Our Goal

Ensuring Universal Participation at Every session of the Human Rights Council

Join the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund success story!

LDCs/SIDS TRUST FUND

Pledging Event and Cocktail Reception

Voluntary Technical Assistance Trust Fund to Support the Participation of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Work of the Human Rights Council

Date and venue: Friday 15 November, 10:00–12:00 in Room XXII, Palais des Nations, Geneva

Co-conveners: The Permanent Mission of Maldives to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva, and the Permanent Mission of Mauritius to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva, together with the two co-facilitators for LDCs/SIDS, H.E. Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox (Finland) and H.E. Ms. Caroline Bwanali Mussa (Malawi), and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Background: Established in 2012 by HRC/RES/19/26 and operationalized in 2014, the Voluntary Technical Assistance Trust Fund to Support the Participation of Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States (hereafter "Trust Fund") aims at ensuring that eligible LDCs and SIDS, in particular those without a permanent representation in Geneva, are able to participate and contribute to the work of the Human Rights Council. In order to support delegates from these countries, thirty-five (35) countries have so far provided financial contributions to the Trust Fund, thus enabling the participation of two hundred and eighty-one (281) government officials (164 women, 117 men) from 71 LDCs and SIDS in the work of the Human Rights Council .

Nevertheless, the amount of voluntary contributions started declining sharply since the COVID -19 pandemic and in 2023 marked the lowest since the Trust Fund's operationalization. If such a trend continues, a significant financial challenge is expected in continuing to accommodate current levels of LDCs/SIDS' participation in the Human Rights Council (up to 15 delegates per session).

Objectives: This pledging event is being organized following the side-event entitled *"Our Success Stories"* held on the margins of the 56th session of the Human Rights Council, where several delegations expressed their hopes for official pledging opportunities towards the Trust Fund. The pledging event will also provide an opportunity for former beneficiaries of the Trust Fund who are now based in Geneva to share their experiences, on how the contributions of donor countries and the capacity-building training provided by OHCHR have empowered them to better engage with human rights mechanisms beyond the Council, and even contribute to the opening of their Permanent Missions in Geneva.

Outcome: This event will be a unique opportunity for existing and potential funding partner countries to show their support and commitment to the participation of LDCs/SIDS in the Council by making pledges for the Trust Fund.

Format: The two-hour side event will start with the opening statement by the High Commissioner, followed by the testimonies of our invited panellists – former beneficiaries, currently posted at their Permanent Missions in Geneva.
Speakers from the floor will then be invited to make pledges. Speakers are encouraged to limit their interventions to 1 minutes and 30 seconds.

A cocktail reception, sponsored by the Permanent Mission of Finland, and a photo op will follow.

The event will be held in English. One-way interpretation from English to French will be provided.

Pledges: Both financial and non-financial pledges are welcome. Please communicate the details of your pledge in advance to the Secretariat (ohchr-sidsldc@un.org) **by 13 November 2024**, to help the organization of the event.

Opening statements:

- Mr. Volker Türk, High Commissioner for Human Rights;
- H.E. Mr. Omar Zniber, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Morocco to the United Nations and other International Organisations in Geneva and President of the Human Rights Council;
- H.E. Ms. Usha Chandnee Dwarka-Canabady, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Mauritius to the United Nations and other International Organisations in Geneva; and
- H.E. Ms. Salma Rasheed, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Maldives to the United Nations and other International Organisations in Geneva.

Moderator: Mr. Mahamane Cisse-Gouro, Director of the Human Rights Council and Treaty Mechanisms Division at OHCHR.

Panellists (Former beneficiaries of the Trust Fund):

- Ms. Bafou JENG, Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of the Gambia and former beneficiary of the Trust Fund;
- Ms. Janice R. ALLADIN, Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of Suriname and former beneficiary of the Trust Fund;
- Ms. Marissa Noelani Toomata, First Secretary at the Permanent Mission of the Independent State of Samoa and former beneficiary of the Trust Fund.

***