

Background Note: Briefing to the Executive Board, First Regular Session 2023

“Update on UN-Women policies and procedures to tackle sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment”

I. Introduction

1. Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) and Sexual Harassment (SH) are a profound betrayal of the core values of UN-Women and of the UN system and undermine our ability to deliver positive change. With women and girls making up an overwhelming majority of the victims/survivors of SEA and SH, the prevention of and response to sexual misconduct within its own organization and across the UN system has been and continues to be of highest priority to UN-Women. Consequently, by leveraging its expertise and experience stemming from its triple mandate to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment, UN-Women has consistently pursued the highest standards of policy and governance frameworks and advanced a victim/survivor-centred implementation thereof at HQ, regional and country level, through the reinforcement of capacities and safeguards, as well as accountability structures. To ensure the effectiveness of these targeted efforts to tackle sexual misconduct, UN-Women has put in place a robust monitoring scheme through which it assesses the impact thereof.

2. Therefore, the Executive Board may wish to welcome UN-Women’s comprehensive indicators and metrics framework through which it measures progress on addressing SEA and SH and which will inform the corresponding UN-Women strategies, policies, and procedures from here on forward; and take note that UN-Women’s integrated results and resources framework (IRRF) indicator on SEA and SH is fully aligned with the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (QCPR) and its associated monitoring framework indicators, as well as those of other United Nations development system agencies (UNDS).

II. UN-Women Metrics to Measure Progress on Addressing SEA and SH

I. UN-Women Indicators and Metrics Framework for Tackling SEA and SH

Methodology

3. A desk review of resources and best practices from across the UN system and leading INGOs and consultations with key stakeholders within UN-Women and beyond led to the identification of the Multilateral Organization performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) SEA and SH indicators and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Minimum Operating Standards for protection from SEA indicators as the foundation of UN-Women’s indicators and metrics framework for tackling SEA and SH. Not only are they in line with existing international norms

and standards, including the DAC Recommendation on Ending Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment in Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance, but also were they developed to be utilized within the specific context of the UN to assess the effective addressing of sexual misconduct therein, thus rendering them uniquely suitable for UN-Women.

4. The 42 potential indicators, covering all areas of the prevention of and response to sexual misconduct, offered by the two tools were then organized into a cohesive framework, comprised at first of five main categories, which then were further streamlined into three thematic dimensions, using the same analytical structuring as the implementation of the recommendations of the independent, victim-centered review of UN-Women's policies and procedures to tackle SEA and SH (see [Briefing Note to the Executive Board, Annual Session 2022](#)). Then each of the potential indicators were reviewed in terms of their relevance and the availability of quality data, resulting in the reduction of their number to 9 key performance indicators (KPIs).

5. Subsequently, with the help of relevant data sources, composite metrics to demonstrate the progress and update on the efforts implemented were clearly identified for each KPI. Composite metrics were chosen because they offer a simplified way of indicating progress or absence thereof for the complex sexual misconduct-related issues the KPIs seek to measure. For each of the 23 composite metrics, multiple specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) sub-metrics were defined, bringing their total to 75.

6. The data sources used for the sub-metrics include inter-alia: the OSCEA¹-administered PSEA perception survey, the Chief Executives Board (CEB) survey on reporting, UN-Women HR data sets (training logs, orientation participation logs, recruitment data, etc.), Microsoft Teams analytics, Microsoft SharePoint analytics, implementing partner management data, Enterprise risk framework data, and focal point survey data.

Framework

7. UN-Women's indicators and metric framework aims to simplify the assessment of the entity's progress on addressing SEA and SH. It is divided into 3 thematic dimensions, which reflect continuous advancement of: (i) strong policy and governance structures for addressing SEA and SH, (ii) a victim/survivor-centred implementation of UN-Women's frameworks to address SEA and SH; and (iii) unequivocal leadership and accountability to tackle sexual misconduct within UN-Women and across the UN system.

