

## **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 2018/3<sup>1</sup> 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 2 February 2023, 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-centred approach to preventing and addressing SEA and SH. Since its last certification provided to the Executive Board on 11 May 2022, and in addition to the [Update on UN Women policies and procedures to tackle SEA and SH provided to the Executive Board during its First Regular Session 2023](#), 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 2022, 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 inclusion of systematic assessments of SEA and SH risks within UN Women's 2022 risk review exercise.
3. The ongoing coordination of UN Women's network of prevention of SEA and SH focal points in regional and country offices, which yet again increased from 96 to 118 appointees, who spearhead operationalization of crucial PSEA and SH efforts on ground, in consonance with their Heads of Office, while aiding the propagation of the victim-centred approach as well providing capacity building for newer focal points.

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<sup>1</sup> [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 establishment of a dedicated PSEA and SH Specialist position at entity-level, responsible for the provision of technical support and guidance on matters related to the internal prevention of and response to SEA and SH.
5. The inclusion of PSEA-specific obligations for partners in UN Women's newly-developed Programme Partner Management Policy.
6. The launch of a regional PSEA and SH focal point capacity building brown bag series to help focal points develop skills that allow them to more effectively operationalize UN Women's PSEA and SH framework within their specific country context.
7. The facilitation of 4 meetings of UN Women's international taskforce on addressing SH on: a victim/survivor-centred approach to SH; what makes an effective SH training; the intersections between UN Women's work on addressing SH and the efforts of the Commission of the Status of Women (CSW); as well as the synergies between UN Women's external work on tackling SH and its internal efforts.
8. The provision of assistance for victims/survivors of SEA, prioritizing their rights and dignity, as soon as UN Women was made aware of an allegation, upon consent of the affected individual, in line with United Nations Protocol on the Provision of Assistance to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.
9. 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 counselling provider Rome Institute.
10. 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 Centred Approach, on Learning and Communication, and on Leadership and Culture.
11. 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.
12. The joining of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee PSEA Technical Advisory Group.

## **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-General<sup>2</sup>, 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".

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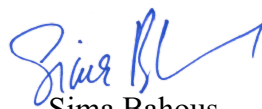
<sup>2</sup> Section 4.6 of the Secretary-General's Bulletin on "Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse" (ST/SGB/2003/13)

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).
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 website<sup>3</sup> and also shared with all UN Women personnel.
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.

In addition, UN Women expanded its existing reporting mechanism through:

6. The development of a comprehensive indicators and metrics framework through which UN Women measures and gathers concrete information on progress on addressing SEA and SH, to further inform the corresponding UN Women strategies, policies, and procedures and to ensure coherence of data collection across different levels of organization and promote greater transparency.

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  
25 May 2023

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/accountability>