



Fact sheet on the Secretary-General's initiatives to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse

Background: In March 2017, the Secretary-General outlined a comprehensive four-pronged strategy¹ to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse across the United Nations system.² The elements of the strategy are to: (a) prioritize the rights and dignity of victims; (b) end impunity through strengthened reporting and investigations, including clarifying limitations on the United Nations to achieve criminal accountability; (c) engage with civil society and external partners; and (d) improve strategic communication for education and transparency. In the implementation of this strategy, the Secretary-General focused on putting the United Nations “own house in order”—putting in place mechanisms under his authority. In March 2018, the Secretary-General provided an update on the implementation of the strategy.³

To enhance coordination and ensure sustained high-level attention on the issue, the Secretary-General extended the mandate of the Special Coordinator to Improve the United Nations Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse until 31 December 2018. Her role is to coordinate the implementation of the strategy throughout the United Nations system and ensure a harmonized approach through the development of aligned mechanisms and procedures, standardized protocols and tools.

Below are some key initiatives undertaken or built upon in accordance with the Secretary-General's commitment to combat sexual exploitation and abuse.

Prioritizing the rights of victims

Initiative	Status
1. Secretary-General appointed first Victims' Rights Advocate at the Assistant Secretary-General level to strengthen the support that the United Nations gives to victims and ensure that a victim-centered approach is integrated into prevention and response	Appointment completed August 2017; action plan completed December 2017; work ongoing
2. Field visits conducted by the Victims' Rights Advocate to gain a first-hand understanding of how United Nations actors operate on the ground to assist and support victims of sexual exploitation and abuse, and make recommendations for further action	Central African Republic, October 2017; South Sudan, December 2017; Haiti, April 2018; Lebanon, August 2018; and Jordan, September 2018

¹ See A/71/818 and A/71/818/Corr.1.

² As part of the strategy to ensure high level engagement in the relevant entities across the UN system, in 2016 a high-level steering group was established including the Chair, Chef de Cabinet; the Under-Secretary-General for Field Support; the Under-Secretary-General for Management; the Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications; the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations; the Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel; the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict, Sexual Violence in Conflict, and Violence against Children; the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs; the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator; the Administrator of UNDP; the Executive Director of UNICEF; the High Commissioner for Refugees; the Executive Director of UNFPA; and the Executive Director of UN-Women. The Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services participates as an observer.

³ See A/72/751 and A/72/751/Corr.1.





3. Establishment of inter-agency working group to facilitate a more timely and effective resolution of outstanding paternity/child support claims arising from sexual exploitation and abuse	Working group established June 2018; ongoing
4. Mapping of victims' rights approaches/services : in line with the Secretary-General's instruction in his 2018 report (A/72/751, para. 28), the Victims' Rights Advocate is undertaking a pilot mapping of victims' rights approaches and/or services (prevention, medical, psychosocial and legal assistance, livelihood support, accountability) available across the United Nations system and beyond in eight countries. This will build on existing work and provide a clear overview of gaps, overlaps, lessons learned and best practices to inform the development of additional tools, policies and programmes	Project commenced August 2018; ongoing
5. Field Victims' Rights Advocates appointed in the four peacekeeping operations with the highest number of allegations: Democratic Republic of the Congo, Central African Republic, Haiti and South Sudan. Their role is to ensure that a victim-centered, gender- and child-sensitive and non-discriminatory approach is integrated into all activities to support and assist victims in those countries	Appointment completed September 2017; work ongoing. Three dedicated positions were approved by the General Assembly in July 2018.
6. Secretary-General and the Victims' Rights Advocate met confidentially and directly with victims of sexual exploitation and abuse	October 2017; ongoing
7. Centralized tracking tool for provision of victim assistance in all peace operations developed by the Department of Field Support (DFS)	To be rolled out in fourth quarter of 2018
8. Protocol on the provision of assistance to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse developed and field-tested by DFS and UNICEF. It provides guidance on the roles and responsibilities of United Nations actors in the field to ensure coordinated and immediate victim assistance	Field testing began January 2017; the protocol will be updated based on the testing and will incorporate roles of the Victims' Rights Advocate and the Field Victims' Rights Advocates.
9. Trust fund established in 2016 to provide resources to support victim assistance services and projects	As at August 2018, the balance of the fund is some \$2 million. Projects have been launched or are being developed in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Liberia and South Sudan.