8. The policy and governance dimension reflects the strength of the policies and procedures that govern UN-Women's prevention of and response to SEA and SH, as well as the presence of dedicated resources and structures that allow their effective operationalization. In addition, it includes information on the effective usage of regularly monitored action plans.

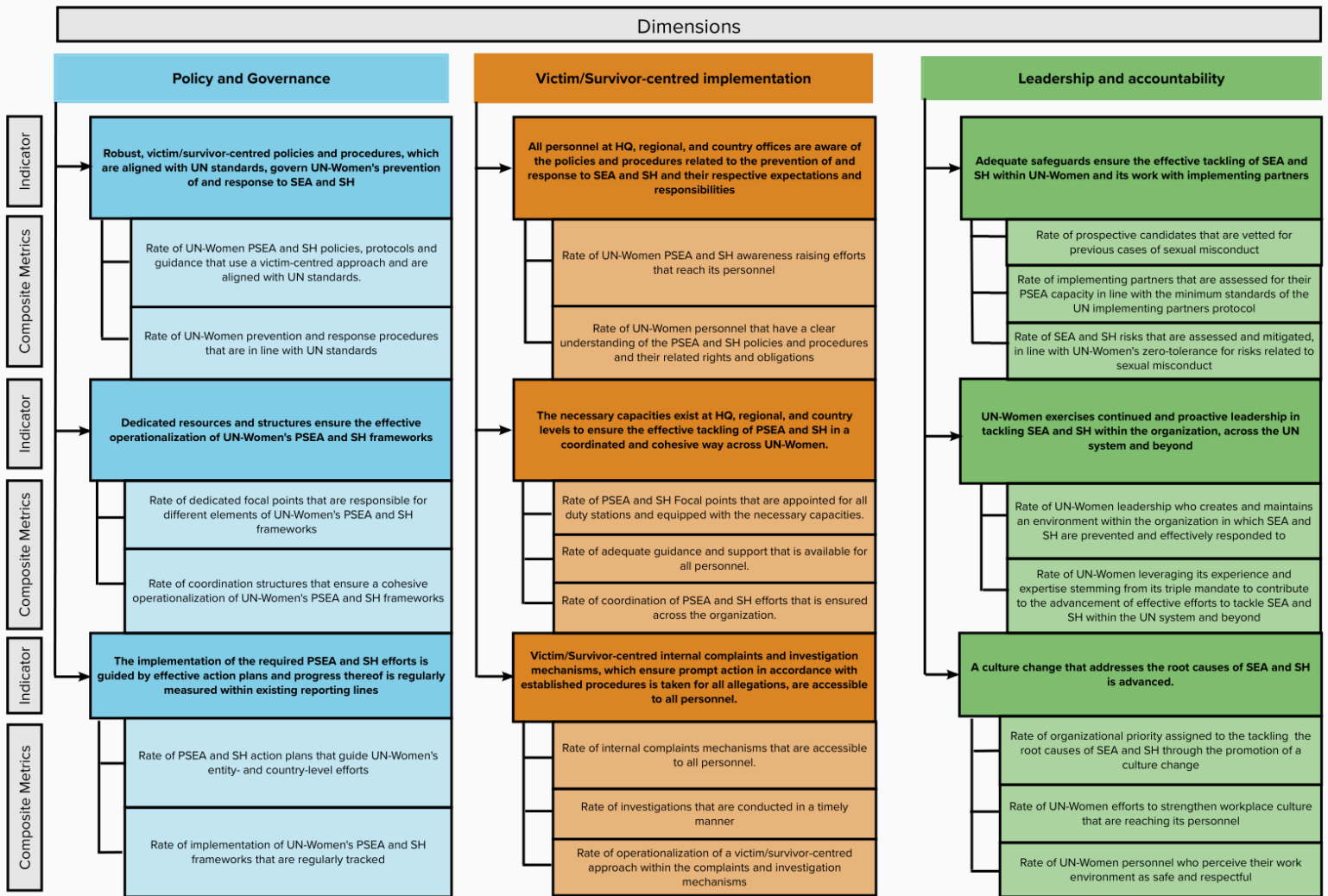
9. The victim/survivor-centred implementation dimension indicates the robustness of the operationalization of UN-Women's SEA and SH frameworks, using a victim/survivor-centred approach. For this purpose, it displays the SEA and SH awareness of personnel, the SEA and SH

