

Management Letter on preventing, addressing and reporting on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment

In accordance with the request of the UN Women Executive Board at paragraph 10 of Decision 2018/3¹ and the requirement of Section 4.6 of the Secretary-General's Bulletin on "Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse" (ST/SGB/2003/13), and as also communicated in the *End of Year Management Letter on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) and Reporting of SEA Allegations* of the UN Women Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director dated 25 January 2022, UN Women hereby certifies that the organization has reported to the Secretary-General all allegations of SEA that have been brought to its attention and has taken all appropriate measures to address such allegations, in accordance with established rules and procedures for dealing with cases of staff misconduct.

Recognizing the request of the Executive Board to also report on sexual harassment (SH), UN Women wishes to also confirm that it has taken all appropriate measures to address allegations of SH against UN Women personnel, in accordance with established rules and procedures.

Preventing and addressing SEA and SH

UN Women continues to use a proactive and victim-centered approach to preventing and addressing SEA and SH. Since its last certification provided to the Executive Board on May 10, 2021, and in addition to the key actions taken from June 2021 to February 2022 detailed in UN Women's [Update to the Executive Board First Regular Session 2022](#), to further strengthen the prevention of and response to SEA and SH within UN Women and across the UN system, this entailed:

1. The certification from the Regional Directors and Heads of Office to the Executive Director of their compliance with their duties in addressing SEA and SH during the year 2021, considering the duties of "Heads of Departments, Offices and Missions" of UN organizations pursuant to Section 4 of ST/SGB/2003/13, and in accordance with paragraph 4.16 of the Prevention of Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Discrimination and Abuse of Authority Policy.
2. The ongoing coordination of UN Women's network of regional and country SEA and SH focal points, who concert the effective operationalization of the required key PSEA and SH activities in their respective duty stations in direct collaboration with their Heads of Office, as well as the provision of capacity building for all newly appointed focal points.
3. The continuation of the roll-out of UN Women's scenario-based SEA and SH training workshops, providing personnel with a contextualized understanding of the key SEA and SH definitions and concepts, the applicable UN Women and UN system-wide SEA and SH policies and procedures, the different reporting mechanisms, due process, and potential consequences.

¹ [UNW/2018/8](#) (Decisions adopted by the Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women at its 2018 sessions)

4. The coordination of efforts to prevent and address SH through the UN Women internal taskforce on addressing SH, under the shared leadership of the Ending Violence against Women (EVAW) section and Human Resources (HR) department and with a broadened membership to include key stakeholders from across all UN Women's geographical locations.
5. The inclusion of the tackling of SEA and SH as a priority within the nurturing of a diverse and empowered workforce and the advancement of an inclusive culture, which forms a key pillar of UN Women's high impact business model within UN Women's 2022-2025 Strategic Plan.
6. The continued active engagement with the Chief Executive Board Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment within the Organizations of the United Nations as co-chair of the workstream on Outreach and Knowledge Sharing and as a member of the workstreams on Advancing a Victim Centered Approach, on Learning and Communication, and on Leadership and Culture.
7. The resolute participation in the UN system-wide SEA Working Group, spearheaded by the Office of the Special Coordinator on Improving the United Nations Response to SEA, through provision of technical inputs to its key initiatives.
8. The continuation of the Respectful Workplace Facilitators pilot programme in selected countries to build confidential and informal peer support capacity at the local level in country offices under the umbrella of the Office of the Ombudsman for United Nations Funds and Programmes. The programme, *inter alia*, provides information on SH related support services available to UN Women personnel.
9. The facilitation of the 2021 United Nations Leadership Dialogue "Accountability System in the UN: How do you understand and make it work?" to promote a robust ethical awareness and culture of integrity within UN Women that contributes to an environment in which dignity and respect are the norms, free from sexual misconduct.
10. The provision of stress management and counselling support to any personnel experiencing trauma from SEA and SH by the UN Women stress counsellors, in addition to services rendered by the UNDSS Critical Incident Stress Management Section and the online counseling provider Rome Institute.

Reporting SEA and SH

UN Women continues to be fully committed to reporting on these issues while maintaining confidentiality in order to ensure, *inter alia*, the probity and confidentiality of any investigation, to ensure the safety and security of persons including the alleged victim, and to respect the due process rights of all involved. Accordingly, the established reporting mechanism are as follows:

1. Each year, management reports to the Executive Board, as required by the Secretary-General², that the organization has reported all allegations of SEA and taken appropriate measures to address such allegations.
2. All publicly available information on SEA allegations can be accessed on the UN's Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Data on Allegations website, as UN Women participates in the Secretary-General's reporting mechanism, "iReport SEA Tracker".
3. The Annual Report on Internal Audit and Investigation to the Executive Board reports on cases of SEA and SH reported to and investigated by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS).

² Section 4.6 of the Secretary-General's Bulletin on "Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse" (ST/SGB/2003/13)

4. Pursuant to the UN-Women Legal Policy for Addressing Non-Compliance with United Nations Standards of Conduct, each year the Executive Director issues a report that communicates anonymized information on disciplinary decisions taken and cases of misconduct, including SEA and SH, that have resulted in the imposition of disciplinary measures in the course of the preceding year. The report is provided to the Executive Board, published on the UN Women intranet, publicly available on the UN Women website³ and also shared with all UN Women personnel.

In addition, in 2021, UN Women enhanced its reporting framework through:

5. The inclusion of a PSEA and SH dedicated key performance indicator in UN Women's 2022-2025 Strategic Plan Monitoring Framework, in line with the corresponding indicators from the 2021 QCPR. The indicator measures that UN-Women has taken all appropriate actions, in accordance with the established rules and procedures, to prevent and address allegations of SEA and SH against its personnel.

Finally, in accordance with ST/SGB/2003/13 and the provisions of General Assembly resolution 62/63, the Secretary-General, on behalf of UN Women, brings credible allegations that reveal that a crime may have been committed, including SEA and SH, to the attention of the States against whose nationals such allegations are made.

Recognizing the importance of transparency and accountability in the United Nations system with respect to fighting SEA and SH, this has been done in good faith.



Sima Bahous
Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director
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³ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/accountability>