

On gender and human rights for women, the report notes that the OHCHR is finalizing a mission statement which will identify action to be taken at three levels: (a) the integration of a gender perspective into all aspects of OHCHR with particular attention being paid to policy development, strategic planning and the setting of priorities and objectives; (b) the active and broad participation of women in all fields of UN human rights activity; and (c) the initiation of specific programmes, special projects and activities aimed at improving the enjoyment by women and girls of their fundamental human rights.

With regard to technical cooperation, national institutions and education, the report notes that technical cooperation gives priority to reinforcing national human rights capacities and national human rights institutions and infrastructures. This includes the promotion of democratic institutions, development and human rights, human rights support to parliaments, constitutional assistance, human rights training, legislative reform assistance, the administration of justice, establishing or strengthening national human rights institutions, and the training of police and prison officials. Assistance is also provided on specific human rights issues, such as the preparation and implementation of comprehensive national plans of action for the promotion and protection of human rights, popular participation in decision-making and implementation of projects related to economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development. The High Commissioner stated that the requests received by OHCHR for technical assistance strain the capacity of the Office to deliver effectively. In a period of some ten years the programme has grown from only a few seminars and fellowships per year to some 200 main activities in some 40 countries.

The High Commissioner noted the increased demands on the UN human rights system generally and, with regard to resources, recalled that from 1995 to 1998 there has been no significant growth in the regular budget resources in dollar terms. In terms of staff, the OHCHR staffing table regressed by 18 regular posts between the 1996-1997 and 1998-1999 bienniums. The High Commissioner stated that the reasonable demands on the programme will require a significant new effort from the UN regular budget and, further, that it is no longer acceptable for member states to tell the people of the world that their human rights are worth less than two per cent of UN resources. The High Commissioner called upon Member States to take the necessary steps necessary to put the core activities of the human rights programme on a sound and predictable financial basis through the UN's regular budget.

In 1998, the OHCHR received US\$21.1 million from the UN regular budget; extra-budgetary resources (voluntary funds) were expected to total approximately US\$54.4 million (see the section on "Technical Assistance").

HIV/AIDS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

In May 1997, at the fourth meeting of the special rapporteurs/representatives, experts and chairpersons of working groups of the special procedures of the Commission on Human Rights (E/CN.4/1998/45, Annex), there was a discussion on how to integrate concerns related to HIV/AIDS into the work of special procedures.

The meeting noted that there are specific forms of human rights abuses which heighten the risk of infection from HIV/AIDS, including: religious intolerance, which sometimes leads to a failure to provide information on how to avoid infection; violation of the rights to receive and impart vital information on the virus; violations of physical integrity, including female genital mutilation and physical torture or corporal punishment; and sale of children and forced prostitution. The meeting also noted that a range of human rights abuses are directed against people living with HIV/AIDS, who are often subjected to discrimination with respect to access to housing, health care and employment. Their freedoms of expression and association can also be violated, and women infected with HIV/AIDS are sometimes perceived as "vectors of the disease" and subjected to punishment and harassment. Prisoners living with HIV/AIDS are frequently segregated from other inmates and subjected to violations of the confidentiality of their health status.

The representative from UNAIDS requested that the special procedures provide assistance to UNAIDS by, *inter alia*: systematically gathering information on marginalized people suffering heightened vulnerability to HIV; identifying and responding to local and regional patterns regarding HIV/AIDS-related human rights abuses; intervening, as appropriate, with governments by, for example, helping states to address the issue of marginalization, tackle practices which had an impact on the vulnerability to infection, and tackle practices which had an impact on people living with HIV/AIDS; including in their reports human rights violations relating to HIV/AIDS; and establishing contact with UNAIDS at its headquarters in Geneva or at the local level where UNAIDS country programme advisers could provide useful information.

