

24 September 2018

Dear Colleagues,

I would like to thank Bill, Kate and Lindsay again for their perseverance and leadership. I am honored to follow Director General Swing as the Champion for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), and Deputy High Commissioner Kate Gilmore and Lindsay Coates from Interaction as Co-Champions for Sexual Harassment and Abuse (SHA) against aid workers for the Inter-Agency Standing Committee.

During my tenure, I will focus on scaling up:

- safe and accessible reporting mechanisms,
- quality, survivor-centered support, and
- accountability for every child and adult survivor in all humanitarian responses.

The IASC has taken important strides against these abuses of our mandates and values. In 2002, the IASC adopted Six Principles on PSEA, with clear prohibitions for humanitarian workers. In 2015, the IASC Principals reaffirmed the roles of PSEA Senior Focal Points, Humanitarian Coordinators, and Humanitarian Country Teams to implement their commitments. And, in May, we committed to eradicate the culture of impunity, accelerate work on accountability to affected populations, be even more pro-active in improving gender parity, while recognizing that sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment affect both men and women, and to strengthen the accountability and internal justice mechanisms of our organizations.

Learning from these efforts as well as those that are ongoing under the leadership of the Secretary General within the UN system, and building capacity to promote promising practices are important investments for the IASC to take forward. I suggest we develop a system-wide plan to generate evidence of what works to stimulate organizational culture change and accountability.

This year, we can – and must – operationalize the following commitments to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse consistently in all emergency responses. For your consideration, we propose that a country-based package be implemented in all humanitarian situations, consisting of:

- Community-Based Complaints Mechanisms that reach everywhere humanitarian assistance reaches, and includes safe and trusted mechanisms for reporting sexual exploitation and abuse appropriate to the national context concerned, and the introduction of U-report to open avenues of reporting of SEA.
- Quality support for survivors of sexual exploitation and abuse, including medical care, psychosocial support, legal assistance and reintegration.

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To: IASC Principals

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

- An SEA Steering Committee comprising all members of the Humanitarian Country Team, chaired by the Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC), and supported by a technical-level PSEA Network inclusive of all relevant partners; as well as an accountable RC/HC who reports to the Emergency Relief Coordinator on the effectiveness of actions taken to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse.

To take forward our commitments on both PSEA and SH to stop transgressors from moving through the humanitarian system, we agreed to strengthen our internal justice mechanisms through more efficient investigations capability, and improved sector-wide vetting and reference checking. While each agency is implementing independently, we propose the following system-wide actions:

- Issuing IASC best practices on recruitment (self-certification, screening questions, consent provisions, verification of references), disclosure of personnel data, and standards for disqualification.
- Strengthening investigations in relation to sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, which builds on ongoing joint work, capitalizes on efficiencies and provides targeted support where needed. On November 26th, the IASC, with the support of UNHCR, will be holding a conference on SEA investigations in Geneva, bringing together Heads of Investigation Services from UN agencies, NGOs and experts in the field, which we hope will result in a series of concrete recommendations, for joint and individual action, based on a survivor-centred approach.
- Consideration of measures to support criminal accountability when referrals are made to Member States including potential public disclosure of additional information.

We, the IASC, will need to invest the resources for consistent and effective implementation in each humanitarian response. At UNICEF, we will pledge an investment of \$11 million of our resources to strengthen these PSEA/SH, and we hope that each of you will also make a commitment to contribution.

The next IASC Senior Focal Points meeting will provide an opportunity for you to give guidance and direction on the new strategy and priorities, and to commit to specific actions to support progress.

Yours sincerely,



Henrietta H. Fore
Executive Director