Evaluation of the Guatemala and Honduras Country Programmes and the Subregional Programme in El Salvador

Final Report

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Table of Acronyms

- AWP — Annual work plan
- CICIG — International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala
- CO — Country Office
- COPREDEH — Presidential Commission for Human Rights (Guatemala)
- COVID-19 — Coronavirus disease
- CPWD — Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- CSO — Civil Society Organizations
- DESIB — Development and Economic and Social Issues Branch
- DEXREL — Donor and External Relations Section
- EOY — End of the year report
- ESCR — Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- FOTCD — Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division
- FP — OHCHR Field Presence
- HQ — OHCHR Headquarters
- HR — Human rights
- HCHR — UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
- HRA — Human Rights Adviser
- HRBA — Human Rights-Based Approach
- HRD — Human rights defender
- HRO — Human rights officer
- IAComHR — Inter-American Commission on Human Rights
- LGBTI — Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex
- MACCIH — Mission to Support the Fight against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras
- MOU — Memorandum of Understanding
- NHRI — National Human Rights Institution
- NPM — National Protection Mechanism of Human Rights Defenders (Honduras)
- OAG — Office of the Attorney General
- OCHA — UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
- OHCHR — Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
- OHCHR Guatemala — Office in Guatemala of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
- OHCHR Honduras — Office in Honduras of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
- OMP — Office Management Plan
- PBRB — Programme and Budget Review Board
- PDH — Procuraduría de los Derechos Humanos (NHRI in Guatemala)
- PMS — Performance Monitoring System
- PPMES — Policy, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Service
- PSMS — Programme Support and Management Services
- PwD — Persons with Disabilities
- RC — UN Resident Coordinator
- RO — OHCHR's Regional Office for Central America and the Dominican Republic
- SIMORE — Recommendations Monitoring System
- SPB — Special Procedures Branch
- ToRs — Terms of reference
- TJ — Transitional Justice

• UNCT	UN Country Team
• UNDAF	UN Development Assistance Framework
• UNDP	UN Development Program
• UNEG	UN Evaluation Group
• UNESCO	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
• UNFPA	UN Population Fund
• UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
• UNICEF	UN Children Fund
• UNODC	UN Office on Drug and Crimes
• UNS	UN System
• UNV	UN Volunteers
• UN Women	UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
• UPR	Universal Periodic Review
• VAW	Violence against Women
• WRGS	Women Rights and Gender Section

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Executive Summary

Background

This evaluation is part of the cooperation agreement signed between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and Sweden. The agreement requested OHCHR to carry out an independent evaluation of OHCHR's work in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, which Sweden has supported financially since 2017. The evaluation assesses the work funded by Sweden as well as the overall programs in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador carried out during that period from 2017 to 2020. As per the evaluation's terms of reference (ToRs), this evaluation is focused primarily on lesson learning and secondly on accountability and reporting to donors.

As Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras are located in the same region and share many common challenges, the evaluation team was asked to apply a regional focus when assessing the work of the three country programs. The evaluation team found some significant initiatives where the three country presences are developing joint work and coordination, in particular, in relation to migration and in responding to the COVID-19 crisis. Beyond this work, the evaluation team found no overarching strategy for these three presences to collaborate, coordinate and share information in a systematic way. The report identifies some opportunities to increase information sharing and collaboration between the three presences.

Methodology

The evaluation is organised around the five Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) evaluation criteria as set out in the evaluation ToRs. It also includes as evaluation criteria gender and human rights principles of non-discrimination and equality, with emphasis on women's and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex persons' (LGBTI) rights, disability inclusion and indigenous peoples' rights. The evaluation took lessons learning and utilization-focused approaches.

The evaluation team used a mixed-methods approach and triangulated different sources of data, with a particular focus on methods to determine lessons concerning what worked, what didn´t, and why. The methodology included: review of key documents; an inception phase including a five-day mission to Geneva and development of an evaluation analytical framework and evaluation tools; individual and focus groups interviews conducted remotely; and three case studies illustrating good practices.

The world health and humanitarian crisis provoked by the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent travel bans made it impossible to conduct country visits as established in the original inception report. The evaluation team, in coordination with OHCHR Policy, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Service (PPMES), decided to proceed with the evaluation remotely. Data-collection methods were modified and adjusted.

Main Findings

Relevance

The evaluation team found the work of OHCHR in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador to be significantly relevant to OHCHR's mandate as set out in the pillars of the Office Management Plan (OMP) 2018 – 2021 and the equivalent thematic priorities of the former OMP for 2017. Respondents agree that OHCHR is working on critical issues where OHCHR adds value.

In the three countries, OHCHR's on-going dialogues with civil society organizations have contributed to identify areas of work were the Office adds value. Strategic planning processes have also taken into account requests for technical advice and capacity building received from different State institutions.

OHCHR's presences have used adequate strategies to achieve results, including: 1) strengthening the capacity of rights holders and duty bearers; 2) using its voice to advocate for change, 3) using its convening role to bring together different stakeholders; and 4) working collaboratively with partners to advance human rights (HR) work.

While the areas of work identified through the strategic planning process clearly reflect the current realities in the countries under review, strategic prioritization can be strengthened in the three field presences to provide adequate direction to staff and a clear road map to achieve projected results.

Effectiveness

The evidence reviewed—including End of Year Reports (EOY) (2017 to 2019), the report to Sweden and other donors, and interviews with internal and external respondents—confirm good progress towards achieving the results set out in the Annual Work Plans (AWPs) during 2017 – 2020 in the three country presences.

OHCHR efforts to strengthen the capacity of judicial operators, fight against impunity for present and past human rights violations and improve access to justice for marginalized and discriminated groups is well-recognized in the three countries. Similarly, the accompaniment to Civil Society Organizations (CSO) and defenders in the region was valued as critical support, in particular the monitoring of trials and the support provided to human rights defenders (HRD) criminalized for their work. OHCHR is also considered an important ally in the protection of migrants in the subregion. Migration is one of the areas where OHCHR has developed a regional approach and coordinated work among country presences in the region.

OHCHR's work has increased attention to economic, social and cultural rights (ESCR) including the right to land, food, right to water and labour rights in the region, for instance, in relation to the impact of development on the right to land (OHCHR Guatemala) and on the implementation of the guiding principles on business and human rights (OHCHR Honduras).

OHCHR has also provided substantive support to the governments in the three countries to establish national systems for follow-up and implementation of recommendations of

treaty bodies and Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and to build national institutions' capacities on human rights.

Lastly, respondents recognized that OHCHR has played an important role raising awareness of respect for human rights, in particular proportionality of the use of force as well as to deter the escalation of violence during social unrest and public demonstrations.

Efficiency

The evaluation team concludes that the results achieved justify the invested resources. The three country presences have achieved substantive results with limited resources. The expertise, accessibility and availability of staff to travel outside the capital to accompany rural and indigenous communities are highly valued by rights holders in the three countries.

While the adequacy of the organizational arrangements is very different in each one of the presences, the evaluation team found some challenges that are applicable to the Country Offices (CO) in Honduras and Guatemala that have impacted the efficiency and sustainability of OHCHR's work in these countries. These challenges are related to recruitment delays, contractual arrangements and changes in leadership that have affected the efficiency of OHCHR's work. OHCHR in Honduras and Guatemala need to prioritize the internal strengthening of its structure and the consolidation of their teams. These challenges confronted by the COs in Honduras and Guatemala offer important lessons for the field presence / the national senior human rights officer in El Salvador, as the program team there is looking towards expanding and consolidating its presence in the country.

Impact Orientation

The Guatemala and Honduras Country Programmes and the Subregional Programme in El Salvador have supported the achievement of significant thematic pillar outcomes. OHCHR's reliable and timely information, analysis of the human rights situation as well as technical support have been highly relevant to partners.

The three country presences have enhanced the capacities of duty-bearers and rights holders to investigate past and present human rights violations and to challenge gender inequality and discrimination against marginalized groups. The support provided to women, LGBTI persons, persons with disabilities (PwDs) and indigenous and Afro-descendent communities would contribute to promote their rights over the longer term.

OHCHR's monitoring and documentation roles have contributed to the protection of defenders and more broadly to the protection of civic space. Lastly, OHCHR's efforts to encourage State institutions in the three countries to follow-up international human rights recommendations can lead to a progressive integration of recommendations in public policies.

Sustainability

The country presences in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador have invested in long-term processes, to enhance the capacity of State institutions to integrate human rights standards in their work and the capacity of CSOs to claim their rights. However, the

majority of respondents agree that without the presence of OHCHR in these countries, human rights protection will falter.

The sustainability of results is also linked to the financial sustainability of OHCHR's presence in these countries. To ensure the long-term sustainability of the work in the three countries, OHCHR HQ needs to commit longer-term resources to support this work by prioritizing the use of non-earmarked funds.

Gender and human rights integration

The three country presences have maintained a strong engagement and on-going dialogue with women, LGBTI, Indigenous and Afro-descendants, and people with disabilities (PwD) organizations (to a lesser extend in Honduras and El Salvador). This has resulted in a number of activities focusing on gender equality, disability inclusion and indigenous peoples' rights planned for 2017-2020 in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. The evaluation team also found good examples that illustrate the integration of gender and LGBTI concerns in general activities. Nonetheless, a gender analysis could be more systematically integrated in OHCHR's work at the country level.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

The evaluation team found the work of OHCHR in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador to be significantly relevant to OHCHR's mandate as set out in the OMP 2018 – 2021 and the equivalent thematic priorities of the former OMP for 2017. Respondents agree that OHCHR is working on critical issues where OHCHR adds value.

The evidence reviewed confirm good progress towards achieving the results set out in the AWPs during 2017 – 2020 in the three country presences. The three field presences have supported the achievement of significant thematic pillar results.

The evaluation team concludes that the results achieved justify the invested resources. The three country presences have achieved substantive results with limited resources. However, FPs in Guatemala and Honduras, with support from HQ, need to prioritize the internal strengthening of its structure and the consolidation of their teams to overcome current challenges related to human resources and project management. In El Salvador, the current model—having staff present in the country with strong support from RO as well as headquarters—has proven successful, but would need to be strengthened to sustain the current workload.

The three FPs have invested in long-term processes to enhance the capacity of State institutions to integrate human rights standards in their work and the capacity of CSOs to claim their rights. However, the majority of respondents agree that without the presence of OHCHR in these countries, human rights protection will falter.

Concerning the financial sustainability of OHCHR's presence in these countries, OHCHR HQ needs to commit longer-term resources to support this work by prioritizing the use of non-earmarked funds.

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Recommendations

1. Strategic planning

The three FPs need to improve their strategic prioritization process to provide adequate direction to staff and a clear road map to achieve projected results. Having more regular reflection and needs assessments would help reassess priorities and adapt country work. This process should:

1) include a thorough prioritization of objectives based on and analysis of Field presences (FP) added value in the different areas of intervention;
2) take into account lessons learned from the monitoring and documentation work;
3) include technical support to help staff prioritize and find a balance between achieving the country results defined in the work plans and responding to emergencies and day to day work; and
4) assess the experiences of other country offices in the region that have undertaken similar processes.

In particular, El Salvador should: 1) develop a stand-alone country strategy that articulates the structure of the program; what it specifically intends to address; how would it do it and what it is expected to achieve in a particular period of time. The strategy should also spell out the role of the Human Rights Officer (HRO) vis-a-vis the Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator and how it fits in the overall country strategy; and 2) strengthen the current team by increasing staff positions to support commitments. Consider recruiting an international staff member to help maintain high-level interactions with State institutions and the international community and ensure immunity.

2. Human resources and administration

FPs, in collaboration with HQ, should develop a deployment strategy to strengthen the organizational structure, including:

1. A contingency plan to prioritize and accelerate the recruitment of vacant posts;
2. A rationale for the current FP´s structure that clearly articulates staff's roles and responsibilities, and reporting lines;
3. A revision of staff's contractual arrangements to ensure continuity of the work. Having an appropriate contract level is important as it can impact the prospects to interact with State institutions.
4. A schedule setting up the frecuency and type of communication between Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division (FOTCD) and the COs in Guatemala and Honduras that includes regular conference calls to address progress on the organizational structure, contingencies for staff turnover and related logistics;

5. A scheme for ensuring staff well-being, that includes techniques and strategies to address conflict resolution inside and outside the Office.

Particularly in complex political contexts, OHCHR headquarters (HQ), in collaboration with FPs need to improve the planning of leadership changes in FPs. In particular, it needs to guarantee that clear institutional communication conveys to all partners the Office's commitment to continue with the implementation of the human rights mandate in the country to avoid misinformation that can cause institutional reputational damage. Gaps in senior leadership and extended interim positions should be avoided as a matter of priority.

In relation to administration of projects, DEXREL and Front Office at HQ level should improve administrative procedures to avoid delays in the signature of the projects (in particular regarding fund transfers and the recruitment of project staff) funded by donors as these delays impact their timely implementation.

Given the rapid staff turnover, OHCHR should develop a mechanism to serve as a repository of knowledge and historical memory of OHCHR interventions in each country. For example, OHCHR, in consultation with FPs, should establish and maintain a shared drive with documents accessible to all staff for knowledge sharing purposes. The focus on the knowledge hub should be on relevant information related to program implementation, including lessons learned, challenges, and synergies and dynamic with partners and relevant stakeholders.

3. Planning, monitoring and evaluation

FPs should revise outputs to make them more specific and enable a better assessment of progress over a concrete period of time. Outputs should indicate what measurable results the Office is looking to attain, specify beneficiaries and indicate how the FP is planning to do it. AWPs should also provide clear baselines to enable FPs to adequately monitor results at national level.

Conduct periodic lessons learned exercises and collect disaggregated data systematically and ensure that this data feeds into planning and strategic prioritization processes.

Develop tools to track the impact of the specialized training and technical support provided to State institutions and CSOs. Evaluation tools should measure how the knowledge generated has been used by beneficiaries and the subsequent impact. For instance, how judges have used specialized trainings and how the acquired knowledge is reflected in rulings.

4. Coordination and communication

Coordination between FPs and HQ has been strengthened and should continue to be improved to guarantee a constant common analysis and to identify adequate support. Staff rotation between HQ and FPs has contributed to build trust and enhance communication among staff and should continue to be encouraged.

At management level, there needs to be more regular communication and joint strategizing at critical moments when the FPs are confronted with complex political situations. While communication and joint strategizing have already improved, effective means to solve disagreements with FPs in relation to leadership and strategic approaches should be organized.

OHCHR has not developed an overarching strategy for the three Country programs to collaborate, coordinate and share information in a systematic way. While OHCHR's structure does not support the development of regional strategies among the FPs in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, a more systematic sharing of information and experiences would enhance OHCHR's work and impact in the subregion.

The subregional joint meetings held in the framework of the project with Sweden in Guatemala in October 2018 and in April 2020 are a good practice that should be replicated on an annual basis. These meetings can help identify areas for further information sharing and cooperation. In addition, regular conference calls among the three FPs should strengthen sharing of information and best practices in the region.

