

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 31 January 2024, 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 25 May 2023, and in addition to the Update on UN Women policies and procedures to tackle SEA and SH provided to the Executive Board during its Annual Session 2024, 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 2023, 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 coordination of UN Women's PSEA and SH portfolio by UN Women's dedicated PSEA and SH function, established in 2022, which includes the design and implementation of the 2023/2024 action plans and the provision of technical support and guidance on matters related to the internal prevention of and response to SEA and SH.
3. The inclusion of systematic assessments of SEA and SH risks within UN Women's 2023 risk review exercise.

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 ongoing coordination of UN Women's network of prevention of SEA and SH focal points in regional and country offices, which encompasses 118 appointees, covering 100% of all UN Women duty stations.
5. The continuous roll-out of its regional PSEA and SH focal point capacity building workshop series to help focal points effectively implement UN Women's PSEA and SH framework within their specific country context.
6. The ongoing facilitation of inter-active, scenario based PSEA and SH workshops across the organization, complementing the mandatory online trainings on PSEA and SH.
7. The continued active participation in the inter-agency working group to set up a global PSEA framework for cooperation with governments, which establishes a shared PSEA commitment between the UN and the governments.
8. The provision of assistance referral for victims/survivors of SEA and SH, 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 established protocols and standards.
9. The involvement in the CEB task force on Addressing Sexual Harassment, through UN Women's co-leadership of the workstream on Outreach and Knowledge Sharing and its participation in the other workstreams focusing on sustainability of prevention efforts and result measurement through data collection.
10. The resolute participation in the UN system-wide SEA Working Group and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee PSEA Technical Advisory Group through provision of technical inputs to all key initiatives.

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).
4. Pursuant to the UN Women Investigation and Disciplinary Process Policy, 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.

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

5. The 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, 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.
6. UN Women's comprehensive PSEA and SH indicators and metrics framework, through which continued progress on tackling SEA and SH is measured.

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

7. The joint development of a harmonized reporting template, together with UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, and UNOPS, to better track year-on-year progress against indicators, allow for enhanced comparison of reports and gain a more strategic understanding of the results, impact and organizational culture change achieved from its efforts and activities, as requested by Executive Board decision 2023/7.³

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
30 May 2024

³ [UNW/2023/7](#) (Decisions adopted by the Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women at its 2023 sessions)