



End-of-Year Management Letter on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) and Reporting of SEA Allegations

In accordance with 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 in accordance with paragraph 10 of the UN Women Executive Board Decision 2018/3 which requests that UN Women management, as required by the Secretary-General, present its annual certification to the Executive Board at each annual session, I, Sima Bahous, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women, hereby certify that UN Women has reported to the Secretary-General all allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse 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.

Furthermore, training on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse has been made available to all UN Women staff members and related personnel¹ who have been informed of their individual obligation to report incidents.² UN Women has been proactive in raising awareness of its staff members and related personnel, regarding the prohibition of sexual exploitation and abuse and ways of reporting such acts, and UN Women has engaged in outreach efforts to raise the awareness of the affected population and beneficiaries of assistance, regarding the prohibition of sexual exploitation and abuse and the ways of reporting such acts. UN Women has also submitted the annual Action Plan on measures undertaken to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse and conducted and acted upon the results of risk assessments in respect of sexual exploitation and abuse,³ along with properly addressing the victims’ rights to assistance and support.

¹ United Nations staff and related personnel include United Nations staff members, individual consultants/contractors, interns, National Officers, United Nations Volunteers, affiliated personnel and contingent members.

² All UN-Women staff members and related personnel are required to complete mandatory training on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse within six (6) months of commencing with UN Women. Throughout 2022, UN-Women continued to enhance accessibility of the learning on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse for all personnel through scenario-based learning workshops and contextualized awareness raising efforts, complementing the mandatory online course.

³ As part of its Enterprise Risk Management framework, all UN-Women risk entities (field offices, responsible for implementation and/or oversight of programmes or projects, or headquarters functions/sections, responsible for oversight for and/or support to field offices in respect of the implementation of programmes or projects) carry out a compulsory yearly risk review exercise in which sexual exploitation and abuse risks are systematically assessed, and response plans are established.

Ensuring that UN Women's implementing partners have minimum standards in place to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse

UN Women's implementing partner policy framework incorporates the requirements of the UN Protocol on Allegations of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Involving Implementing Partners (the Protocol), which is aligned with ST/SGB/2003/13, thus ensuring adequate safeguards and appropriate action related to sexual exploitation and abuse. Specifically, UN Women's Selection of Programme Partners Procedure requires that prospective implementing partners are assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Protocol. Furthermore, UN Women's partner agreement template, which is used to formalise the engagement of partners after they have been selected, requires that the partner agrees to commit to the required actions for the guarantee of the required minimum standards to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse.

Moreover, in 2022, UN Women has joined the UN Partner Portal (UNPP), designed to facilitate harmonized, efficient and easy collaboration between the UN and partners. Upon completion of the phased roll-out process of the UNPP, its joint prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse assessment module will allow sharing partner risk assessment across the system, using the UN common assessment methodology, to further enhance safeguards and appropriate action related to sexual exploitation and abuse.

The corporate and country-level action plan indicators related to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse with implementing partners include concrete targets and benchmarks that allow tracking progress of this area of work. In addition, UN Women's newly developed indicators and metrics framework includes metrics dedicated to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse with implementing partners, which provide additional data points for the measuring of success thereof, as well as highlight priority areas for improvement.

Mechanisms established to address a victim/survivor-centred approach

In light of the particularly high risks of sexual exploitation and abuse experienced by women and girls, UN Women, as the UN entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women, strongly believes that placing their needs and priorities at the forefront of any response is of utmost importance. A victim/survivor-centred approach, including its core principles, thus has been implemented in all its efforts.

UN Women's scenario-based sexual exploitation and abuse training workshops include a module exploring what a victim/survivor-centred approach, including safety, confidentiality, respect, and non-discrimination, means. The capacity-building offered to UN Women's prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse focal points covers a detailed exploration of how a victim/survivor-centred approach can be operationalized at the country level. All UN Women sexual exploitation and abuse awareness raising efforts are designed using a victim/survivor-centred approach. When an allegation of sexual exploitation and abuse is reported, UN Women's investigative body, the Office of

Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), ensures that the victims/survivors are at the heart of the investigation and that the process respects the difficulties victims/survivors experience coming forward with a complaint, including the assurance that the process is clearly explained to them, facilitating support pathways, conducting sensitive interviews, and keeping victims informed of the outcome of the investigation.

Assistance for the victims/survivors, which prioritizes their rights and dignity, is provided as soon as we are 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. It includes referral to legal assistance, as well as safety, medical and psychosocial support through UN Women's in-country prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse focal points as well as our Elimination of Violence Against Women specialists on the ground via the established victim assistance mechanism or Gender Based Violence referral pathway for the respective country and in collaboration with the UN Country Team and Field Victims' Rights Advocate where present.

To measure the progress in establishing mechanisms to address a victim/survivor-centred approach, the corporate and country-level action plan indicators related to victims'/survivors' rights to assistance include concrete targets and benchmarks. Additional data points are provided by UN Women's newly developed indicators and metrics framework, which includes metrics dedicated to the operationalization of a victim/survivor-centred approach.

Recognizing the requirement for leadership, transparency and accountability if we are to eradicate sexual exploitation and abuse within the United Nations system, I hereby certify that I have exercised my duties in this regard in good faith and to the very best of my abilities.



Sima Bahous

Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director

2 February 2023