FPs and HQ should also pursue and reinforce the cooperation with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IAComHR). Taking into account the complementarity of the mandates of each entity, OHCHR and IAComHR could further their collaboration through, for example, common reporting, joint visits of special mechanisms and joint technical cooperation projects.

5. Funding

To ensure the long-term sustainability of the work in the three countries, HQ needs to commit longer-term resources to support this work by prioritizing the use of unearmarked extra-budgetary funding. Considering mounting limitations to access funds locally, OHCHR HQ should also consider strengthening its support from the Regular Program for Technical Cooperation Program of the SG (RPTC), which is funded from the Regular Budget.

HQ, particularly the Donor and External Relations Section (DEXREL), should strengthen the capacity of FPs to fundraise locally. Additionally, PPMES in coordination with FOTCD, could support FPs with the formulation logical frameworks or theories of change and the identification of measurable results and precise indicators as this is key to for the future sustainability of the three FPs.

1. Introduction

Programme Background

This report constitutes an independent evaluation of OHCHR's Guatemala and Honduras Country Programmes and the Subregional Programme in El Salvador, with a focus on the years 2017-2020. To contextualize the work of the country presences in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador and their impact in the region it is necessary to provide an overview of the different programs.

There are significant differences in terms of their structure, history and reporting lines between the three country programs. The COs in Guatemala and Honduras have been established by an agreement with the respective governments and report directly to FOTCD in HQ. The subregional program in El Salvador reports directly to the Regional Office for Central America and Dominican Republic (RO).

OHCHR Guatemala was established in January 2005 by an agreement between OHCHR and the Government of Guatemala. This agreement was renewed for the fourth time in 2017 for a new three-year period. The CO has a full-fledged mandate to monitor the human rights situation in the country, assist State institutions and CSOs in the implementation of international human rights obligations, and promote human rights. OHCHR Guatemala works from its office in Guatemala City and carries out field missions throughout the country. The Office has increased from 40 staff positions in 2017 to 50 in 2020.

OHCHR's engagement in Honduras dates back to 2010 when the Office deployed a Human Rights Adviser (HRA) in response to human rights violations following the 2009 *coup d'état*. The continued human rights crisis in Honduras prompted the decision of the Government to seek international specialized assistance in the area of human rights, which materialized in May 2015 with the signing of an agreement and the establishment of a CO. The mandate of OHCHR Honduras encompasses promotion and protection of all human rights, monitoring, reporting and technical assistance. OHCHR Honduras is based in the capital Tegucigalpa and reaches departments and communities through field or air missions. In terms of staffing, the Office has increased from 14 staff positions in 2016 to 33 in 2020.

The programme in El Salvador is implemented by RO. Since mid-2018, the RO has a permanent national team based in El Salvador working under the umbrella of the UN RC in the country. The team is composed of one National Senior Human Rights Officer and Adviser to the UN RC and two national UN Volunteers (UNVs) – working under the direct supervision, coordination and guidance of the Regional Representative for Central America. The team in El Salvador also receives strong support from two international staff members based in the RO in Panama.

Evaluation Background

This evaluation is part of the cooperation agreement signed between OHCHR and Sweden in October 2017. The agreement requested OHCHR to carry out an independent evaluation of OHCHR's work in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, which Sweden has supported financially since 2017. The evaluation assesses the work funded by Sweden as well as the overall programs in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador carried out during that period from 2017 to 2020.

As per the ToRs, this evaluation is focused primarily on lesson learning and secondly on accountability and reporting to donors. A key rationale for this emphasis is that learning lessons from OHCHR's work in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador can inform future strategies to strengthen human rights in these countries. Thus, the evaluation is intended to provide insights for strengthening country work, and produce clear and actionable recommendations identifying concrete actions.

As Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras are located in the same region and share many common challenges, the evaluation team was asked to apply a regional focus when assessing the work of the three country programs. In particular the ToRs request the evaluation team "to assess the communication, coordination and synergies amount the

programs, looking for opportunities to increase information sharing, collaboration and joint strategies."[1]

The evaluation team found some significant initiatives where the three country presences are developing joint work and coordination, in particular, in relation to migration and in responding to the COVID-19 crisis. The report also draws attention to some examples in which the different country presences have shared information and experiences. Beyond this work, the evaluation team found no overarching strategy for these three presences to collaborate, coordinate and share information in a systematic way. The report identifies some opportunities to increase information sharing and collaboration between the three presences.

Methodology

The evaluation took place between February and June 2020. It was guided by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN System (2016), the UNEG Handbook for Conducting Evaluations of Normative Work (2014) and Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality into Evaluations (2014), as well as OHCHR Evaluation Policy (2013). A utilization focus approach was the key organizing approach of this evaluation, which emphasizes the importance of working with evaluation users to ensure that results and recommendations are relevant and include follow up.

The evaluation analytical framework (Annex Three) operationalized the evaluation questions by aligning the specific sub-questions with both data sources and methods of data collection. The questions were framed along the OECD/DAC criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability), as set out in the evaluation ToRs. To ensure the integration of human rights and gender issues in the evaluation, it specifically includes as evaluation criteria gender and human rights principles of non-discrimination and equality, with emphasis on women's and LGBTI rights, disability inclusion and indigenous peoples' rights. Due to the limited availability of disaggregated data, the analyses rested mainly on documentation review and specialized interviews.

The evaluation used a mixed-methods approach and triangulated different sources of data, with a particular focus on methods to determine lessons of what worked or not and why. The evaluation team used the following methods:

- **Desk review**, which included the OMPs for 2014-2017 and 2018-2021, AWPs and EOY, funding agreements and reports, evaluations and other related documents from the field (including country presence annual and thematic reports, internal planning documents, press releases and other communication materials).
- **Semi-structured individual interviews** (in person, by video-conference, Skype or phone) with HQ and FP staff and key stakeholders. In total 194 interviews were conducted between late February and late May 2020 (see Annex Two for the complete list of respondents. In the tables below, private sector organizations are comprised under CSOs). The lists of respondents were established by FPs, in coordination with PPMES and the evaluation team. Appreciative inquiry was used during the interviews to focus on lessons learning; it consisted in asking questions

[1] See ToRs in Annex One, p.3.

concerning what worked well, why it worked well, and how what has worked can be scaled up to wider organizational processes.

- **Case studies.** The evaluation team, in coordination with the FPs, selected case studies for each country covered in the evaluation. Each case study focused on thematic areas developed and/or being carried out by the Country/Subregional Programmes.

El Salvador	32
CSO	12
OHCHR - RO	6
OHCHR - ES	4
State	6
UNCT	2
International community	2

Guatemala	66
CSO	22
OHCHR- Guatemala	24
State	11
UNCT	4
International community	5

Honduras	66
CSO	30
OHCHR - Honduras	19
State	9
UNCT	4
International community	4

Others	29
OHCHR - Mexico	1
OHCHR - HQ	25
International community	3

To evaluate the impact of OHCHR's work in the three countries, the evaluation team developed an impact-analysis framework based on the reports produced by the three FPs (see Annex six). The information used to develop the analysis was then triangulated with information from interviews with external stakeholders, including State representatives, CSOs, members of the UNCT and the international community. The evaluation team conducted 114 interviews with stakeholders external to OHCHR.

Modifications of the data-collection methods due to COVID-19

The world health and humanitarian crisis provoked by the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent travel bans made it impossible to conduct country visits as established in the original inception report. Following careful consideration of the current context, the evaluation team, in coordination with PPMES, decided to proceed with the evaluation remotely. Data-collection methods were modified as follows:

- Interviews in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador were entirely conducted by videoconference. Interviews in Geneva HQ were for the most part conducted in in person.
- Questions were prioritized and clustered.
- When necessary, a written follow-up to the interview with some interlocutors was carried out.
- The questionnaire was sent to the identified external stakeholders before conducting the interview.

Limitations of the evaluation

The virtual format of the evaluation resulted in several limitations:

- Remotely conducting team interviews limited the group learning dynamic that a focus group could have offered;
- Team dynamics were difficult to perceive through virtual devices;
- Virtual interviews limited the possibilities to build rapport with stakeholders and to develop a contextualized perspective of OHCHR's work;
- Some interlocutors were not as confident or felt free to speak through digital devices.
- In El Salvador, the availability of State representatives (including from the former government) who could participate in the evaluation was limited.

Remote data-gathering methods entailed also a modification of the evaluation timeline, since the interviews could not be concentrated in three to four days per country, as originally planned during the field visits foreseen for March 2020. Instead, interviews were spread over almost two months, delaying the drafting of the reports.

Other limitations not linked to COVID-19 include:

- **Access to documentation and information**. In some cases, key documentation was provided to the evaluation team at a very late stage of the data gathering process.
- The evaluation team did not have access to all available information related to the challenges of the functioning and structure of the Offices in Honduras and Guatemala as well as the measures taken to address them. This limited the evaluation team's ability to comprehensively assess some aspects of efficiency.

2. Findings

2.1. Relevance

1) How relevant have been the Country/Subregional Programmes to the situation of human rights in the countries, the Country Offices' mandates, OHCHR's Management Plan and the Sustainable Development Goals?

2) How do the Country/Subregional Programmes align with and support human rights priorities at the national and regional level? Do programmes take into account OHCHR's comparative advantages?

The evaluation team concludes that the work of OHCHR in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador is significantly relevant to OHCHR's mandate as set out in the pillars of the OMP 2018 – 2021 and the equivalent thematic priorities of the former OMP for 2017, as well as for the projects documents for the three countries contained in the Agreement between Sweden and OHCHR on support to the three countries. At country level, the majority of stakeholders, including CSO, UN agencies and many respondents from government institutions agreed that **OHCHR is working on critical issues where OHCHR adds value.**

Respondents highly valued OHCHR presence in the three countries, as the Office enables the voice of HRDs to be heard, and keeps the international community informed and engaged in the human rights situation in the region. OHCHR's broad mandate monitoring State's compliance with international human rights recommendations provides the FPs the opportunity to combine political interventions with technical support and to dialogue with a wide range of stakeholders while building their capacity. The Office's technical analyses, based on international human rights law, are highly valued by partners and stakeholders and contribute to OHCHR's credibility.

Similarly, OHCHR is well recognized within the United Nations System (UNS) for its technical analysis, its participation in inter-agency working groups, and its role in ensuring the inclusion of a human rights-based approach to UN programs.

OHCHR's added value in relation to the work of other UN agencies and other institutions and organizations was a key criterion used to plan interventions in the three countries. For example, in the area of migration, key areas that OHCHR focuses on include access to justice and the monitoring of migrants in transit and returnees with a regional perspective since these aspects are outside the work of other agencies working on migration, such as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Office for Migration (IOM).

When asked about OHCHR's added value and comparative advantage in relation to other UN agencies in the country, respondents highlighted:

- OHCHR's unique monitoring mandate;
- The trust developed with a number of interlocutors that allow FPs to voice victims' concerns;
- The technical assistance provided to different stakeholders to fight impunity;
- The analysis and (annual and thematic) reports that constitute a point of reference for the situation of human rights in the countries;
- OHCHR's role vis-a-vis the international community.

Priority areas of work for the country notes and the AWPs were identified through internal and external consultative processes. Internally, the three FPs have organized annual or biannual Office retreats to discuss opportunities, assess risks and comparative advantages and commitments to donors. The national teams have also consulted with OHCHR HQ thematic teams in the planning process.

In the three countries, OHCHR's on-going dialogues with civil society organizations have contributed to identify areas of work were the Office adds value. Strategic planning processes have also taken into account requests for technical advice and capacity building

received from different State institutions. These dialogues with relevant stakeholders have enabled staff in the three countries to identify critical areas of work, including specific technical assistance needs for different State Institutions.

Strategic prioritization

While the areas of work identified through the strategic planning process clearly reflect the current realities in the countries under review, the capacity to maintain a long-term perspective on national priorities requires strengthening in the three countries. A recent evaluation of OHCHR Implementation of Results-Based Management underlines: "Given the funding constraints the Office is currently facing with regard to its regular budget, the unlikelihood that XB [extra-budgetary] funding will continue to grow at the same pace as before, and the risk of spreading scarce resources too thinly, strategic-level prioritization is a must."[2]

Challenges to strategic prioritization differ significantly in the three countries. OHCHR Guatemala has been able to adapt its strategy to adverse contexts without diverting from core activities. However, the Office's dependence on projects to ensure its financial sustainability together with the increased demand of OHCHR's intervention can potentially side-track its core interventions.

Honduras has faced more challenges to prioritize its work and to find a balance between structural work and emergency responses. As examples of these challenges, respondents draw attention to how the post-electoral context, the health and education sector protests and the unrest during the tenth anniversary of the coup in 2019 generated increased protection demands and the need to strengthen the CO monitoring role and to follow up on violations. This additional workload was also compounded by the amount of vacant positions in the Office and high level of staff turnover.

The sub-regional programme in El Salvador, a relatively new presence in the country, works closely with the RO to ensure the focus of its work where OHCHR adds substantial value. However, as the team in El Salvador is consolidating and demands for support are growing, the need for strategic prioritization is becoming more pressing.

More recently, the 2020 AWP have been affected by the COVID-19 emergency. To respond to this emergency, OHCHR Honduras has put in place a COVID-19 Response Strategy mapping out relevant actions that the CO is taking under each thematic unit. Similarly, OHCHR Guatemala has put in place a COVID-19 task force to focus its work in each thematic unit. This exercise is a good practice that could be used by the presence in El Salvador to help staff to adapt work plans and better manage workloads.

The evaluation team concludes that strategic prioritization needs to be improved in the three country presences. More regular reflection and needs assessments to review priorities is necessary to provide adequate direction to staff and a clear road map to achieve projected results.

This is also an area where more sharing of information will be beneficial. A systematic sharing of experiences in relation to long-term strategizing, balancing emergency with

[2] Independent Evaluation of the Implementation of Results-Based Management at OHCHR, September 2019.

structural work and how to make most use of limited resources would benefit the three country presences.

3) Have the strategies used to achieve results been adequate to the national and regional contexts and stakeholders? How have the Country/Subregional Programmes conducted risk assessments and mitigation strategies?

OHCHR's presences have used adequate strategies to achieve results, including: 1) strengthening the capacity of rights holders and duty bearers; 2) using its voice to advocate for change, 3) using its convening role to bring together different stakeholders; and 4) working collaboratively with partners to advance human rights work.

Strengthening the capacity of rights holders and duty bearers has been a key strategy to advance accountability for past and present human rights violations. OHCHR has provided specialized trainings to State institutions, including justice operators and NHRIs. The Office has also built the capacity of CSOs in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador to enable these groups to claim their rights, in particular through the use of human rights mechanisms. While counterparts highly value trainings, some of these initiatives appeared to be *ad hoc*. A more systematic capacity building approach could have been explored in the three country presences to further enhance the sustainability of human rights work.

