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4 July 2025

Excellency,

I have the honour to refer to the letter addressed to you by the High Commissioner for Human Rights on 16 June 2025, concerning the Human Rights Council-mandated activities that cannot be fully delivered in 2025 and 2026 due to the ongoing liquidity crisis affecting the United Nations.

In this regard, I enclose herewith an information note intended to provide Member States with additional context and detail regarding the impact of the liquidity crisis on the work of the Office. It complements the High Commissioner's letter and reflects the information shared by OHCHR representatives in their exchanges with delegations.

I wish to take this opportunity to reaffirm that the High Commissioner and the Office remain fully committed to implementing mandated activities to the greatest extent possible within the limits of available resources. The High Commissioner and the Office also remain steadfast in their commitment to continued close cooperation with the Council in navigating this challenging period, while safeguarding—and indeed strengthening—the promotion and protection of human rights.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Nada Al-Nashif
Deputy High Commissioner

Enclosure

His Excellency
Mr. Jürg Lauber
President of the Human Rights Council

Information note by the Secretariat

Human Rights Council-mandated activities that cannot be delivered in 2025 and 2026 due to the liquidity crisis affecting the United Nations

I - Introduction

On 16 June 2025, the High Commissioner for Human Rights addressed a letter to the President of the Human Rights Council, *inter alia*, informing the Council of the mandated activities that OHCHR will not be able to deliver in full and on time in 2025 and 2026 due to the worsening liquidity crisis affecting the United Nations. The letter was intended to be of an informative nature.

The present information note is intended to provide Member States with additional context and details as per exchanges between OHCHR representatives with delegations, including the criteria used to determine which specific activities were impacted.

As reflected in the High Commissioner's letter, the impact of the liquidity crisis on OHCHR's ability to deliver Council-mandated activities has been profound. This impact extends not only to the activities listed in Annex I of the letter, but also to virtually **all thematic and country-specific mandates currently being implemented by OHCHR**.

OHCHR deeply regrets not being able to implement all Council-mandated activities in full. Indeed, every effort has been made to deliver as many mandates as possible. However, **full implementation is unfortunately not feasible when only 73 per cent of the approved budget has been allotted**, a significant decrease from the 87 per cent received in 2024.

II - Budgetary constraints

The 73 percent allocation encompasses both staff and non-staff costs. The Office has been allocated 85 percent of its resources for core staff salaries, 73 percent for temporary personnel supporting mandated activities, and only 45 percent for operational costs and activity implementation. After accounting for fixed operational expenses, the effective funds available for implementing activities amount to 35 percent of what was approved in OHCHR's budget. This significant funding shortfall for temporary personnel and programmatic activities impacts on the Office's ability to deliver mandated activities within expected timeframes.

Furthermore, the ongoing hiring freeze, expected to continue until year-end, impacts timely recruitment of personnel, affecting the effective execution of mandates.

The Secretary General informed Member States that resolving the liquidity crisis in the near term appears unlikely, and there remains considerable uncertainty about improvements by 2026. The projected reduction in the regular budget for 2026 further heightens concerns in an already difficult situation.

III – Overall Criteria used to reduce staffing and activities

It is important to underscore that in determining the implementation of Council-mandated activities in light of available resources, OHCHR has treated all mandates equally. No distinction was made based on the content or subject matter of the mandates, as all are considered equally important by the Office. The list in Annex I to the High Commissioner's letter of 16 June was based solely on budgetary considerations.

At the same time, Human Rights Council mandates differ significantly in type of delivery, resources and staffing they require. As a result, the approach within respective categories of spending is different. However, it must be emphasized that in each category of spending, substantial cuts have been made and the approach used is intended to make the relative impact across different mandates and activities consistent.

The budget reductions impact on both the staffing levels required to carry out mandates and the non-post (activity) resources necessary for implementation. In an effort to stretch the limited budget as far as possible, OHCHR sought to reduce implementation costs across all mandates, wherever feasible e.g. by holding workshops, panels, and events online without interpretation, and by reducing travel.

Despite these efforts, the budget gap remains large, as staffing costs represent the largest share of OHCHR's expenses.

From the beginning of 2025, OHCHR has worked to deliver as much of the mandated work as possible. However, once the final allotment was confirmed by the Controller, the Office was compelled to reassess its capacity to implement all of its activities, including those mandated by the Council. As a result, OHCHR concluded that the existing budget shortfall would not allow for the full delivery of all mandates.

IV. Delivery of thematic mandates

The following criteria were used to determine which thematic mandates could be delivered in the context of reduced resources:

- a) **Postponed 2024 mandates prioritized.** As previously communicated to the Council, activities originally mandated for 2024 but deferred to 2025 (pursuant to Council decision 55/115) were given priority for implementation. Most of these activities are expected to be delivered by the end of 2025 (see Annex II to the High Commissioner's letter of 16 June).
- b) **Staff already on board.** Delivering mandated activities requires staff. Perennial mandates frequently depend on staff already within OHCHR, while some recurring mandates and many one-time and short-term mandates do not. Rather than recruiting separate temporary staff for each mandate, OHCHR is able in some cases to combine resources from different mandates, allowing for more efficiency through longer-term contracts with staff providing support to more than one Council-mandated activity throughout the year. Many other mandates are fulfilled by staff that need to be hired each

year on short-term contracts of two to six months. Mandates with staff already onboard could be delivered, although with reduced resources for the activities involved. These decisions were informed by the number of mandates in a given thematic area and the alignment with the expertise of staff already on board.