10. Development of a United Nations policy on a human rights-based approach to sexual exploitation and abuse (led by OHCHR)	Expected completion in fourth quarter of 2018
Risk mitigation and ending impunity	
Initiative	Status
1. Development and distribution to all United Nations entities with a field presence of the “no excuses card” prototype , which sets out the standards and obligations to prevent and report in all official and some local languages. The prototype can be customized to meet the needs of individual organizations	Completed November 2017; distribution ongoing
2. Mandatory prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse training and e-learning required of all peacekeeping, Secretariat, IOM, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNRWA, UN-Women, and WFP personnel	For peacekeeping since 2016, for Secretariat and other entities since 2017; training ongoing
3. Instituted annual management letter 2017 requiring heads of funds and programmes to certify to their governing bodies and the Secretary-General that they reported all credible allegations and the training offered ⁴	Completed January 2018
4. Management letter 2018 , in which the Secretary-General plans to urge <u>all</u> members of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination to submit certifications for 2018	To be done November 2018
5. Action plans/risk mitigation strategies submitted to the Secretary-General by all entities with field operations and programmes	April 2017: 35 submitted August 2018: 37 submitted
6. Development of guidelines on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2272 (2016) addressing sexual exploitation and abuse in peace operations (http://undocs.org/S/RES/2272(2016))	Operationally effective July 2016
7. DPKO OMA released “The Military Aide Memoire: Commanders’ guide on measures to combat Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in United Nations military” http://dag.un.org/handle/11176/400745	September 2017, Updated May 2018
8. DFS developed a sexual exploitation and abuse risk-management toolkit	Launched June 2018; under implementation

⁴ Certifications provided by ITC, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNOPS, UNRWA, UN-Women, UNU, and WFP.





9. Development of an electronic tool, “ Clear Check ”, ⁵ for screening United Nations personnel dismissed owing to substantiated allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse or who left the Organization with a pending investigation or disciplinary case	Launched 28 June 2018
10. Incident reporting form (and associated guidance) to ensure uniformity in the collection of information first reports	July 2017
11. Field testing of incident reporting form in the Democratic Republic of the Congo	November 2017– Ongoing
12. Review of field testing of incident reporting form	Ongoing, May–September 2018
13. Development and endorsement of system-wide uniform policy on balancing the disclosure of information to national authorities with principles of confidentiality when receiving and handling allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by persons acting under a United Nations mandate	November 2017
14. Development of uniform guidelines for investigations of sexual exploitation and abuse to harmonize investigative methods and approaches across United Nations investigative bodies	Fourth quarter 2018
15. Adoption of formal/informal community-based complaint mechanisms in all peace operations for receipt of allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse	Established 2016, rolled out to all United Nations entities March 2018
16. United Nations finalized and circulated to all agencies, funds and programmes the protocol on allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse involving implementing partners (led by UNICEF and UNFPA)	March 2018 Translations of Protocol completed (Arabic, English, French, Russian, Spanish)
17. All job openings and hiring letters now specify United Nations values and expectations of conduct and consequences for misconduct	Completed 2017; ongoing
18. Staff members required to acknowledge in writing , upon entry, reassignment and on a yearly basis, their knowledge and understanding of United Nations standards of conduct, particularly regarding sexual exploitation and abuse, and the consequences for violating them	Completed 2017; ongoing

⁵ The United Nations entities participating in the screening tool are: all Secretariat entities, FAO, IOM, IMO, IRMCT, ITC, ITU, UNAIDS, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNEP, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNOPS, UNRWA, WFP, and WIPO.