OHCHR has been a **strong advocate for the protection of human rights defenders** and women human rights defenders in the three countries. Respondents also spoke highly of the role of OHCHR **speaking up in support of women rights**, in particular with respect to the investigations of femicides (in Honduras), in support of sexual and reproductive rights (in El Salvador) and in the follow up to the implementation of gender-related rulings of emblematic cases (in Guatemala). **Challenging discrimination** has also been a strong component of advocacy efforts, in particular in relation to LGBTI persons and indigenous peoples. COs have used their voice to advocate for changes in legislation to support transitional justice (TJ) efforts (in El Salvador and Guatemala) and to respond to the excessive use of force (in evictions in Guatemala and in the context of elections in Honduras).[3]

The COs have also made a strategic use of the voice of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (HCHR) to shine light on particular issues. For example, in the context of COVID-19, the High Commissioner's statement calling for the respect of the Rule of Law and for measures to be consistent with international human rights standards had an important impact on the protection of vulnerable groups, including persons deprived of liberty and CSOs.

The Office has used its convening role to facilitate dialogue among different stakeholders. For example, bringing together civil society organizations and members of the Legislative Assembly in El Salvador opened up opportunities to advance discussions on legislation to protect defenders. In Honduras, the Office played a key role to facilitate a dialogue between CSOs, the business sector and State institutions on the implementation of the guiding principles on business and human rights. Similarly, in Guatemala, OHCHR facilitated the dialogue between authorities and victims of the fire in

[3] This list aims at illustrating common advocacy efforts in the three countries but it is not an exhaustive list.

the *Hogar Seguro Virgen de la Asunción*[4], in particular between the victims and the Attorney General. The dialogues facilitated by the three FPs between CSOs, families of disappeared migrants, and authorities have also contributed to improve investigations to search for missing migrants in the region.

Working collaboratively with partners has also been an important strategy for advancing human rights work in the region. Support to women, LGBTI groups and indigenous peoples has provided legitimacy to their claims and empowered these groups to challenge discrimination. OHCHR and IAComIDH signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in 2017 and have launched a joint action plan on protection of human rights defenders in the Americas.

2.2. Effectiveness

4) What have been the main results achieved in the different areas of the Country/Subregional Programmes during the period assessed?

The feedback from internal and external respondents is very positive concerning the results achieved by OHCHR in the three countries during the period under review. The evidence reviewed by the evaluation team —including End of Year Reports (2017 to 2019), the reports to Sweden and other donors, and interviews with internal and external respondents—confirm good progress towards achieving the results set out in their AWPs during 2017 - 2020.

The evaluation team finds OHCHR's methods to measure progress towards results to be somewhat subjective (for example, the difference between some progress and good progress is not all clear). However, the evaluation team generally agrees with the progress reported in the EOY reports, which is summarized in the table included in Annex Five.

This section presents results according to OHCHR Global Pillars taking into account the country/sub-regional programmes outcomes. For length restrictions, the evaluation team chose to highlight some significant and promising results representative of the work of the three FPs.

Global Pillar—Accountability
Strengthening the rule of law and accountability for human rights violations

Access to justice and respect for the rule of law are key areas where OHCHR has developed a well-recognized expertise in the three countries, in particular in relation to the following areas:

- **Strengthening the capacity of judicial operators.** FPs have provided technical assistance and build the capacity of prosecutors and the judiciary to integrate human rights in their investigations. For instance, OHCHR Guatemala developed a training

[4] The Hogar Seguro Virgen de la Asunción case ("Virgin of the Assumption Safe Home") refers to the fire occurred in the institution during which 41 girls died. OHCHR Guatemala published a special report on the case available at https://www.oacnudh.org.gt/images/CONTENIDOS/ARTICULOS/PUBLICACIONES/InformeHSVA.pdf

module on TJ for the School of Judicial Studies. Similarly, OHCHR Honduras and the team in El Salvador provided specialized training to the Schools of the Offices of the Attorney General (OAG) to integrate human rights standards in their investigations. Working with the schools of the judiciary and the OAG ensures the sustainability of the training. In the framework of litigation strategies, specialized training session were also organized in Guatemala for lawyers and judges dealing with the identified cases.

These specialized trainings were highly rated by participants for their practical approach and the technical expertise of the trainers. Respondents particularly valued the exchange of experiences on TJ between Guatemalan prosecutors and their Salvadorian counterparts in one of these trainings. The evidence points to the need to replicate this exchange as a good practice.

- **Fighting against impunity for present and past human rights violations.** Respondents highly valued OHCHR's contribution to TJ efforts in El Salvador and Guatemala. For instance, OHCHR's technical assistance to justice operators, trial monitoring and public statements of support have contributed to guaranteeing the protection of victims, complainants, judges and prosecutors involved in TJ efforts in Guatemala. In El Salvador, OHCHR's support to the OAG to write its prosecutorial policy for the investigation of crimes committed during armed conflict will likely help to enhance accountability for these crimes.

  In Honduras, OHCHR's efforts to combat impunity have focused on monitoring and documenting electoral and post-electoral violence. The reports produced by the CO have placed State accountability at the center stage and provide a human rights framework to discuss security and the use of force in the country.

In relation to **law reform**, OHCHR's efforts in Guatemala and El Salvador have contributed to ensure that debates on national reconciliation bills include the voices of victims and limit impunity for past crimes. More recently, in Honduras advocacy efforts with the Ministry of Human Rights resulted in the amendment of the State of Emergency Decree, which now has eliminated the restriction on freedom of expression and the prohibition of detention and incommunicado detention for more than 24 hours from the restricted constitutional guarantees.

Improving access to justice for marginalized and discriminated groups. Through its technical assistance and monitoring of cases, respondents recognized the critical role that OHCHR has played advocating for the improvement of the access to justice for marginalized and discriminated groups, including for indigenous peoples, women, LGBTI persons, migrants and defenders. Initiatives related to women, LGBTI and indigenous peoples are discussed under section 2.6 on Gender and human rights integration.

Global Pillar—Participation
Enhancing and Protecting Civic Space and People's participation

In the three countries, respondents highly **valued the support that the Office provides to civil society organizations.** Regular meetings with defenders from a wide range of sectors (indigenous organizations, organizations working on gender equality, violence against women, LGBTI rights, transitional justice, sexual and reproductive health,

freedom of expression, deprivation of liberty and disappearances, journalists) have enabled to better monitor their situation, generate common analyses, develop strategies and joint actions and strengthen their knowledge on international HR law.

The **accompaniment to defenders in the region** was also valued as critical support. For example, the monitoring of the environmentalist Berta Caceres murder trial in Honduras and the monitoring of trials of woman accused of abortion-related crimes in El Salvador have appeared to spur greater respect for due process guarantees in some cases—sending a clear signal to the judiciary that international community is vigilant. In Guatemala, support to HRDs criminalized for their activities provided them with legitimacy and contributed to their protection.

Supporting State institutions to develop and strengthen measures to protect defenders was also an important component of OHCHR's work in the region. For example, in Honduras, OHCHR's support for the National Mechanism for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Journalists, Media Workers and Justice System Actors (NPM) has helped foster the development of a gender-responsive protocol to facilitate a gender specific risk analysis and identification of adequate protection measures. In Guatemala, the investigative process and report on the situation of HRDs[5] was instrumental to the creation, within the NHRI, of a specialized unit on HRDs and journalists in November 2019. In El Salvador, bringing together civil society organizations and members of the Legislative Assembly has opened up opportunities to advance discussions on legislation to protect defenders.

Pillar- Discrimination – Enhancing equality and countering discrimination[6]

OHCHR is considered an important ally in the protection of migrants in the subregion. Migration is one of the areas where OHCHR has developed a regional approach and coordinated work among country presences in the region. The consensus among respondents is that the Office's human rights framework and its monitoring capacity clearly add value and provide a strong voice that contributes to the protection of the human rights of migrants. OHCHR complements the work of other international entities—including UNHCR, UNICEF and IOM—in this area.

Box 1. A regional approach to migration

Migratory flows in Central America have their origin in endemic inequality and social conflict, including gender violence, social exclusion and high levels of poverty, which are common across the region. The vulnerabilities inherent in their migratory journeys expose migrants, asylum seekers and refugees to severe human rights violations, including attacks by public security forces and abuses perpetrated by criminal actors. The migration policies adopted by these States in response to various crises have been marked by a security-oriented approach, spurred in part by pressures from Mexico and the United States, that often hinders respect for the protection of human rights.

[5] See https://www.oacnudh.org.gt/images/CONTENIDOS/ARTICULOS/PUBLICACIONES/Informe_personas_defensoras.pdf

[6] Results related to women, LGBTI, indigenous peoples and peoples with disabilities are discusses under section 5.6 on Gender and human rights integration.

To respond to these challenges, OHCHR conducted an observation mission from September 25 to October 11, 2017, in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico to assess human rights challenges and protection gaps faced by migrants and refugees traveling to or through these countries. This mission helped identify challenges and areas where national interventions as well as joint work among OHCHR's presences in the region could add value, including: 1) access to justice for relatives of disappeared migrants; and 2) monitoring and documentation of violations faced by migrants.

In relation to access to justice, OHCHR has organized several workshops (two regional workshops in Guatemala and Honduras in 2018 and one national workshop in El Salvador in 2019) to strengthen the capacities of organizations to promote actions to search for disappeared migrants with the authorities of the different countries involved, including countries in transit.

These workshops together with the work of the three country presences at the national level with these committees have helped **strengthen the capacities of the National Committees of the Relatives of Missing Migrants** to claim their rights. Promoting dialogue between civil society organizations, families of disappeared migrants, and authorities has also helped improve investigations to search for missing migrants.

Concerning monitoring, respondents highlighted the critical role that OHCHR has played in monitoring **'migrant caravans'** and sharing of information. They also emphasized how their role in articulating relations between CSOs and State institutions has helped prevent violations of migrants' rights. For example, in Guatemala, the presence of OHCHR in regions where migrant caravans took place, together with the technical assistance provided to the national police (with the Presidential Commission on Human Rights - COPREDEH), helped deter violence and enabled the development of reliable information for the international community and United Nations Country Team (UNCT). Similar examples were provided for Honduras. El Salvador, however, has had a limited capacity to conduct monitoring in this area, albeit with some important exceptions (like accompanying the visits of special rapporteurs).

The sharing of information among OHCHR's country presences in the region and with partners in the UN system has also helped draw a more complete picture about migrants' protection needs as well as opportunities for joint action. For example, in Honduras and Guatemala, OHCHR's participation in the UNCT protection group has resulted in an increased exchange of information and common remote monitoring of the situation of migrants, returnees and internally displaced persons. In Panama, the Office has worked with UNHCR, UN Children Fund (UNICEF), UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and IOM to develop a remote monitoring system to share information, take actions and raise concerns with authorities on humanitarian and human rights issues.

Lastly, in the context of COVID-19, respondents emphasized the need for the Office to boost its efforts to support country responses vis-à-vis migrant protection. The Offices in the three countries have issued joint press releases to bring attention to the precarious conditions of migrants that are trapped in border areas and the issue of forced returns in

the sub-region during the pandemic. These press releases are contributing to shape the narrative in a human rights framework.

Global Pillar: Development- Integrating HR in sustainable development

OHCHR's work has increased attention to ESC (including right to land, food, right to water, labour rights) in the region. For instance, OHCHR Guatemala focus on labour rights contributed to the development of a guide on labour rights of children and agricultural workers for Labour Inspectors. The CO in Guatemala has also conducted extensive work on the impact of development on the right to land.

Box 2. An interinstitutional strategy to reduce the number and impact of forced evictions

Land disputes and forced evictions of peasant (mostly indigenous) communities remain critical challenges in Guatemala. This situation has provoked serious and numerous HR and humanitarian consequences for the involved communities and their leaders (who are often criminalized). OHCHR Guatemala has regularly reported on this area of work and has followed emblematic cases.

Based on its monitoring activities and the recommendations provided in its annual reports, OHCHR Guatemala has worked in a joint effort with the NHRI (Procuraduría de Derechos Humanos-PDH) and the Presidential Commission of Human Rights (COPREDEH) to ensure the integration of international HR principles in eviction procedures, and thus lessen their HR impact. As a result, institutional protocols on forced evictions were written with the technical assistance of OHCHR Guatemala (who contracted renowned international experts), documents on the basis of which inter-institutional training were carried out (with the National Police, OAG and the Judiciary). In addition, OHCHR Guatemala has continued its efforts to raise awareness among judges, Constitutional Court magistrates, and representatives of the business sector, and to advocate for legislative reforms.

This joint work has contributed to the decrease of the number of forced evictions carried out in the country. Although the protocols have not been officially approved by all the concerned institutions, the strategy remains pertinent for various reasons:

→ It combines OHCHR Guatemala monitoring and technical assistance mandates; it uses an integrated strategy combining knowledge based on observations from its monitoring activities and the accompaniment of communities at risk, and its technical expertise on international human rights law;
→ It is aimed at supporting Guatemala State institutions to follow one of OHCHR recommendations;
→ It supports the work of national HR institutions (COPREDEH and PDH);
→ Aware of the political resistance of the issue, it concentrates on technical and concrete aspects of eviction procedures that enable tangible results and the awareness-raising of public operators involved;
→ It is aimed at sustainable results;
→ It has had a concrete impact on the situation.

In Honduras, the CO adopted a multi-layered approach to engage with the State, trade unions, civil society organizations and the private sector on the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. It included capacity building and the establishment of channels for technical cooperation and advocacy. The CO is supporting the Ministry of Human Rights to organize multi-actor workshops aiming at discussing and proposing strategies to implement the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the recommendations of the UN Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises, especially building trust among the actors involved. In the context of the COVID-19 crisis, OHCHR is engaging on a permanent dialogue and coordination with the Honduran Council of Private Business (COHEP) to discuss early recovery measures.

El Salvador has not included this thematic pillar in its country program. However, the team in El Salvador has been supporting the citizens' movement (*espacio ciudadano*) promoting the signature of the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (the Escazú Agreement). OHCHR's technical assistance and support to advocacy efforts has given new impetus to this initiative.

Global Pillar – Mechanisms
Increasing implementation of the international human rights mechanisms' outcomes

OHCHR has provided technical and substantive assistance to the Executive Branch's Human rights entity (COPREDEH in Guatemala, the Presidential HR Commission in El Salvador, and the HR Ministry in Honduras) to establish and implement a national system for follow-up and implementation of recommendations of treaty bodies and UPR. These initiatives were based on the Recommendations Monitoring System (SIMORE) created in Paraguay.

The three FPs have strengthened civil society organization's capacity to engage with human rights mechanisms. For example, in relation to the UPR, OHCHR was successful in supporting the preparation of civil society reports that included the views of diverse sectors, including women, LGBTI populations and indigenous peoples.

Global Pillar – Early warning, prevention and protection of HR in situations of conflict and insecurity

Only Guatemala and the RO have established results under this pillar.