- c) **Mandates scheduled for early 2025.** A small number of Council mandates were scheduled for delivery in January or February 2025. As the full extent of budget reductions was only confirmed during the second quarter of 2025, OHCHR had already delivered these mandates, albeit with reductions.

Most thematic mandated activities fall into one of the three categories outlined above and have therefore been delivered or are expected to be delivered in 2025, albeit with significant reductions. **The mandates that OHCHR is unable to deliver—or will only be partially delivered—are those that fall outside these categories. The estimated cost for the full implementation of the thematic mandates in this final category (the 17 thematic mandates listed in Annex I to the High Commissioner’s letter of 16 June) is approximately USD 2.3 million, resources that OHCHR does not have at its disposal.**

As noted, other thematic mandates have been delivered with significant reductions. For example, Special Procedures mandate holders can undertake only one country visit this year, instead of two. Special Procedures Working Groups have had to reduce both the number of sessions (with reduced meeting time) and country visits. All consultancies and additional activities have been cancelled.

Other Council-established thematic mechanisms, including Intergovernmental Working Groups and Expert Mechanisms, have also experienced significant budget cuts, limiting their ability to travel and hold sessions.

Substantial reductions have also been made to mandates requesting the strengthening of OHCHR’s staffing capacities and to activities funded through thematic mandates. This includes posts and work in the areas of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; Sustainable Development; the Right to Development; Biodiversity; Digital Technology; and Children’s Rights. In each of these areas, the limited availability of funds means that OHCHR can only deliver a reduced portion of the mandates, which were originally intended to enhance the Office’s capacity and expand our work in these areas.

V – Delivery of geographic mandates

The staff for country mechanisms is already on board, except for newly-mandated mechanisms. This means that the impact of limited budgets is manifested differently than in short-term mandates, for which staff need to be hired. The most effective way to reduce mechanisms’ spending is through limiting staff costs. As with thematic Expert Mechanisms, the country mechanisms have also been impacted by the liquidity crisis, facing reductions in staffing and cuts in resources for their activities. Country-specific special procedures have also reduced their number of visits from two to one per year.

Staff capacity has been reduced to below 80 per cent of the resources allocated for posts, while activities have been adjusted to remain within the 35 per cent of resources available for non-post expenses. With reduced staffing and limited funds for activities, OHCHR has had to scale back technical cooperation and capacity-building services, including training, workshops, and the provision of expert advice on legislation and national policies.

In light of the above, geographic mandates have not been included in the High Commissioner's list of non-deliverables, but they will be implemented at a drastically reduced level.

Investigative mechanisms

Regarding the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in its resolution S-37/1, the Human Rights Council requested the High Commissioner to urgently establish a fact-finding mission (FFM) on the serious violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law committed in the Provinces of North Kivu and South Kivu. In the same resolution, the Council decided to establish an independent commission of inquiry (COI) to continue the work undertaken by the FFM following the submission of its comprehensive report (October 2025).

Considering the severe liquidity constraints affecting the regular budget of the United Nations, the receipt of additional allotments was deemed unlikely. OHCHR therefore advanced internal resources to support the FFM activities. As a result, the FFM will deliver against its mandated requirements: an oral update was just presented, and a comprehensive report will be presented at the 60th session of the Council.

However, at the current time, while taking note of the request by the Council Bureau that the office makes all efforts to ensure the implementation of Council resolution S/37-1, OHCHR confirms it has exhausted available internal resources and is unable to support the start of the COI's work.

Pending the receipt of the required funding (budgeted at approximately \$4 million as per the PBI), OHCHR will continue with its regular archiving and follow up activities, while the joint Human Rights Office in the DRC will continue its mandate of human rights monitoring and reporting, including of the situation in the north and south Kivu provinces.

The inability to provide any support to the DRC COI is solely due to it being the latest investigative body mandated by the HRC Council. The **existing investigative mechanisms** have a minimum of assigned resources and are already operational, although working with a maximum cap of 60 per cent staffing capacity and severely limited operational budget. Several of these mechanisms are much below that cap due to the hiring freeze.

VI. Other reductions

Concerning other human rights mandates and activities more broadly, the 34th session of the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee and the 36th session of the Working Group on Communications under the Complaint Procedure, scheduled for August 2025, will need to be postponed. A formal notification will follow. In addition, the Treaty Bodies with three sessions will

only be able to hold two in 2025, pre-sessional working groups have been cancelled and the meeting time of those treaty bodies with two sessions has been reduced.

VII - Cost breakdowns at mandate level

The United Nations Secretariat does not currently possess the mechanisms required to provide financial information at the mandate level. As such, it is not in a position to provide information related to either allotments or expenditures.

The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), which is a subsidiary body of the United Nations General Assembly tasked with reviewing the United Nations' administrative and budgetary matters, sees merit in further enhancing the tracking of budgetary requirements and expenditures. In response, OHCHR has agreed to **pilot** this initiative. Nevertheless, given the complexity this entails and the necessary investments in system improvements, the realization of the full benefit will require time and sustained effort.

As part of the United Nations Secretariat, OHCHR's budgetary and financial matters are governed by the relevant intergovernmental bodies in New York, such as United Nations General Assembly Fifth Committee, which is responsible for administrative and budgetary matters. All pertinent budgetary information is **publicly available**, including OHCHR's proposed programme plan and budget, individual oral statements of programme budget implications, revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions adopted by the Human Rights Council, the ACABQ report on the proposed programme budget and resolutions of the Fifth Committee.

Geneva, 4 July 2025