¹ The Office of the Special Coordinator on improving the United Nations response to sexual exploitation and abuse

capacities at HQ, regional and country level, the coordination of efforts, and the accessibility of the complaints and investigation mechanisms.

10. The leadership and accountability dimension manifests UN-Women’s commitment to hold itself accountable and exercise a leading role to put an end to sexual misconduct within UN-Women and across the UN system. Furthermore, it shows UN-Women’s efforts to advance a culture change that addresses the root causes of SEA and SH.

11. The KPIs and composite metrics for each of these dimensions are described below:



II. Alignment of UN-Women IRRF prevention of SEA and SH indicator with QCPR and other UNDS

12. In response to the welcome inclusion of PSEA and SH in the 2021 quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (QCPR), UN-Women explicitly incorporated the tackling of sexual misconduct within the advancement of

such an inclusive culture, as well as the nurturing of a diverse and empowered workforce within UN-Women, which forms a key pillar of the high impact business model of its 2022-2025 Strategic Plan.

13. To monitor and measure the effectiveness and efficiency of its efforts in that regard, UN-Women furthermore developed a performance indicator for our 2022-2025 integrated results and resources framework (IRRF):

O 4.5 UN-Women has:

A) Certified to the Secretary-General and the UN-Women Executive Board that it has reported all allegations of Sexual exploitation and abuse (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

B) Developed a sexual harassment action plan using a victim-centered approach for their actions and provided a report on the actions taken to their respective governing bodies²

14. It is in alignment with QCPR indicators OP 113: 3.6.10– OP 113: 3.6.14, as well as the UNDPs IRRF Indicator 2.3.1, UNICEF’s IRRF Indicators E3.4 and E3.5, as well as UNFPA’s IRRF Indicator OP2.13.

15. Moreover, the IRRF indicators 4.2 and 4.4 of Output 4, which challenge the norms, beliefs, behaviors, and customs that give rise to them, complement the SEA and SH specific indicator by contributing to the promotion of a culture change that tackles the root causes of sexual misconduct. They are in alignment with similar behavioural change indicators from UNICEF, UNDP, and UNOPS.

16. Furthermore, because SEA and SH are rooted in gender inequality and other intersecting forms of discrimination, UN-Women monitors the percentage of female staff among international professional and national staff as an important protective measure against sexual misconduct as indicator O 4.6 in its IRRF. This indicator corresponds to the QCPR indicator 3.6.6-3.6.9 and is aligned with UNICEF’s IRRF indicator E 4.1

17. In addition, UN-Women also tracks progress in addressing gaps in policy and programming action to tackle SH in multiple settings whether urban, rural, online, workplace, conflict-affected and humanitarian settings through the Strategic Plan IRRF indicator 4e: *Number of countries with multistakeholder initiatives in place to prevent and respond to sexual violence including sexual harassment in public and/or private spaces.*

² [UN Women Strategic Plan 2022 2025 Integrated Results and Resources Framework](#)

III. Conclusion

18. UN-Women's indicators and metric framework will provide the organization concrete information on the progress achieved on addressing SEA and SH. It will ensure coherence of data collection across different levels of the organization, and thus promote greater transparency on advancements and needs.

19. The insights generated will reveal priority areas to focus efforts on, gaps to be addressed through additional allocation of capacity and advocacy, and good practice areas to share lessons learned with other entities. The assessment data will be used as an input for future action plans, and it will inform policy and procedure updates.

20. In addition, the framework will enhance the existing mechanism in place by availing concrete data on progress status within one centralized tool.