The evaluation found that OHCHR has played an important role raising awareness on respect for human rights, in particular proportionality of the use of force as well as to deter the escalation of violence during social unrest and public demonstrations. For instance, in El Salvador, the RO has provided technical guidance to the UNCT and the RC on security and human rights in the context of a UN Office of Drug and Crimes (UNODC) joint action protocol for police and military forces and the application of the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy.

More recently, the team in El Salvador supported the NHRI to establish a remote monitoring mechanism to strengthen the protection of human rights under COVID-19 emergency conditions (see Box 3). In Guatemala, the work carried out on an eviction protocol with the national police, COPREDEH, AOG and the judiciary have resulted on the reduction of the number of evictions (see Box 2).

More broadly, IAComHR-OHCHR are discussing the update of the 2009 IAComHR study on citizen´s security and human rights that would look at three major common issues of concern to the Central American region: militarization of security, privatization of security and strengthening of the police force. This analysis could help identify joint actions and areas of cooperation for both agencies.

5) Where positive results of the Country/Subregional Programmes were found, what were the enabling factors and processes?

Factors that have contributed to the achievements of results include:

- **Political credibility**: OHCHR is recognized as the voice of the United Nations and a guarantor of human rights international obligations in the national level.
- **Staff's expertise and commitment**: the staff's specialized knowledge of international standards, together with their knowledge of the political context and commitment, are well recognized as a key asset in OHCHR's high quality technical assistance.
- **Partnership building**: the first two factors have opened the door for OHCHR to develop close relationships with a wide range of stakeholders, including CSOs, human rights victims, State institutions, the UNCT and the international community. These partnerships have been critical to advance the work of OHCHR at the national level.
- **Convening power**: OHCHR has used its capacity to bring together a variety of stakeholders to promote participatory processes that have helped build trust and contribute to an enhanced articulation among different stakeholders.
- **Inter-institutional and multi-actor strategies**: in developing its strategies, OHCHR looks at promoting inter-institutional cooperation and synergies between multiple actors.

6) Are there areas where it is not possible to identify positive results on human rights issues in the countries? What prevented the OHCHR field presences from achieving results in those areas?

The evaluation team found positive results under all thematic pillars established in the annual work plans by the country presences. There are several caveats to this statement:

- The work on PwDs has been very extensive in Guatemala (see Section 4 Emerging Good Practices), but it has not been mainstreamed in the other two country presences. Honduras and El Salvador need to strengthen and expand dialogue with organizations of PwDs.
- The ability to make progress has been impacted by lack of political will on the part of State Institutions in the three countries. In particular, in Honduras, progress on

investigations of femicides and cases against defenders have not progressed despite OHCHR's repeated attempts to provide technical assistance to the OAG in order to advance investigations. Several respondents from civil society and the international community underscored the challenges of engaging State institutions, in particular the Supreme Court of Justice and the AOG. This seems to be changing as the Supreme Court of Justice has recently agreed to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with OHCHR Honduras to start receiving technical cooperation assistance. In Guatemala, following the decision to terminate the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) mandate, the relationship with the Executive was particularly difficult amid a government-led anti-UN campaign. Many respondents as well as the larger international community have shared these challenges.

- The work of CICIG in Guatemala and of the Mission to Support the Fight against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras (MACCIH) had opened up opportunities for the FPs to broaden their activities on human rights and corruption. In fact, they collaborated effectively on significant issues. However, after the two governments decided to end the missions' agreements, FPs reduced their work in this area.
- Staff shortages in Honduras and Guatemala during certain periods have also contributed to slow down progress on results.

2.3. Efficiency

7) How efficiently have the field presences been in using the human (including staffing policies), financial and intellectual resources at its disposal to achieve its targeted outcomes? To what degree do the results achieved justify the resources invested in them (cost efficiency)?

8) Have the organizational arrangements of the field presences been adequate to the Country/Subregional Programmes priorities, context and stakeholders? What has been the deployment strategy used for these field presences?

Overall the evaluation team concludes that the results achieved justify the invested resources. The three country presences have achieved substantive results with limited resources. The expertise, accessibility and availability of staff to travel outside the capital to accompany rural and indigenous communities are highly valued by rights holders in the three countries. Respondents voiced the necessity to open field antennas in the three countries.

OHCHR in Honduras (in 2018) and Guatemala (in 2019) have undertaken internal restructuring processes to organize their work in units or clusters along thematic areas. This has been an effective way to enable units/clusters to align activities and strategies with the results established under each pillar in relation to monitoring, technical cooperation and capacity building. Also, both Offices have communication units to support all thematic areas. In Guatemala, each substantive cluster is co-coordinated by an international and a national staff, which appears to be a good strategy to ensure better continuity of the work in case of vacancy.

Both Honduras and Guatemala have now dedicated staff to deal with program management, which is critical, as both Offices have substantive demands derived from fundraising and project administration, including monitoring and reporting to donors.

The structure in El Salvador is not comparable as it is a small team composed of one National Senior Human Rights Officer and Adviser to the UN RC and two national UNVs supported by two international staff members and supervised by the RO in Panama.

While the adequacy of the organizational arrangements is very different in each one of the presences, the evaluation team found some challenges that are applicable to the COs in Honduras and Guatemala that have impacted the efficiency and sustainability of OHCHR's work in these countries. OHCHR in Honduras and Guatemala need to prioritize the internal strengthening of their structure and the consolidation of their teams. Specific attention should be given to prioritizing the recruitment of vacant posts. The evaluation team has been informed that recruitment processes are being accelerated in both COs.

The enabling factors as well as the challenges confronted by the COs in Honduras and Guatemala offer important lessons for the El Salvador, as this presence is looking towards expanding and consolidating its presence in the country.

Challenges related to human resources

- **Recruitment delays.** In Honduras, a third of the positions are not filled (out of 33 staff positions, 5 positions are vacant, 4 are under recruitment and 3 have been finalized with only final administrative steps remaining). Similarly, OHCHR Guatemala has also been affected by lengthy recruitment processes that have left substantive vacant positions during prolonged periods of time. These delays have been caused by a number of obstacles at the country and the headquarters level, including: 1) insufficient staff to support recruitment processes within the COs; 2) the fact that the recruitment through the roster was not allowed by HQ at certain points; 3) errors in the evaluation of candidates (the rules for how many people and who is allowed to be on an interview panel were not followed); and 4) requirement to be fluent in English was also cited as an added obstacle to recruit national staff.

This situation seems to have improved over time. In 2018 and 2019, OHCHR Guatemala recruited or regularized a high number of staff members.[7] Similarly, OHCHR Honduras reported to the evaluation team that between March and June of this year, a number of positions have been recruited or are in the process of being recruited.

- **Contractual arrangements.** In the three countries a considerable number of staff positions are UNVs (in El Salvador, 2 out of the three members of the team based in El Salvador are UNVs; in Honduras almost a third of staff positions, and OHCHR Guatemala has 8 international and 4 national UNVs). Respondents highlighted a number of challenges related to the high percentage of UNV positions in the three countries. In Honduras, respondents pointed at the complexity of the political environment in the country and the junior entry-level experience required for these positions. On the contrary, in El

[7] 17 positions were approved in 2018 and 6 in 2019 by the Programme and Budget Review Board (PBRB). Among them, 11 positions were regularized and 9 constituted new positions.

Salvador, the two current UNV positions are filled by human rights professionals with a long trajectory of human rights in the country, which doesn't match the junior entry-level experience required of an UNV. In Guatemala, respondents noted that UNV positions do not support staff stability since UNVs are prone to look for better positions.

- Changes in leadership have affected the efficiency of OHCHR's work in the countries.

OHCHR informed the evaluation team of the concrete steps taken in relation to changes in leadership in Honduras, including: 1) The issuing of a press release to inform stakeholders in the country that these changes were part of a regular rotational process; 2) the support provided during the transition, including the temporary deployment of the Chief of the Americas Section to oversee the transition process; and 3) the prompt deployment of a Representative a.i. to ensure that there were no gaps in the leadership and to show continued political support of the High Commissioner to the operations in the country. However, in Honduras, most stakeholders interviewed were convinced that the reasons for leaving were due to the pressure exercised by the government on OHCHR and lack of support from OHCHR HQ.

The timing of the Representatives' departure in Honduras and in Guatemala has been questioned and criticized by partners in both countries. For example, in Honduras, the fact that the departure took place a few weeks after the government ended the mandate of the MACCIH contributed to create a climate of uncertainty among different partners. Similarly, in Guatemala, the representative left between two rounds of presidential elections, a month before the government ended CICIG's mandate, and amid a government-led anti-UN campaign. According to several respondents, under these circumstances, the accreditation of a new Representative was improbable until the new government was established in January 2020. In both countries, the deputy representative positions were also vacant at the time.

Apart from the internal reasons and the procedures followed by HQ, the consensus among partners—including civil society, the UNCT and the international community in the country—is that changes in leadership were not managed adequately and left many partners questioning whether the COs had the required political support from headquarters. In Guatemala, although the Office deployed an acting representative of the High Commissioner and increased the number of public messaging directly from the High Commissioner, the absence of a fully accredited representative for 8 months restricted the possibility for OHCHR Guatemala to make public statements, as the government does not accredit officers in charge and their capacity to speak publicly. (This situation did not occur in Honduras where the Representative was replaced in 15 days).

- **Challenges related to organizational structures**. In Honduras, the transition from a horizontal to a vertical Office structure in 2018 created discontent among staff. In Guatemala, staff, in particular national staff, felt overburden and pressured at times when they needed to assume additional functions to cover vacancies. Internally, it was reported that the uncertainty of the human resource situation and the internal changes added stress and heavier workloads on OHCHR Guatemala staff, especially on long-term national staff. In both cases, HQ sent either Rapid Response Units (two to Guatemala) or mission deployments (two to Honduras) to support the COs with internal and external challenges. According to some respondents, these missions provided guidance and relieve for the

teams in both countries. However, the evaluation team did not receive enough information to assess the adequacy of these missions to address internal challenges.

All these challenges have affected the efficiency of the work internally and externally. Staff turnover and interim arrangements in Guatemala and Honduras have impacted the continuity of national processes and dialogues, which are based on personal trust developed with different sectors over long periods of time. Knowledge of complex political context and dynamics also get lost and needs to be rebuilt every time that new staff and leadership comes in.

The capacity of the staff to sustain the work internally is also affected. The evaluation found that one of the strengths of COs is the dedication, commitment and expertise of their teams. Staff in Honduras and Guatemala, however, described that their workloads have been impacted as they redistribute work among existing posts when positions are vacant. A respondent from Honduras noted, "this way of working is exhausting, and it is not just about putting out fires as this has become a permanent situation." Ultimately, all these internal challenges affect the capacity to maintain workloads and deliver results more effectively.

Challenges related to project management

The management of multiple donor projects, with distinctive monitoring, reporting requirements and timeframes, has added challenges to planning and monitoring processes in the Offices in Guatemala and Honduras. According to respondents, a particular difficulty has been to ensure the coherence between the Offices' overall planning and the aims of specific projects. Also, several respondents stressed the need to ensure that OHCHR stays focused and does not divert towards donors' priorities. Another issue is related to the stability of the staff (enrolled through a service contract) independently of the specific projects that provide the funds for the position. Staff noted Swedish orientation towards core funding as a good practice

To adequately manage the planning, OHCHR Guatemala has recently established a team, led by a Program Manager (in function since August 26, 2019), to monitor different projects and avoid duplication in reporting (by centralizing the information than can then be reported to each donor). The team is also in charge of fundraising. This is a good practice that could be replicated in other FPs.

Several respondents also pointed at administrative obstacles in the administration of projects in Guatemala related to delays in the signature of the contracts, fund transfers and the appointment of project staff, which have had impacts on the implementation.

9) How has been the coordination among the field presences in the region and with OHCHR's Headquarters (including the chain of command/decision making process) in programmatic, financial and administrative issues?

Communication and coordination among field presences

The evaluation team found some significant initiatives where the three country presences are developing joint work and coordination, in particular, in relation to migration (addressed under question 4) and in responding to the COVID-19 crisis (addressed under the section on emerging good practices). The evaluation also draws attention in this

report to some other *ad hoc* good practices in which the different country presences have shared experiences and how the sharing of those experiences has had an impact on results.

These initiatives are promising and have contributed to develop synergies between the three FPs that have resulted in positive impacts in the subregion. Apart from this work, OHCHR has not developed an overarching strategy for the three Country programs to collaborate, coordinate and share information in a systematic way.

Communication and coordination between field presences and headquarters

Overall the three countries maintain good working relations with different sections in headquarters in Geneva at the technical level, including the Women Rights and Gender Section (WRGS), the Donor and External Relations Section (DEXREL), the Programme Support and Management Services (PSMS) and FOTCD. Respondents cited the fact that the desk officers for Guatemala and Honduras have had previous field experience as a positive factor that has contributed to build bridges between HQ and FP. It has allowed desk officers at FOTCD to better understand the context and to be more effective to respond to FP's needs. Interactions with other thematic areas (in particular the ones dealing with migration, women's rights, business and human rights and Special Rapporteurs) seem to have also been very fluid.

With regards to communication between the Subregional program in El Salvador and the RO respondents noted a good dynamic between staff in Panama and El Salvador. Respondents agreed that regular communication and sharing of information has led to close coordination and joint strategizing, which has been critical to the success of the sub-regional program in El Salvador.

At management level, the evaluation team learned of disagreements between FOTCD and the representatives in Honduras and Guatemala that limited the communication flow. This affected joint strategizing at critical moments when the COs were confronted with complex political situations.

10) What has been the strategy and methodology used to work together, communicate and disseminate results among the local stakeholders, donors, partners and UN Country Teams? What have been the implications in terms of capacity and resources of this work in coordination and cooperation within the UN Country Teams?

The three country presences have maintained a strong engagement and ongoing dialogue with a wide range of CSO (women, LGBTI, Indigenous and Afro-descendants, transitional justice and corruption, with people deprived of liberty and to a lesser extend in Honduras and El Salvador with PwD), and State institutions (with different levels of success). OHCHR's technical analysis and thematic and annual reports are highly appreciated by many local partners, recognized for their quality and adequate analysis of the human rights situation in the country. Additionally, the increased use of social and traditional media in the three country presences has enabled OHCHR to reach out to a wide audience to disseminate human rights analysis and reports.

OHCHR has also maintained regular communication with the international and donor community. For example, OHCHR Honduras took on the coordination of the Working

Group on justice, security and human rights, and in 2019 also that of the Gender Equality Working Group of the G-16 Donor Group,[8] which has enabled the Office to share analysis and information on a wide range of human rights issues and to increase synergies with the international community.

Similarly, OHCHR Guatemala has maintained effective relationships with diplomatic representations present in the country. In particular, OHCHR's active participation in the Filter Group ("Grupo Filtro")[9] has been well received and has increased the effectiveness of their actions towards HRDs.[10] Stakeholders really valued OHCHR's reliable and timely information on HRD cases, and the analysis of the human rights situation.

