

## **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 29 January 2021, 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 18, 2020, this entailed:

1. The complete implementation of the recommendations from the external independent victim-centered review of UN Women policies and procedures on tackling SEA and SH.
2. The certification from the Regional Directors, Heads of Office or Directors of Division to the Executive Director of their compliance with their duties in addressing SEA and SH during the year 2020, 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.
3. The establishment and coordination of a UN Women network of 47 prevention of SEA and SH focal points, in regional and country offices who serve as UN Women's first line of support on the ground and aid the operationalization of UN Women's victim-centered approach to preventing and addressing SEA and SH.

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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 mapping of dedicated resources that exist to prevent and respond to SEA and SH at the Headquarters, Regional, and Country Office levels. The purpose of this exercise was to ascertain a clear overview of the existing resources in these offices. Building on the findings from this exercise, UN Women has now determined the corresponding assessment of resource needs.
5. The development of an SH action plan template to guide the creation and implementation of local action plans at Regional and Country Offices level.
6. The design and delivery of interactive prevention of SEA and SH scenario-based training programs relevant to the different operational contexts of UN Women.
7. The assessment and mitigation of SEA and SH related risks within UN Women's Enterprise Risk Framework.
8. The continued coordination of efforts to prevent and address SH through regular meetings of UN Women's internal taskforce on addressing SH, under the shared leadership of the Executive Director's Office and the Executive Board Secretariat.
9. UN Women's 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.
10. The piloting of the second phase of the Respectful Workplace Facilitators programme, a confidential and informal peer support system 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.
11. The participation in the 2020 United Nations Leadership Dialogue "*Acknowledging Dignity through Civility*", designed to drive a robust culture of ethics in the organization. Training on civility aims at promoting a safe, inclusive and respectful work environment, which in turn contributes to ensuring appropriate behavior in the workplace.
12. The recruitment of three UN Women Staff Counsellors who will, *inter alia*, be available, if needed, to provide counseling support for any personnel experiencing trauma from SEA and SH, in addition to services provided by UNDSS Critical Incident Stress Management Unit and the online counseling company 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-General<sup>2</sup>, that the organization has reported all allegations of SEA and taken appropriate measures to address such allegations.

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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)

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 Legal Policy for Addressing Non-Compliance with United Nations Standards of Conduct, each year the Executive Director issues a report that communicates 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.

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.



Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka  
Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director  
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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/accountability>