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

#### Chapter I

##### Introduction

1. The present report<sup>1</sup> describes the activities undertaken by my Office since my last report to the General Assembly in 2008. They were undertaken during and in the aftermath of the celebrations marking the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which culminated on 10 December 2008. The activities in celebration bore testimony to both the vision and continuing relevance of the Declaration for the United Nations and peoples of the world.
2. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights remains today the most enduring and widely acclaimed statement of human rights. If the celebrations revealed enormous popular enthusiasm for the ideals enshrined in the Declaration, they also provided a reminder of the distance still to be covered before we can proclaim the rights of all truly protected. The efforts of my Office as described in the present report aim at better implementation of these rights. From the fight against racism, to support to the various human rights machinery, development of partnerships at the country level, and strengthened and better utilized thematic expertise, my Office has continued with its implementation of its full mandate as described in General Assembly resolution 48/141.

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#### Chapter III

##### Human Rights Council

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##### C. Special procedures

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22. At the eighth special session, on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and at the ninth special session, on the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the Council adopted resolutions tasking several mandate holders with reports, which were presented at the tenth session in March 2009.

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#### Chapter V

##### Work of the Office of the High Commissioner at the country level

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##### B. Rapid response capacity

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38. ... In the wake of the Israeli military operations against Gaza, in January 2009, a rapid response officer was sent to the OHCHR office in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and assumed the lead in the inter-agency Protection Cluster. In July 2009, OHCHR deployed a human rights adviser to Honduras, at

the request of the United Nations Resident Coordinator, to assist the United Nations country team in responding to the human rights consequences of the political crisis.

39. OHCHR continued to support the implementation of resolutions and decisions of the Human Rights Council. Following the adoption, on 12 January 2009, of resolution S-9/1, the Rapid Response Unit provided initial operational and technical support to the international independent fact-finding mission established by the President of the Council on 3 April 2009 “to investigate all violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law that might have been committed at any time in the context of the military operations that were conducted in Gaza during the period from 27 December 2008 and 18 January 2009, whether before, during or after”. OHCHR subsequently appointed a secretariat to support the mission in the implementation of its mandate. The independent fact-finding mission will present its report at the twelfth session of the Council.

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## **Chapter VII**

### **Mainstreaming human rights and enhancing partnerships**

99. While continuing to participate in inter-agency humanitarian mechanisms, particularly the Executive Committee for Humanitarian Affairs and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and its subsidiary groups, and the Global Protection Cluster Working Group, emphasis has been placed this year on empowering human rights field presences to fully participate — and sometimes lead — in collaborative efforts. In support of this priority, OHCHR participated in norms-setting activities, including for example the ongoing development of a rapid-assessment tool in protection and standard operating procedures on protection in natural disasters. On the ground, OHCHR currently plays a lead role in protection coordination in: Afghanistan, Burundi, Chad, Fiji, Georgia, Haiti, Indonesia, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, north Lebanon, Nepal, Timor-Leste and the occupied Palestinian territories.

### **Conclusion**

102. In these difficult times, the human rights challenges ahead both longstanding and emerging are immense but not insurmountable. Addressing them timely and adequately require an increased dialogue among all concerned stakeholders (member States, regional and intergovernmental organizations, national human rights institutions, civil society organizations). We have to adopt new approaches and make full use of the United Nations human rights system as a whole, in particular its early warning mechanisms so as to make a real difference for the victims of human rights violations worldwide. Against this background, and following consultations, I have defined the following six themes that will be my priorities during my tenure: ensuring the realization of human rights in the context of migration; eliminating discrimination, in particular on the basis of race, sex or religion, and against marginalized groups; protecting economic, social and cultural rights in efforts to combat inequalities and poverty, including in the context of the economic, food and climate crises; protecting human rights in situations of armed conflict, violence and insecurity; combating impunity and strengthening accountability, the rule of law, and democratic societies; and strengthening international human rights mechanisms and the progressive development of international human rights law. I intend to further the mainstreaming of human rights in the policies and practices of the United Nations system, while enhancing the support to the resident coordinator system, the United Nations country teams and to United Nations peace missions. I also intend to take a leadership role in encouraging a human rights approach to global issues such as land-grabbing and its multidimensional impact on human rights.

103. My Office, working as one to maximize cross-fertilization, is currently developing holistic strategies in these areas. This would be the best way to uphold the principles of universality, indivisibility, interdependence and non-selectivity that will guide OHCHR under my leadership.

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<sup>1</sup> The report focuses on the activities of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) since the submission of the report to the sixty-third session of the General Assembly. The report should be read in the context of the High Commissioner's report submitted earlier this year to the Human Rights Council ([A/HRC/10/29](#)).