At a bilateral level, however, the evidence points at the need to strengthen communication with donors to ensure a more regular flow of information.

As a response to the COVID-19 crisis, OHCHR has launched a series of guidelines outlining the need for exceptional measures or a state of emergency to respect human rights. The country presences have developed a regional communication strategy and focused their efforts on promoting these guidelines in relation to a wide range of rights. This is addressed chapter 5 on emerging good practices.

Communication and coordination related to the UNCT is addressed under question 17.

11) How effectively do Country/Subregional Programmes monitor and evaluate the performance and results? Is relevant information and data systematically collected and analyzed to feed into management decisions?

The main method to track performance and results in the three country presences is through the use of the performance monitoring system (PMS). On a regular basis, staff report to the program officers (in Guatemala and Honduras) or to the RO (in El Salvador) on progress in achieving outputs, which provides the basis to draft EOY and other reports to donors. Apart from the ratings provided in the EOY reports, the COs in Honduras and the Subregional programme in El Salvador do not have a mechanism in place to measure impact.

More learning driven monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are needed to track impact, which could be very useful to attract more funding. For instance, the Program Management team in Guatemala is putting into place a set of indicators to monitor and report on results, according to projects.

The evaluation team has identified a number of areas that need to be strengthened:

[8] The G16 is the main coordination mechanism for donors and comprises Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States, as well as multilateral agencies such as the World Bank, the Central American Bank for Economic Integration, the Inter-American Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the European Union.

[9] The Filter Group is composed of: the EU delegation, its State members, Canada, Switzerland and the US. It is aimed at coordination the implementation of the EU Guidelines on HRDs.

[10] Among the activities carried out by the Filter Group are field visit, diplomatic dialog with key institutions (OAG, Interior Ministry (*Ministerio de Gobernación*), PDH, COPREDEH, local authorities), presence in judicial audiences, visits to HRD in detention and to non-governmental organizations, joint press releases.

1.- Outputs often lack specificity, which makes more difficult to assess progress over a period of time. For example, instead of "the capacity of civil society organizations on transitional justice will be strengthened," a more specific output should indicate what measurable results the Office is looking to attain through which strategy: "15 civil society organizations have the capacity to take on advocacy work on institutional reform and truth-seeking and reparation mechanisms." A clear baseline should also be available to enable evaluating the results of the outputs.

2.- More emphasis needs to be given to incorporate lessons learned in planning cycles in each country and between countries. For example, including lessons learned about how emergencies and staff shortages have affected the implementation of the annual plans in Honduras and Guatemala can contribute to a more effective planning and use of resources. Also, including lessons learned from the monitoring work in the Guatemalan election into the planning for monitoring elections in Honduras could have been useful. Respondents noted some examples of sharing of experiences between COs, but this seemed to have been ad hoc.

3. Evaluation tools to capture impact are limited in the three Offices. This is particularly relevant in relation to capacity building initiatives, a significant component of the work in the three countries. OHCHR has developed some tools to evaluate trainings. For example, the CO in Honduras request participants to fill out questionnaires at the end of the trainings to assess content and methodology. However, these tools are ad hoc and limited in scope to assess content and methodologies. More robust evaluation tools are needed to track the impact of these trainings.

2.4. Impact Orientation

12) To what extent are the Country/Subregional Programmes making a significant contribution to broader and longer-term enjoyment of rights, including their contribution to changes in national human rights and development policies and programmes? Or how likely is it that it will eventually make this contribution?

The impact of OHCHR in the three countries needs to be understood in the context of the socio-political situation in the region. Central America is marked by a profound social and political crisis driven by high levels of poverty, violence and insecurity. The escalation of authoritarianism and the weakening of State institutions combined with high levels of impunity and corruption have severely impacted the protection of human rights in Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras.

Defending human rights is extremely dangerous in the region, which has an alarming rate of homicides, attacks, threats, harassment, stigmatization and judicial persecution against defenders. "Those involved in environmental rights, land conflicts and members of marginalized groups, such as indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants, peasants and LGBTI

activists, are among those who are most at risk."[11] Women rights are also under threat, with high numbers of femicides and gender-based violence. Highly restrictive reproductive health laws and policies, particularly with regard to abortion, also prevent women from enjoying their rights.

In this challenging context, putting human rights on the national agenda has been a major achievement. The assessment of OHCHR documents from the three FPs under review, together with the information gathered through interviews with an extensive number of OHCHR's staff (80) as well as external stakeholders (114), enabled the evaluation team to conclude that the Guatemala and Honduras Country Programmes and the Subregional Programme in El Salvador have supported the achievement of significant thematic pillar results (see the impact analysis for the three FPs in Annex Six). The public reports (annual or thematic reports in Honduras and Guatemala) and legal analysis (in El Salvador) constitute key references documents that have brought human rights and State obligations to the centre of public debates. OHCHR's reliable and timely information, its analysis of the human rights situation as well as its technical support has been highly relevant to partners.

The three country presences have enhanced the capacities of duty-bearers and rights holders to investigate past and present human rights violations and to challenge gender inequality and discrimination against marginalized groups. The support provided to women, LGBTI persons, PwDs and indigenous and Afro-descendent communities would contribute to promote their rights over the longer term.

OHCHR's monitoring and documentation roles have contributed to the protection of defenders and more broadly to the protection of civic space. These results can be observed, in particular, through the monitoring and documentation of violence during of social mobilization and protests; the support for judicial investigations and monitoring of trials; and the support provided to protection programs. More generally, the role of the FPs facilitating dialogues between civil society, national authorities, the international community and the media, if maintained over long term, can progressively contribute to a better understanding of civil society's role protecting human rights and enhance their position as legitimate actors in the country.

Lastly, OHCHR's efforts to encourage State institutions in the three countries to follow-up international human rights recommendations can lead to a progressive integration of recommendations in public policies. These efforts are complemented by the support provided to civil society organizations, which have increased their use of human rights mechanisms as part of their collective strategies to hold authorities accountable.

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[11] United Nations Human Rights Report 2019. See also "The rapidly deteriorating quality of democracy in Latin America," Daniel Zovatto Friday, February 28, 2020, and #JusticiaParaImelda: the difficult battle for women's rights in Central America, Open Democracy, November 14, 2018.

A detail account of the specific impact of OHCHR's work in each country is included in Annex six.

13) Are there priorities for human rights in the countries that have not been addressed yet by the Country/Subregional Programmes, and if so, why not? Have the programmes worked on human rights in the context of emerging global concerns such as climate change, environment and natural resources?

The first part of this question is answered in question 6, where the evaluation team addresses the issue of corruption and human rights.

With regards to the second question, the three FPs under review address issues related to environmental and natural resources in their programmatic work supporting indigenous communities. As discussed under questions 18 and 19, all three countries have focused on the regulation of free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples, which have enabled them to denounce violations to their rights to their lands and natural resources resulting from the establishment of development projects in their territories. (See, for example, Box 3). The accompaniment and support to indigenous communities and leaders helped to legitimize their claims and to raise the visibility nationally and internationally of what is happening to these countries natural resources and environment.

Additionally, the three FPs include natural resources and the environment under other areas of work. For instance, OHCHR Guatemala addresses these issues under its work on ESC rights, which have included the development of an inter-institutional strategy to reduce the number of forced evictions and reduce their impact on access to land and natural resources (see, for example, Box 4). Further, the work of OHCHR Honduras to advance implementation of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the support provided in El Salvador to the Escazú Agreement aim at promoting better governance of natural resources in these countries.

Work on human rights in the context of other emerging global concerns

As a response to the COVID-19 crisis, OHCHR HQ has launched a series of guidelines outlining the need for exceptional measures or a state of emergency to respect human rights. Country presences are using this guidance to frame responses to COVID-19. For example, in Honduras, OHCHR's guidance has framed UNCT discussions about responses to the COVID-19. The CO has also used this guidance to successfully advocate for reducing the prison population. OHCHR Guatemala has focused on providing recommendations to the State to guide responses to the pandemic and raising the visibility of violations.

In El Salvador, efforts have focused on promoting these guidelines in relation to a wide range of rights, as well as monitoring government responses to the pandemic. For example, the RO is monitoring violations to freedom of expression and what is happening to journalists. The Office uses social media to promote human rights guidance on freedom of expression as well as to bring attention to violations that are taking place.

Box 5. Good practices for the protection of human rights under COVID-19 emergency conditions in El Salvador

Relevance

Since the Legislative Assembly declared a state of emergency on March 14, many national and international organizations have expressed their concern about reports of abuses by security forces, including the arrest of hundreds of people in government "containment centres" for alleged quarantine violations.[12]

In this context, RO-OHCHR provided technical support to NHRI to develop a remote monitoring mechanism for human rights violations. The harsh restrictions dictated by the government during the emergency by COVID-19—which mainly included the closing of borders, limitations of key fundamental rights and the domiciliary quarantine—greatly limited the capacity of civil society organizations to monitor human rights violations.

The objective of the remote monitoring mechanism is to collect direct information on the human rights situation from citizens that can send information through the use of an application for mobile phones. The information is systematized and analysed by technical staff at the NHRI and provide the basis to issue early alerts and periodic recommendations to State institutions. The mechanisms will remain in force for the duration of the emergency and while restrictions on free movement are in place.

Any citizen with Internet access can send information from their phone as a text message indicating place, description of the event, authorities involved and identification of those affected if possible. The mechanism also includes a second application for NHRI staff outside the capital and civil society organizations. This other application is somewhat more complex and requires some knowledge of human rights, a user and a password. For example, the complaints must be framed within a typology of rights protected by NHRI.

The mechanism covers the whole the country, as long as the person has access to the Internet. The information is sent to a collection centre at the NHRI that organizes, classifies, verifies and analyses it. This information is collated with other sources to support the reports that the Attorney General presents to the country.

Effectiveness

Currently, the NHRI has registered 1,515 complaints from March 21 to May 13. Most of the cases are linked to arrests for breach of quarantine measures. Other complaints are related to gaps in medical attention, labour rights, access to information and the lack of access to water or food.

The implementation of this monitoring mechanism has given legitimacy to the work of the NHRI before other State institutions. For example, the Supreme Court of Justice has asked the NHRI to send periodic reports. Likewise, the Health Commission and the Human Rights Commission of the Legislative Assembly have also requested the submission of case reports. This is very relevant, as other State institutions often question the role of the NHRI.

[12] Carta abierta a Nayib Bukele, Presidente de El Salvador, de parte de Organizaciones Internacionales, 30 de abril de 2020. Available at: https://www.cejil.org/es/carta-abierta-nayib-bukele-presidente-salvador-parte-organizaciones-internacionales.

Impact
The monitoring and publication of these reports have given national and international visibility to the human rights situation in the country. At the national level, the information has been published in different media outlets, which has contributed to influencing the debate on the measures adopted by the COVID-19 crisis. At the international level, the HCHR has cited the reports of El Salvador's NHRI in her press releases requesting the investigation of the alleged human rights violations in the context of the measures adopted to fight against COVID-19.

Lessons learned
The positive application of digital technologies can help advance human rights. Widespread access to mobile phones and the easy accessibility of the App enables the participation of citizens and civil society organizations in monitoring and reporting potential violations. Anyone can send a message, picture or video to alert the NHRI of what is happening. This, in turn, can have the effect to deter some violations to take place.

This project has the potential to strengthen the NHRI long-term monitoring and protection role. The public credibility and legitimacy acquire through this monitoring project provides an important opportunity for the NHRI to show to citizens, civil society and state institutions its added value to advance human rights in the country.

14) What changes in the programmes, strategies or organizational arrangements of the field presences could be made to address those priorities that have not been addressed or those areas were positive results have not been yet achieved? Are there opportunities for joint regional strategies among the programmes?

The first part of the question has already been answered under question 2, which deals with OHCHR's need to strengthen the strategic prioritization process in the three country presences. Changes in organizational arrangements are dealt with under question 8.

In terms of **opportunities for joint regional strategies**, Stakeholders highlighted that the current OHCHR's structure does not support the development of regional strategies. OHCHR's regional offices do not have a coordination role, but rather support countries in the region that do not have a country office. For example, RO, established in 2007 in Panama, supports and engages specifically with Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama and, since mid-2018, also with the Dominican Republic. However, there is no formal reporting line from COs to the RO. Honduras and Guatemala report directly to HQ.

Stakeholders also stressed the fact that just because the three countries have common challenges and are in the same region does not entirely justify the need for subregional strategies as countries in the region have very particular national contexts and dynamics. For example, while the need to strengthen the judicial system is common to the three countries, the concrete strategies in each country may be very different—strategic litigation works in Guatemala, but it would not work in Honduras. Similarly, strengthening

CSOs would require different strategies, as the expertise and cohesion of organizations and human rights movements are very different in the three countries.

The evidence points that to strengthen coordination among the three country presences would require specific resources to support the development of joint strategies as the programs in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador already have limited resources and staff is overstretched to carry on with their work.

Apart from these challenges, the overall consensus is that a more systematic sharing of information and experiences would enhance OHCHR's work and impact in the subregion. The evaluation team identified the following areas:

- **Transitional justice**: The Office has accumulated vast knowledge and experience working with partners on legislative initiatives to ensure accountability of perpetrators of human rights violations; providing technical advice and building the capacities of justice operators; and providing protection to defenders working on these issues. A systematic sharing of experiences among the country presences is critical, as sets back in one country will have implications in other countries in the region.

- **Protection of women and LGBTI rights**: the discourse of conservative political parties and groups in the region are negatively impacting the recognition and enjoyment of sexual and reproductive rights. Sharing information and developing common messaging could help counteract negative stereotyping and discrimination. Additionally, coordinated work on gender-based killings of women could be furthered taking advantage of the Model of Protocol to investigate gender-based killing of women.

- **Protection of human rights defenders and women human rights defenders**: the three country presences should also share best practices and strategies related to the protection of defenders in the region, including experiences with national protection mechanisms. This could also facilitate a more regional and systematic work with the IAComHR.

- **Citizen security**: The three countries have similar challenges in this area and have a repressive approach to address criminality. Sharing of practices could focus on OHCHR strategies dealing with prisons overcrowding and the use of the security forces in matters of citizen security.

- **People with disabilities**: The Office is in a good position to support the implementation of the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy as OHCHR grounds its work in a human rights framework which United Nations agencies lack. Therefore, this is an area that needs to be further developed in El Salvador and Honduras and learning from the experience in Guatemala is a good starting point.

2.5. Sustainability

15) Are the results, achievements and benefits of the Country/Subregional Programmes likely to be durable?

16) Are the local stakeholders committed and able to continue working on the issues addressed by the Country/Subregional Programmes? How effectively have the field presences built national ownership and necessary capacity?

The country presences in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador have invested in long-term processes, to enhance the capacity of State institutions to integrate human rights standards in their work and the capacity of CSOs to claim their rights. However, the majority of respondents agree that without the presence of OHCHR in these countries, human rights protection will falter. In the case of Guatemala and Honduras, respondent noted that the work of OHCHR is even more relevant now that the mandates of the CICIG and the MACCIH have not been renewed. OHCHR, according to respondents, is the only human rights voice on the ground.

