGOs and personal representatives of the Secretary-General. In the first round of project selection and fund disbursements in 2006, the then Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, approved 125 projects worth US\$ 36 million, covering all regions.

### How to access the United Nations Democracy Fund

UNDEF can receive applications for project funding from a wide range of democracy and governance actors, including national human rights institutions (NHRIs), but with a particular focus on civil society organizations, such as national and international NGOs, research and policy institutes, and professional associations.

Some of the requirements that UNDEF-financed projects must meet are:

- Projects must generally be implemented over a period of two years;
- Grants do not in principle exceed US\$ 500,000 for any given project and are usually of a minimum of US\$ 50,000;
- Applications from all countries, as well as regional and global initiatives, are considered; and
- Preference will be given to applicants from countries and regions where the difficulties of democracy are more critical and pervasive, such as countries emerging from conflict, new and restored democracies, the least developed countries, and low- and middle-income countries.

<sup>79</sup> See General Assembly resolution 60/1 on the 2005 World Summit Outcome.

UNDEF aims at supporting projects that promote democracy and whose outputs would strengthen, for instance, the relations between civil society and governmental bodies, the inclusion and participation of marginalized segments of society and vulnerable groups, or foster South-South cooperation.



### **How to apply to UNDEF**

Organizations wishing to apply for UNDEF funding should visit its website, where they will be prompted to complete an online proposal, which can be completed in English or French. The Fund will not accept proposals submitted by e-mail, regular post, fax, hand or courier delivery or any other channel.

### **How to contact UNDEF**

United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF)

#### **United Nations**

1 UN Plaza, Room DC1-1330

New York, NY 10017

United States of America

Phone: +1 917 367 42 10 or +1 917 367 80 62

Fax: +1 212 963 14 86

E-mail: [democracyfund@un.org](mailto:democracyfund@un.org)

**For more information, please visit the [UNDEF website](#).**

## 6. The United Nations Voluntary Fund on Disability

The **United Nations Voluntary Fund on Disability** was established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 32/133, in connection with preparations for the 1981 International Year of Disabled Persons. The General Assembly has since decided that the Fund should continue and it now provides small grants to support activities aimed at building the capacity of civil society organizations to take part in the implementation of the **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**.

The Fund provides small grants to support catalytic and innovative activities to:

- Promote greater awareness of the Convention and disability issues, and support the implementation of the Convention;
- Permit the exchange of knowledge and experience, as well as dissemination of inclusive and accessible policies and practices;
- Promote mainstreaming of disability in the development agenda; and
- Build the capacity of stakeholders to improve the livelihoods and well-being of persons with disabilities in developing countries, and to implement the Convention (stakeholders may include organizations of persons with disabilities, other civil society organizations, Governments, private sector organizations and international development donors).

The Fund is administered by the **Department of Economic and Social Affairs** at United Nations headquarters in New York.

### How to access the United Nations Voluntary Fund on Disability

Since its establishment in 1981, the Fund has supported activities that aim to build national and institutional capacities to improve the livelihood and well-being of persons with disabilities in developing countries. It has also supported awareness-raising on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, such as training, communications support and public information activities. Funding is available to both civil society organizations and Governments, but does not extend to individuals.

Project proposals are accepted throughout the year. Civil society organizations wishing to submit a proposal first need to obtain a letter of concurrence/non-objection from the relevant governmental officials, prior to submitting a request for assistance to the Fund. Civil society organizations may wish to consult the local UNDP office about procedures for obtaining such a letter.



## **How to apply to the United Nations Voluntary Fund on Disability**

A project proposal template is available for use when submitting applications for assistance. Project proposals will be accepted in other formats provided that all necessary information is included. Proposals may be submitted in English, French or Spanish. Project proposal templates are available from the **United Nations Enable website**.

Proposals should be sent by e-mail, fax or post (e-mail submissions are preferred) to:

**Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**  
**Department for Economic and Social Affairs**  
**United Nations**

Two UN Plaza, DC2-1372

New York, NY 10017

United States of America

Fax: +1 212 963 01 11

E-mail: [enable@un.org](mailto:enable@un.org)

**For more information on the Fund, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and on the work of the United Nations on disability, please visit the United Nations Enable website.**