OHCHR's long-term efforts to strengthen governments' capacity to engage with human rights mechanisms have resulted in the development of tools to facilitate the follow-up of international human rights recommendations in the three countries. These efforts, if sustained for over a long period of time, will likely contribute to the progressive integration of human rights recommendations in public policies.

Building the capacities of judicial operators has also been a significant component of OHCHR's work in the three countries. Respondents provided examples of how capacity building provided to the OAG's School in El Salvador and Honduras and the judicial school in Guatemala strengthened the capacity of these actors to investigate cases. The fact that these trainings were part of the formal curriculum for these institutions will contribute to the longer-term sustainability of this work.

The capacity-building that OHCHR has provided to CSOs in the areas of TJ, sexual and reproductive rights, indigenous peoples rights and the use of human rights mechanisms, among others, was highly valued by a significant majority of respondents. For example, in Guatemala, the support to indigenous peoples' and lawyers' organizations to use strategic litigation have empowered communities and triggered changes in public policies, practices and legislation. Support to CSOs in the three countries have also strengthened the capacity of rights groups working with women, LGBTI populations and indigenous peoples to engage in the UPR process and to be actively engaged with a number of special procedures.

The Office has supported the NHRIs in the three countries strengthening its technical capacity through trainings and the development of joint activities. For example, in El Salvador the technical support provided to the NHRI to develop a remote monitoring mechanism for human rights violations in the context of COVID-19 has the potential to strengthen the NHRI long-term monitoring and protection role (see Box 3). However, most respondents agree that the NHRIs in the three countries remain weak as they lack legitimacy to carry on with its human rights mandate (as it is the case in Honduras and El Salvador) or have been under constant attack from government institutions (in Guatemala).

These capacity building initiatives were highly rated by a significant majority of respondents. However, the evaluation team found that follow up to these initiatives was limited. Some of them included questionnaires that participants must fill out at the end of

the trainings assessing content and methodology, but OHCHR has no systems in place to assess the impact of these activities over the long term. A more systematic follow-up would enable OHCHR to determine how participants in this capacity building initiatives have applied these trainings and contributed to the sustainability of human rights results.

The sustainability of results is also linked to the financial sustainability of OHCHR's presence in these countries. The COs in Honduras and Guatemala as well as the sub-regional program in El Salvador have been successful in mobilizing financial support from a wide range of external donors to ensure the sustainability of the country work. However, there are a lot of uncertainties about maintaining the level of local fundraising as some important contributors have decided to leave the region and the COVID-19 crisis may cause the redirection of aid to other types of projects. Additionally, being covered 100% by extra budgetary funding brings considerable uncertainty to mid and long-term planning with partners, which can affect the continuity of the work. To ensure the long-term sustainability of the work in the three countries, OHCHR HQ needs to commit longer-term resources to support this work by prioritizing the use of non-earmarked funds.

17) Have the field presences been successful in integrating human rights into the UN Country Teams programmes and activities, including the mainstreaming of its human rights mandate in the UNCTs' work and the implementation of Human Rights Up Front?

The overall consensus is that OHCHR in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador have contributed significantly to the integration of human rights in the work of the UNCT. In El Salvador, being part of the UN RC's technical working group has enabled the HRO to work more closely with the UNCT. For example, joint work with the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) in the preparation of the country team report for the UPR, contributed to the integration of sexual and reproductive rights in the report.

In Honduras, human rights had not been very present in the work of the UNCT; for example, UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAF) did not include references to human rights in the past and the work of most agencies have been linked to the development agenda with little consideration for human rights. OHCHR has progressively made human rights an important part of UNCT discussions. For example, recent UN discussions about responses to the COVID-19 crisis have been guided by the information provided by OHCHR.

In Guatemala, the UNCT highly values OHCHR's contribution and the CO has worked with several UN agencies on a number of projects, including with UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) (on indigenous peoples), with UNHCR, UN Development Program (UNDP) (on transitional actors) and with UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations (UNESCO) (on the archives of the national police). Additionally, the CO worked with other UN agencies to monitor the election process from a human rights perspective.

2.6. Gender and human rights integration

18) Has a Human Rights Based Approach (principles of non-discrimination, participation, transparency, accountability) been mainstreamed in the Country Programme?

19) Did the Country/Subregional Programmes plan results that contributed to gender equality, disability inclusion and indigenous peoples' rights? Were women, persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples consulted during the planning stage?

Rights holders' active participation in the definition of the (multiannual or annual) work plans is increasingly embedded in the practice of the three FPs. In some cases, this might take the form of specific consultations, while in others it manifests as on-going dialogues with civil society organizations, State institutions as well as with the international community. In terms of transparency and accountability, some respondents noted that in addition to the launching of annual and thematic reports, FPs should disseminate more proactively their plans and results.

Regarding the principle of non-discrimination, the three country presences have maintained a strong engagement and on-going dialogue with women, LGBTI, Indigenous and Afro-descendants, and people with disabilities organizations (to a lesser extend in Honduras and El Salvador). This has resulted in a number of activities focusing on gender equality, disability inclusion and indigenous peoples' rights planned for 2017-2020 in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. The evaluation team also found good examples that illustrate the integration of gender and LGBTI concerns in general activities. For instance, recently, OHCHR Guatemala has developed a strategy "to incorporate a gender perspective in OACNUDH Guatemala," and has established a gender unit in its structure. Nonetheless, a gender analysis could be more systematically integrated in OHCHR's work at the country level.

The overall consensus is that OHCHR has played a key role positioning women's rights and gender equality on the agenda in the three countries. Respondents spoke highly of **OHCHR's supporting justice seeking efforts for women** including:

- In Honduras, as an observer in the Inter-Institutional Commission on Femicide, the Office has played a significant role advocating with its members (representatives from the justice sector, government and civil society) on the need to overcome current shortcomings in the investigation of these crimes and to adopt a protocol to improve the investigations.

- In Guatemala, OHCHR has focused on the follow up to emblematic cases, including the Sepur Zarco and the Achi' women cases on sexual violence;[13] and the Hogar Seguro Virgen de la Asunción case. OHCHR has also provided technical assistance to the Constitutional Court, which has led to favorable rulings granting rights to indigenous women weavers and indigenous midwives.

- El Salvador has focused on assessing shortcomings in due process and fair trial standards in cases of women convicted for crimes related to abortion. The Office has strategically used the process of developing this legal analysis to seek cooperation opportunities with the OAG and the Supreme Court of Justice, which has contributed to the release of eight

[13] The Sepur Zarco case deals with the rape and enslavement of indigenous women by the military in a small community near the Sepur Zarco outpost (in the Baja Verapaz department) between 1982 and 1986. The Achi' women case refers to sexual assault charges brought against military and paramilitary members by 36 Maya Achi' women survivors of sexual violence occurred during the internal armed conflict.

women. The RO also sent letters to the AOG requesting the investigation of the killing of trans women in El Salvador.

Facilitating dialogues and information sharing has been key to mainstream gender and LGBTI concerns in public debates and contribute to fight discrimination. For example, in Guatemala, OHCHR's launching of the "Free and Equal" campaign gave visibility to violations confronted by LGBTI persons. Also, OHCHR's technical assistance to State institutions helped avoid the inclusion of discriminatory provisions against LGBTI people and promote the rights of trans persons.

In Honduras, OHCHR's coordination of the Gender Equality Working Group of the G-16 Donors Group in 2019, enabled the Office to share analysis and information on gender and LGTBI-specific issues and to increase synergies with the international community on these issues. Also, the dialogue facilitated by the Office and the Canadian Embassy between women HRDs and women journalists in 2018 provided an opportunity to analyze the role that the media plays in replicating and disseminating gender-based stereotypes.

The RO has also used its convening role to facilitate dialogue among regional and national stakeholders on LGBTI concerns. For example, in 2019 the Office and the IAComHR supported a public forum on the Law on Gender Identity initiative that brought together LGBTI organizations, deputy members of the Legislature, university students and the media.

Lastly, the increased use of OHCHR's communication tools, including social and traditional media has enabled OHCHR to reach out to a wide audience. This has been critically important in the three countries where the LGBTI community is often under attack.

The three COs have also good practices in **integrating gender and LGBTI concerns in generic activities**, including: 1) supporting the development of gender specific protection measures within the technical assistance provided to the NPM in Honduras; 2) the integration of LGBTI concerns in the UPR process in El Salvador; and 3) mainstreaming gender in the work supporting the indigenous justice system in Guatemala (together with UN Women).

Box 6. Mainstreaming gender in the indigenous justice

OHCHR Guatemala cooperated with the Secretariat on Indigenous Peoples of the judiciary to improve coordination between the indigenous and ordinary justice systems, including in relation to violence against women (VAW). As a result, a number of good practices were shared with a particular focus on cases of VAW. The Office participated in three workshops with indigenous authorities to strengthen their capacities on human rights of women and indigenous women and its application in indigenous justice.

Support to indigenous communities (and to a lesser extent to Afro-descendant communities) was also highly valued by partners. All three countries

have focused on the regulation of free, prior and informed consent and its application in concrete cases. In Honduras, the support to indigenous communities, in particular to the Reitoca case (see box 5), has contributed to: 1) raise the visibility nationally and internationally about what is happening in these communities; 2) facilitate dialogues and ease tensions between affected communities, businesses and state authorities; and 3) legitimize their claims and contributes to build a positive narrative about them.

OHCHR's support to strategic litigation in Guatemala has resulted in emblematic rulings that have triggered changes in public policies, practices, and legislation. For example, as a result of this rulings, OHCHR Guatemala collaborated jointly with indigenous organizations and the Ministry of Education to create a bilingual education model; the Office has also worked with the Congress Board on Indigenous Peoples on a proposed legislation to grant collective intellectual property rights to indigenous women weavers; lastly, the CO provided technical assistance to the Health Ministry and the movement of indigenous mid-wives to include the latter in formal health care services.

In El Salvador, OHCHR has supported legislation reforms efforts to recognize the rights of indigenous peoples. In Honduras, OHCHR has worked to strengthen consultation processes to prevent the adoption of a law that lacked support from indigenous and Afro-descendent communities in relation to free, prior and informed consent.

In a context of increased stigmatization, smear campaigns and attacks against indigenous defenders and communities, the direct support provided by OHCHR in the three countries has been critical. The Office has conducted many missions to accompany local indigenous communities and indigenous leaders denouncing violations resulting from the establishment of development projects in their territories. Most respondents agree that this direct support has contributed to their protection.

Box 7. The Reitoca case: supporting indigenous communities to claim their ESC rights and their right to access to justice

In 2015, the National Congress granted to the company PROGELSA (Promotora de Energía Limpia S.A.) a license to build a hydroelectric plant on the Petacón River, located in the municipality of Reitoca in the south of the country, in an area impacted by climate change with long periods of drought.

The community represented by the Lenca Indigenous Council requested the invalidation of the license to the Ministry of the Environment, a request which has not yet been resolved. In December 2018, the Special Ethnic Prosecutor's Office filed a complaint for the irregular granting of the environmental license to construct the dam in the Petacón river. During 2018, the Military Police on several occasions attempted to violently evict a protest settlement of the indigenous community in which excessive use of force was reported and resulted in several members of the Lenca Indigenous Council being injured.

Since then, the company PROGELSA has carried out a smear and stigmatization campaign against the leaders of the Lenca Indigenous Council and some of the human rights organizations that support this case. During 2019, PROGELSA filed a series of complaints against to members of the community for the alleged crimes of usurpation and damage to

private property that have led to their criminal prosecution. The defenders are currently in liberty, having benefitted from alternatives to pre-trial detention.

Relevance
Support for this case is important as it illustrates the threats that many indigenous peoples face in Honduras and how these threats are intrinsically linked to the defense of their lands and natural resources, the fight against racism, their vindication of their economic, social and cultural rights and their right to access to justice.[14]

OHCHR has accompanied this community through field visits and has facilitated the visit of the UN Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises. These missions have enabled the Office to develop a report to analyze and to raise the visibility of the impact that these evictions have on access to economic, social, cultural and environmental rights. The analysis of this case also demonstrates the impact of evictions on the internal displacement of the population—a phenomenon that the State has not recognize.

Effectiveness
OHCHR's support to this community brought international attention to this case. For example, in 2019 OHCHR supported sending communications about the situation to several special procedures, including the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, the Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association and the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression. OHCHR followed up on these communications with headquarters.

Additionally, OHCHR facilitated a meeting of community members with the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples in the framework of her official visit to the country in 2017[15] and the visit of the UN Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises in August 2019. The recommendations issued by these human rights mechanisms provide a roadmap for the State and send a clear message that the international community is watching.

In 2019, OHCHR promoted the analysis of this case within the framework of the United Nations Country Team protection cluster. This exercise was very useful to develop an analysis of humanitarian needs that this inter-agency cluster should take into account when preparing work plans.

Impact and sustainability
OHCHR support to this case has given visibility to issues that were not well recognized by the State—the relationship between internal displacement and migration with the implementation of projects related to the exploitation of natural resources and the lack of access to water. OHCHR has been urging the Honduran government to recognize the linkages between internal displacement and other causes beyond gang violence. The information from this case is helping the Inter-institutional Commission for the Protection

[14] Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, A/HRC/40/60/Add.2, para 45, 11 January 2019.
[15] https://oacnudh.hn/relatora-especial-de-naciones-unidas-para-los-pueblos-indigenas-llega-a-honduras-para-realizar-visita-de-trabajo-sobre-la-regulacion-de-la-consulta-previa-a-los-pueblos-indigenas/

of People Displaced by Violence to develop a diagnosis on the impact and needs of internally displaced people due to land conflicts.

The documentation and analysis of this case has provided input for advocacy efforts on the draft Law on Free, Prior and Informed Consultation that is under discussion before Congress. For instance, in 2019, OHCHR Honduras worked with the Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples on a communication to the Government expressing concern about the draft law and recalling the recommendations issued by the rapporteur during its visits to the country in 2016 and 2017.

The support and technical assistance provided by OHCHR to the organizations litigating this case has contributed to enhance the right to access to justice of indigenous peoples and has promoted women's leadership in these processes. For instance, OHCHR supported to the participation of a Lenca indigenous woman from this community in the Human Rights and Business Forum in Geneva in November 2019.

Lessons learned
There is added value in inter-agency coordination. The analysis from a human rights perspective within the framework of the protection cluster of the United Nations Country Team concluded that this was an effective way to identify the humanitarian needs of the different sectors of the community in terms of WASH, health, education, food security and protection.

Good practice and replicability. The presentation of this case in a regional workshop with RED LAC highlighted the importance of integrating a human rights approach into humanitarian actions, emergencies and human mobility in the region. The needs assessment from this case can be replicated for other cases in the region.

With regards to the inclusion of disability, the work of the three country presences differs significantly. In El Salvador, the RO has only recently developed some initiatives to integrate disability rights in its work. The RO has worked with the NHRI's working group on persons with disabilities to build their capacity to engage with the mechanisms offered by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CPWD). The RO has also supported the MFA in the presentation of the report to the Committee of the CPWD. In the context of COVID-19, the RO is seeking a closer engagement with organizations of PwD.

In Honduras, efforts in this area have been limited. The CO provided technical assistance to the Federation of Organizations of PwD of Honduras (FENOPDIH) regarding two bills on rights of people living with disabilities. This enabled CSOs to advocate for the improvement of these bills. In contrast, OHCHR Guatemala has fully integrated disability rights in internal practices and external activities, including capacity building activities and institutional and law reforms initiatives. A description of this strategy is included in section 4 on Emerging Good Practices.

20) Has been the programmes monitoring data disaggregated by sex and disability? Do the benefits of the programmes accrue equally to women, persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples?

As discussed under the previous question, there is a clear inclusion of women, indigenous rights (especially in Guatemala and Honduras), and PwDs (in particular in Guatemala, with some initiatives in the two other countries) in the work of the three country presences.

Information regarding specific impact of human rights violations on marginalized and discriminated groups is increasingly available in annual and thematic reports. Annual reports include specific sections on women, indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants, LGBTI and migrants. Regarding the integration of data disaggregated by sex, disability or other category, the evaluation team found some examples of data disaggregated by sex in EOY reports in relation to trainings and communication campaigns. However, for the most part, data disaggregation is infrequent in planning and reporting documents.

21) Did the Country/Subregional Programmes achieve results in the areas of gender equality, women's rights, disability inclusion and indigenous peoples' and afro-descendants rights?

Results achieved in these areas are covered in questions 19 and 20.

3. Lessons Learned

Regional cooperation. While the current OHCHR structure does not support a regional approach to work, the joint initiatives developed by the three country presences have been highly effective. The common challenges experienced by the three field presences provide strong arguments for a more systematic sharing of experiences and strengthening of communication among them.

Strategic prioritization. Effective strategic planning requires maintaining a long-term perspective and balancing structural work with the need to respond to emergencies. Developing strategies to respond to emergencies through a consultative process with staff and partners can help staff to adapt work plans and better manage workloads.

Contingency planning. Establishing country offices and other field presences requires a contingency plan that prioritises staff recruitment and the consolidation of a team. Having a strong team leads to better results.

Staff rotation. Rotation between staff at HQ and country presences contributes to build trust and enhance communication among staff. A thorough understanding of the socio-political and cultural contexts are essential elements to effective work relationships.

Changes in leadership. Complex political contexts require a well thought out plan to avoid gaps in leadership as well as a communication strategy that clearly conveys to partners the Office's commitment to continue with the implementation of the human rights mandate in the country.

Support from HQ. In situations where human rights are challenged, a clear voice from HQ showing political support enables country presences to have a strong voice and raise politically sensitive issues that otherwise would be ignored.

Partnerships. Building strong partnerships with CSOs, human rights victims, State institutions, the UNCT and the international community (including with the IAComHR) have been an effective way to advance the work of OHCHR at the national level and maintain human rights in the national agenda.

Focus on PwD rights. Integrating a disability framework in OHCHR's internal practices, including recruitments processes, Office physical accessibility and activity planning leads to a stronger focus on disability rights.

4. Emerging Good Practices

A comprehensive and integrated strategy on Persons with Disabilities rights

In collaboration with HQ (Development and Economic and Social Issues Branch - DESIB), OHCHR Guatemala included in its 2018-2021 OMP a strategy regarding PwDs that focuses on external interventions, as well as on internal practices.

At the external level, OHCHR Guatemala is focusing on capacity-building of CSOs and State institutions, and institutional and law reforms, including:

- PwD organizations capacity building and inter-institutional dialogues. PwDs groups interviewed recognized that OHCHR Guatemala have empowered them: "we feel stronger, supported to claim for our rights;"
- Monitoring of the application of the implementation of the IAComHR precautionary measures against Federico Mora psychiatric hospital;
- Technical assistance on law reforms. With the support of the UN Partnership to Promote the Rights of PwDs, OHCHR implemented a project to support the inclusion of PwD in the labour market, identifying barriers to guarantee their labour rights. It was directly consulted with PwDs (through the organization of four sessions of dialog) and includes human rights standards. In addition, OHCHR Guatemala follows up legislative reforms on PwDs and the application of the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; additionally, OHCHR Guatemala jointly worked with the NHRI to promote the establishment of the national mechanism of the PwDs Convention;
- Institutional capacity-building to State institutions. OHCHR Guatemala included standards on PwDs in training with State institutions, in particular Constitutional Court magistrates.
- Interagency group. OHCHR Guatemala supported the nomination of Guatemala UNCT to pilot the UN Strategy for the Inclusion of Disabilities.

Concerning internal practices, the Office has integrated PwDs in recruitment processes, activity planning, and public information activities. This is a good practice that should be replicated in other field offices, including:

- Recruitment processes are now inclusive and provide all the information including advertising of the job opening, technical exam, etc. in accessible formats. This modification opened the way to the recruitment of a specialized person (who is herself a PwD). This nomination has allowed OCHCR Guatemala to adapt its day-to-day practices to PwDs (accessibility to premises, materials adapted to different vision conditions, etc.), which has enabled the increased PwDs' participation in key events, such as the presentation of the annual report or the international day of human rights.
- PwDs have been incorporated in different aspects of OHCHR Guatemala plan of action;
- Public information campaigns (especially through social media and info-graphics) have focused on the inclusion of PwDs while others communication materials are now more systematically made available for vision-impaired or deaf persons.

Communication strategies under COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has opened up an opportunity for the communication teams in OHCHR FPs in Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, RO and Colombia to develop a joint communication strategy to produce common messaging and media and communications content and disseminate COVID-19 related guidance on international standards throughout the region. This common approach has enabled FPs to put together their limited resources to translate OHCHR press releases (most of them only available in English), to produce joint materials for social networks, and to share documents with key stakeholders in the region. The communication strategy allowed the FPs to react quickly to demands for information, to speak with a common voice, and to strengthen their communication materials.

The communication teams intend to continue this cooperation on common areas of work, and campaigns or commemoration of specific human rights days.

5. Conclusions

The evaluation team found the work of OHCHR in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador to be significantly relevant to OHCHR's mandate as set out in the OMP 2018 – 2021 and the equivalent thematic priorities of the former OMP for 2017. Respondents agree that OHCHR is working on critical issues where OHCHR adds value.

The evidence reviewed confirm good progress towards achieving the results set out in the AWPs during 2017 – 2020 in the three country presences. The three field presences have supported the achievement of significant thematic pillar results.

The evaluation team concludes that the results achieved justify the invested resources. The three country presences have achieved substantive results with limited resources. However, FPs in Guatemala and Honduras, with support from HQ, need to prioritize the internal strengthening of its structure and the consolidation of their teams to overcome current challenges related to human resources and project management. In El Salvador, the current model—having staff present in the country with strong support from RO as well as headquarters—has proven successful, but would need to be strengthened to sustain the current workload.

The three FPs have invested in long-term processes to enhance the capacity of State institutions to integrate human rights standards in their work and the capacity of CSOs to claim their rights. However, the majority of respondents agree that without the presence of OHCHR in these countries, human rights protection will falter.

Concerning the financial sustainability of OHCHR's presence in these countries, OHCHR HQ needs to commit longer-term resources to support this work by prioritizing the use of non-earmarked funds.

The three country presences have maintained a strong engagement and on-going dialogue with women, LGBTI, Indigenous and Afro-descendants, and PwDs (to a lesser extend in Honduras and El Salvador). This has resulted in a number of activities focusing on gender equality, disability inclusion and indigenous peoples' rights planned for 2017-2020 in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. The evaluation team also found good examples that illustrate the integration of gender and LGBTI concerns in general activities. Nonetheless, a gender analysis could be more systematically integrated in OHCHR's work at the country level.

6. Recommendations

1. Strategic planning

The three FPs need to improve their strategic prioritization process to provide adequate direction to staff and a clear road map to achieve projected results. Having more regular reflection and needs assessments would help reassess priorities and adapt country work. This process should:

1) include a thorough prioritization of objectives based on and analysis of Field presences (FP) added value in the different areas of intervention;
2) take into account lessons learned from the monitoring and documentation work;
3) include technical support to help staff prioritize and find a balance between achieving the country results defined in the work plans and responding to emergencies and day to day work; and
4) assess the experiences of other country offices in the region that have undertaken similar processes.

In particular, El Salvador should: 1) develop a stand-alone country strategy that articulates the structure of the program; what it specifically intends to address; how would it do it and what it is expected to achieve in a particular period of time. The strategy should also spell out the role of the Human Rights Officer (HRO) vis-a-vis the Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator and how it fits in the overall country strategy; and 2) strengthen the current team by increasing staff positions to support commitments. Consider recruiting an international staff member to help maintain high-level interactions with State institutions and the international community and ensure immunity.

2. Human resources and administration

FPs, in collaboration with HQ, should develop a deployment strategy to strengthen the organizational structure, including:

1. A contingency plan to prioritize and accelerate the recruitment of vacant posts;
2. A rationale for the current FP´s structure that clearly articulates staff's roles and responsibilities, and reporting lines;
3. A revision of staff's contractual arrangements to ensure continuity of the work. Having an appropriate contract level is important as it can impact the prospects to interact with State institutions.
4. A schedule setting up the frecuency and type of communication between Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division (FOTCD) and the COs in Guatemala and Honduras that includes regular conference calls to address progress on the organizational structure, contingencies for staff turnover and logistics;
5. A scheme for ensuring staff well-being, that includes techniques and strategies to address conflict resolution inside and outside the Office.

In terms of changes in leadership in FPs, particularly in complex political contexts, OHCHR headquarters (HQ) in collaboration with FPs need to guarantee that clear institutional communication conveys to all partners the Office's commitment to continue with the implementation of the human rights mandate in the country to avoid misinformation that can cause institutional reputational damage. Gaps in senior leadership should be avoided ensuring at minimun the appointment of Oic or Head/Deputy heads ad interim. Extended interim positions should be avoided as a matter of priority.

In relation to administration of projects, DEXREL and Front Office at HQ level should improve administrative procedures to avoid delays in the signature of the projects (in particular regarding fund transfers and the recruitment of project staff) funded by donors as these delays impact their timely implementation.

Given the rapid staff turn-over, OHCHR should develop a mechanism to serve as a repository of knowledge and historical memory of OHCHR interventions in each country. For example, OHCHR, in consultation with FPs, should establish and maintain a shared drive with documents accessible to all staff for knowledge sharing purposes. The focus on the knowledge hub should be on relevant information related to program implementation, including lessons learned, challenges, and synergies and dynamic with partners and relevant stakeholders.

3. Planning, monitoring and evaluation

FPs should revise outputs to make them more specific and enable a better assessment of progress over a concrete period of time. Outputs should indicate what measurable results the Office is looking to attain, specify beneficiaries and indicate how the FP is planning to do it. AWPs should also provide clear baselines to enable FPs to adequately monitor results at national level.

Conduct periodic lessons learned exercises and collect disaggregated data systematically and ensure that this data feeds into planning and strategic prioritization processes.

Develop tools to track the impact of the specialized training and technical support provided to State institutions and CSOs. Evaluation tools should measure how the knowledge generated has been used by beneficiaries and the subsequent impact. For instance, how judges have used specialized trainings and how the acquired knowledge is reflected in rulings.

4. Coordination and communication

Coordination between FPs and HQ has been strengthened and should continue to be improved to guarantee a constant common analysis and to identify adequate support. Staff rotation between HQ and FPs has contributed to build trust and enhance communication among staff and should continue to be encouraged.

At management level, there needs to be more regular communication and joint strategizing at critical moments when the FPs are confronted with complex political situations. While communication and joint strategizing have already improved, effective means to solve disagreements with FPs in relation to leadership and strategic approaches should be institutionalized.

OHCHR has not developed an overarching strategy for the three Country programs to collaborate, coordinate and share information in a systematic way. While OHCHR's structure does not support the development of regional strategies among the FPs in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, a more systematic sharing of information and experiences would enhance OHCHR's work and impact in the subregion.

The subregional joint meetings held in the framework of the project with Sweden in Guatemala in October 2018 and in April 2020 are a good practice that should be replicated on an annual basis. These meetings can help identify areas for further information sharing and cooperation. In addition, regular conference calls among the three FPs should strengthen sharing of information and best practices in the region.

FPs and HQ should also pursue and reinforce the cooperation with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IAComHR). Taking into account the complementarity of the mandates of each entity, OHCHR and IAComHR could further their collaboration through, for example, common reporting, joint visits of special mechanisms and joint technical cooperation projects.

5. Funding

To ensure the long-term sustainability of the work in the three countries, HQ needs to commit longer-term resources to support this work by prioritizing the use of unearmarked extra-budgetary funding. Considering mounting limitations to access funds locally, OHCHR HQ should also consider strengthening its support from the Regular Program for Technical Cooperation Program of the SG (RPTC), which is funded from the Regular Budget.

HQ, particularly the Donor and External Relations Section (DEXREL), should strengthen the capacity of FPs to fundraise locally. Additionally, PPMES in coordination with FOTCD, could support FPs with the formulation logical frameworks or theories of change and the identification of measurable results and precise indicators as this is key to for the future sustainability of the three FPs.

7. Appendices (available upon request)

Annex One: Evaluation Terms of Reference

Annex Two: List of stakeholders interviewed

Annex Three: Analytical Framework

Annex Four: Executive summaries of the Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador reports

Annex Five: Result Framework

Annex Six: Impact Analysis of the Three Programmes

Annex Seven: Evaluation Reference Group Members

Annex Eight: Biographies of Evaluation Team Members

Management response to the recommendations

Management response		
Evaluation report title: Evaluation of the Guatemala and Honduras Country Programmes and the Subregional Programme in El Salvador		
Recommendation 1.1: The three FPs need to improve their strategic prioritization process to provide adequate direction to staff and a clear road map to achieve projected results. Having more regular reflection and needs assessments would help reassess priorities and adapt country work. This process should: 1) include a thorough prioritization of objectives based on and analysis of Field presences (FP) added value in the different areas of intervention; 2) take into account lessons learned from the monitoring and documentation work; 3) include technical support to help staff prioritize and find a balance between achieving the country results defined in the work plans and responding to emergencies and day to day work; and 4) assess the experiences of other country offices in the region that have undertaken similar processes.		
Management position on recommendation: Accepted		
Key Actions	**Responsibility**	**Timeframe**
1. With the support of the Americas section, as relevant, the three field presences will conduct strategic planning exercises to prioritize objectives and areas of work, including lessons learned from monitoring and documentation work, as part of the 2021 annual planning exercise (definition of work and cost plans), following the guidelines to be issued by OHCHR headquarters, which include processes for internal/external consultations and priority setting.	Americas section/Field Presences Representatives in three FPs	Q4 2020
2. Given the current changes in leadership in the three FPs, the Americas Section will circulate available OHCHR guidelines and support the three field presences in the development of updated country engagement strategies to be approved by the High Commissioner.	Americas section and three Field presences representatives	Q4 2020
3. When in need to respond to emergencies, the Americas section and field presences will activate an "enhanced monitoring plan" , to include close consultations between HQs and the FP on priority actions, assessment of field presences' capacities and reassessment of country priorities and results defined in the work plans.	Americas section and field presences	Tbc
4. Documented experiences from other country offices in the region will be shared with three field offices.	Americas section and three field presences, with the support of PPMES	Q1 2021

Recommendation 1.2:
El Salvador should: 1) develop a stand-alone country strategy that articulates the structure of the program; what it specifically intends to address; how would it do it and what it is expected to achieve in a particular period of time. The strategy should also spell out the role of the Human Rights Officer (HRO) vis-a-vis the Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator and how it fits in the overall country strategy; and 2) strengthen the current team by increasing staff positions to support commitments. Consider recruiting an international staff member to help maintain high-level interactions with State institutions and the international community and ensure immunity.

Management position on recommendation: Accepted

Key Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe
1. The Regional Office is currently preparing a country strategy for El Salvador and country program for 2021-2022 to be approved by the HC.	Regional Office in consultation with the Americas section	Q4 2020
2. The 2021-2022 country program for El Salvador is to be reviewed/endorsed by the PBRB and HC. The Regional Office will submit a 2021 work/costplan to be approved as part of the 2021 planning exercise.	Regional Office in consultation with the Americas section	Q4 2020 and Q1 2021

Recommendation 2.1:
FPs, in collaboration with HQ, should develop a deployment strategy to strengthen the organizational structure, including:

1. A contingency plan to prioritize and accelerate the recruitment of vacant posts;
2. A rationale for the current FP´s structure that clearly articulates staff's roles and responsibilities, and reporting lines;
3. A revision of staff's contractual arrangements to ensure continuity of the work. Having an appropriate contract level is important as it can impact the prospects to interact with State institutions.
4. A schedule setting up the frecuency and type of communication between Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division (FOTCD) and the COs in Guatemala and Honduras that includes regular conference calls to address progress on the organizational structure, contingencies for staff turnover and related logistics;
5. A scheme for ensuring staff well-being, that includes techniques and strategies to address conflict resolution inside and outside the Office.

Management position on recommendation: Accepted

Key Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe
1. The Americas Section (and field presences in Guatemala and Honduras) will review the status of vacant field positions in the Americas with the Human Resources Management Section on a quarterly basis, with a view to identify challenges to complete the processes, as per the predefined timelines, and ensure support/advice to field presences is provided, as relevant.	Americas section and OHCHR Human Resources Management Section	Q4 2020
2. The three field presences - Guatemala, Honduras and Regional Office (for El Salvador) - in consultation with the Americas Section, will conduct a review of their current structures (including roles, responsibilities and reporting	Field Presences in Guatemala and Honduras, with the support	Q4 2020

lines) and submit a report and/or proposal for changes, if relevant, for the approval of to the PBRB.	of the Americas section	
3. OHCHR will conduct a review of staff contractual arrangements in all three field presences to ensure continuity of the work, as part of OHCHR ongoing efforts for the regularization of the situation of National Field Staff. The recommendations of the 2018 National Field Staff review and plan of action will be circulated to the new leadership of the three offices.	Human Resources Management Section, in consultation with the field presence and the Americas section	Q1 2021
4. The capacity of the three field presences to complete selection processes for international professional staff, UNVs and national staff, in accordance with UN rules and regulations (UNOG, UNDP, UNV) will be strengthened, including through the establishment of Program Management Officer positions, the enhancement of skills through online training /coaching on the use of Inspira and the acquisition/use of other tools.	Field Presences in Guatemala and Honduras, with the support of the Americas section	2020 / 2021
5. The Americas Section will continue its constant dialogue with field presences related to staffing, programmatic and other issues.	Americas section and field presences	Q4 2020
6. Staff well being - Information on available services, including on the Action Plan to adress Mental Health of the Staff members recently developed by Human Resources, will continue to be shared by Human Resources Management Section with all field presences.	Human Resources Management Section	Q4 2020
Recommendation 2.2: Particularly in complex political contexts, OHCHR headquarters (HQ), in collaboration with FPs need to improve the planning of leadership changes in FPs. In particular, it needs to guarantee that clear institutional communication conveys to all partners the Office's commitment to continue with the implementation of the human rights mandate in the country to avoid misinformation that can cause institutional reputational damage. Gaps in senior leadership and extended interim positions should be avoided as a matter of priority.		
Management position on recommendation: Accepted		
Key Actions	**Responsibility**	**Timeframe**
1. Ensure planning of leadership changes in field presences and clear institutional communication is conveyed to all partners to avoid misinformation.	OHCHR Management	Tbc
2. Gaps in senior leadership and extended interim positions to be avoided.	OHCHR Management	Tbc
Recommendation 2.3: In relation to administration of projects, DEXREL and Front Office at HQ level should improve administrative procedures to avoid delays in the signature of the projects (in particular regarding fund transfers and the recruitment of project staff) funded by donors as these delays impact their timely implementation.		
Management position on recommendation: Accepted		

Key Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe
1. OHCHR Management will circulate available /updated information on administrative procedures for the signature of projects with all field presences.	Front Office at HQs level and DEXREL	Q4 2020
2. As part of the 2021 planning exercise, and in view of the current regular budget and XB funding situation, OHCHR is currently reviewing existing processes for the authorization of annual cost plans and issuance of financial cables for field offices to timely implement activities under earmarked projects, with a view to streamlining processes.	Policy, Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation Service (PPMES) and Program Support and Management Services (PSMS)	Q1 2021
3. OHCHR will review periodically the list of vacant positions/existing processes for the recruitment of project staff for field presences and define clear timelines for different types of processes, in accordance with UN rules and regulations, to address delays in the recruitment of project staff.	Program Support and Management Services (PSMS) and Americas section, in consultation with field presences	Q1 2021

Recommendation 2.4:
Given the rapid staff turnover, OHCHR should develop a mechanism to serve as a repository of knowledge and historical memory of OHCHR interventions in each country. For example, OHCHR, in consultation with FPs, should establish and maintain a shared drive with documents accessible to all staff for knowledge sharing purposes. The focus on the knowledge hub should be on relevant information related to program implementation, including lessons learned, challenges, and synergies and dynamic with partners and relevant stakeholders.

Management position on recommendation: Accepted

Key Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe
1. The Office will consider developing an additional mechanism to serve as a repository of knowledge and historical memory of OHCHR interventions in each country.	Methodology and Training Section, in consultation with FOTCD	2021
2. Information on the use of OHCHR Intranet and Extranet, and the shared drive country/thematic platform, which is available for the use of field presences to keep and share information will be provided to the new leadership/field presences teams.	Americas section with the support of Information Management and Technology Section	Q1 - Q2 2021
3. In 2019, OHCHR initiated the pilot project to use a One Drive On Premise service, which is an online storage that hosts data in the OHCHR premises in Geneva, allowing field presences to have a common share storage/drive and remote access shared and individual office files.	Information Management and Technology Section and field presences	2021

Recommendation 3.1:
FPs should revise outputs to make them more specific and enable a better assessment of progress over a concrete period of time. Outputs should indicate what measurable results the Office is looking to attain, specify beneficiaries and indicate how the FP is planning to do it. AWPs should also provide clear baselines to enable FPs to adequately monitor results at national level.

Management position on recommendation: Accepted

Key Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
1. As part of the 2021 planning exercise, and with the support of the Program Support and Management Services, each field presence will ensure that outputs are measurable over a period of time.	Field presences, Program Support and Management Services (PSMS)	Q4 2020

Recommendation 3.2:
Conduct periodic lessons learned exercises and collect disaggregated data systematically and ensure that this data feeds into planning and strategic prioritization processes.

Management position on recommendation: Accepted

Key Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe
1. The Methodology, Education and Training Section (METS) to support in the conduct of lessons learned exercises in the field presences in the Americas with a view for this data to feed into planning and strategic periodization processes. The participation of the 3 field presences in the Knowledge networks will be encouraged.	Field presences and Methodology, Education and Training Section	Q1 - Q2 2021
2. OHCHR will complete assessment on the usefulness of acquiring a software application for field presences in the region, to be able to monitor/document progress in the implementation of projects with earmarked funding.	Field presences	Q1 - Q2 2021

Recommendation 3.3:
Develop tools to track the impact of the specialized training and technical support provided to State institutions and CSOs. Evaluation tools should measure how the knowledge generated has been used by beneficiaries and the subsequent impact. For instance, how judges have used specialized trainings and how the acquired knowledge is reflected in rulings.

Management position on recommendation: Accepted

Key Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe
1. The Methodology, Education and Training section (METS), in coordination with the Americas Section, will seek to build the capacity of the 3 field presences in the use of OHCHR available specialized training materials and/or to develop other targeted tools. This will include distribution of and training in the recent new guidance on human rights training that was published by OHCHR/METS.	Methodology, Education and Training Section (METS) and Americas Section	Q1-Q2 2021

2. Field presences will create a database of participants in various specialized trainings to facilitate the follow-up and impact assessment.	Field presences	Q1 - Q2 2021

Recommendation 4.1:
Coordination between FPs and HQ has been strengthened and should continue to be improved to guarantee a constant common analysis and to identify adequate support. Staff rotation between HQ and FPs has contributed to build trust and enhance communication among staff and should continue to be encouraged.

Management position on recommendation: Accepted

Key Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe
1. Regular meetings between the Americas Section and all field presences in the region will be organized on a quarterly basis. The regular communication efforts and strategic meetings will continue.	Americas section and FOTCD Director	Q1 2021
2. The Americas section will support all regional/country offices to update periodically the regional/country strategies and facilitate discussions with the HC for her approval.	Americas section, FOTCD Director and all field presences	Q4 2020 - Q1 2021
3. Rotation of staff between HQ and FPs will continue to be encouraged and supported by the Americas Section/FOTCD.	Americas section, FOTCD Director, Human Resources	Tbc

Recommendation 4.2:
At management level, there needs to be more regular communication and joint strategizing at critical moments when the FPs are confronted with complex political situations. While communication and joint strategizing have already improved, effective means to solve disagreements with FPs in relation to leadership and strategic approaches should be organized.

Management position on recommendation: Accepted

Key Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
1. In addition to the periodic meetings between the Americas Section and the HoFPs, Senior Management, including the FOTCD Director, the Front Office and Chief of the AECA Branch will provide support when needed. At critical moments, FOTCD will activate an "enhanced strategic thinking mechanism" with more frequent meetings to jointly strategize at critical moments when the FPs are confronted with complex political situations.	FOTCD Director, Front Office and AECA Chief with the support of the Americas section	Q1 2020

Recommendation 4.3:
OHCHR has not developed an overarching strategy for the three Country programs to collaborate, coordinate and share information in a systematic way. While OHCHR's structure does not support the development of regional strategies among the FPs in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, a more systematic sharing of information and experiences would enhance OHCHR's work and impact in the subregion.

Management position on recommendation: Accepted

Key Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
1. The Americas section will facilitate discussions between the three country programs - Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador (ROCA) - to collaborate, coordinate and share information in a systematic way and to support the development of regional thematic strategies among the three field presences.	Americas section and field presences	Q1/Q2/Q3 - 2021
Recommendation 4.4: The subregional joint meetings held in the framework of the project with Sweden in Guatemala in October 2018 and in April 2020 are a good practice that should be replicated on an annual basis. These meetings can help identify areas for further information sharing and cooperation. In addition, regular conference calls among the three FPs should strengthen sharing of information and best practices in the region.		
Management position on recommendation: Accepted		
Key Action	**Responsibility**	**Timeframe**
1. The Field Presences, in coordination with the Americas section will continue organizing annual subregional joint meeting in the framework of the project funded by Sweden. The next meeting will be organized in April 2021, either in Honduras and/or El Salvador (subject to the opening of the borders and COVID situation), or virtually.	Three field presences with the support of the Americas section	Q2 2021
Recommendation 4.5: FPs and HQ should also pursue and reinforce the cooperation with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IAComHR). Taking into account the complementarity of the mandates of each entity, OHCHR and IAComHR could further their collaboration through, for example, common reporting, joint visits of special mechanisms and joint technical cooperation projects.		
Management position on recommendation: Accepted		
Key Actions	**Responsibility**	**Timeframe**
1. OHCHR will continue cooperating with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, in the framework of the Human Rights Council resolution on regional mechanisms and in the framework of the OHCHR-IAHRC joint declaration of cooperation signed on 19 November 2014 and a joint plan of action to contribute to the protection of human rights defenders was launched on 25 October 2017.	Field Presences and Americas Section	Q1 2021
2. A joint meeting to assess progress in the cooperation and implementation of the 2017 joint action plan to contribute to the protection of human rights defenders, between OHCHR and the IAHRC, is planned for early 2021.	Americas section and all field presences in the Americas	Q1 2021

Recommendation 5.1:
To ensure the long-term sustainability of the work in the three countries, HQ needs to commit longer-term resources to support this work by prioritizing the use of unearmarked extra-budgetary funding. Considering mounting limitations to access funds locally, OHCHR HQ should also consider strengthening its support from the Regular Program for Technical Cooperation Program of the SG (RPTC), which is funded from the Regular Budget.

Management position on recommendation: Accepted

Key Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe
1. Prioritize the allocation of unearmarked extra-budgetary funding.	PBRB, DEXREL, Front Office (TO DECIDE WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN)	Q4 2020 - Q1 2021
2. Strengthening support from the Regular Program for Technical Cooperation (RPTC).	PBRB and FOTCD Director	Q4 2020 - Q1 2021

Recommendation 5.2:
HQ, particularly the Donor and External Relations Section (DEXREL), should strengthen the capacity of FPs to fundraise locally. Additionally, PPMES in coordination with FOTCD, could support FPs with the formulation logical frameworks or theories of change and the identification of measurable results and precise indicators as this is key to for the future sustainability of the three FPs.

Management position on recommendation: Accepted

Key Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe
1. OHCHR will strengthen the capacity of FPs to fundraise locally, including through the deployment of a Senior Fundraising Officer to the region.	DEXREL and OHCHR Senior Management	Q2 2021
2. The existing manual on Fundraising will be shared with the new leadership in the 3 field presences. PPMES will be requested to organize a targeted online workshop to strengthen the capacity of field presences in the Americas on the formulation of logical frameworks, with measurable results and indicators.	DEXREL and PPMES	Q2 2021
3. Program Management Officers in the Americas field presences, will be encouraged/supported to participate in bi-annual meetings on administrative, financial procedures, human resources and tools, organized by the Program Support and Management Services to stimulate peer learning and exchange of best practices.	Program Support and Management Services	Q2 2021