19. Repository of national military laws on sexual exploitation and abuse established at: https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/standards-of-conduct	To date, 46 legal frameworks submitted
20. Review of options for harmonization of standards and procedures for non-United Nations international forces authorized under a Security Council mandate	Ongoing
Engaging with civil society and external partners	
Initiative	Status
1. Establishment of a civil society advisory board , comprising leading civil society figures and experts, to provide the Secretary-General with advice on measures to strengthen prevention of and response to sexual exploitation and abuse	October 2018
2. Formal/informal meetings with civil society actors	2017, three formal meetings 2018, two formal and three informal meetings
Improving strategic communications for education and transparency	
Initiative	Status
1. Development of a glossary on sexual exploitation and abuse in the context of the United Nations in English and French (https://hr.un.org/materials/un-glossary-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse-english) (https://hr.un.org/materials/glossaire-sur-l%E2%80%99exploitation-et-les-atteintes-sexuelles-glossary-sea-french)	Initiated 5 October 2016; updated 24 July 2017
2. Secretary-General's high-level meeting on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse held on the margins of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly with Heads of State and Government, regional organizations, civil society and United Nations leadership	18 September 2017
3. Voluntary compact on measures for preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse established (https://www.un.org/preventing-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/content/voluntary-compact)	Ongoing. As at 23 October 2018, 99 Member State signatories
4. Circle of leadership on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations operations comprising Heads of State and Government willing to make a visible commitment to end impunity for sexual	Ongoing. As at 23 October 2018, 71 sitting and former heads of State/Government are members





exploitation and abuse (https://www.un.org/preventing-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/content/circle-leadership)	
5. Development and Issuance of a Collective Statement of the Members of the Secretary-General's Circle of Leadership on the Prevention of and Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in United Nations Operations	September 2018
6. Five informal meetings in 2018 chaired by the Secretariat and co-sponsored by permanent mission representatives of the Heads of State and Government who are members of the circle of leadership to share best practices and initiatives	May, June, July and 17 and 30 August 2018
7. Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse website launched (www.un.org/preventing-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/)	Created July 2017; updated regularly
8. To improve transparency, each quarter the Spokesperson reports on allegations received by all United Nations entities mandated to report to the General Assembly (https://www.un.org/preventing-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/content/quarterly-updates)	Recurrent: November 2017 and February, May and August 2018; ongoing
9. United Nations produced and aired a film showing the work of the community-based complaint mechanisms	September 2017
10. Development of mobile application featuring training materials for use by field personnel	Expected completion in September 2018
11. DFS launched its new website with a live database of allegations, an online reporting form and a subscription service for database updates (https://conduct.unmissions.org/sea-data-introduction)	January 2017
12. All peacekeeping missions, as part of their communications strategy on sexual exploitation and abuse , conduct outreach activities to inform communities of the risks of sexual exploitation and abuse and the reporting mechanisms using direct outreach, theatre, radio, television programming and SMS-based and social media campaigns, as well as specific outreach to local media	Ongoing
13. UNDP launched a website containing information and resources on combatting sexual exploitation and abuse (http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/accountability/combating-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse.html)	Created fourth quarter of 2017





14. UNFPA launched a website containing information and resources on Protection of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (https://www.unfpa.org/protection-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse)	August 2018
15. UNHCR launched a webpage on addressing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse http://www.unhcr.org/our-fight-against-sexual-exploitation-abuse-and-harassment.html	July 2018
16. Public information campaign on United Nations efforts to combat sexual exploitation and abuse, featuring a video showing the UN System approach to the Secretary-General's strategy to prevent and respond to SEA (commitments from: Secretary-General, Special Coordinator, VRA, DFS, DPKO, IOM, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNRWA, UN-Women, WFP, and Field: MONUSCO, Civil Society-MINUSCA)	September 2018 and presented during the 2018 General Assembly weeks

Additional

Initiative	Status
1. System-wide survey for United Nations personnel at 30 duty stations with humanitarian and peace operations	Baseline survey: completed September 2016 Second survey: 1 August–September 2017 Third survey: 1 August–30 September 2018
2. Results of survey disaggregated and shared with heads of participating entities	Baseline survey: December 2016 Second survey: December 2017 Third survey: to be released December 2018
3. UN-Women developed and issued a sexual exploitation and abuse/sexual harassment handbook providing a comprehensive overview of the applicable policies and procedures	June 2018
4. Gender study on the causes and consequences of sexual exploitation and abuse to inform the development of strategies and responses	Concept finalized in February 2018; engaged in outreach for necessary funding
5. UNRWA established a task force on sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment to find innovative ways to ensure that the Agency meets the Secretary-General's and Chief Executives Board initiatives, standards and reporting requirements	February 2018
6. WFP established an ad hoc joint Management and Executive Board committee on sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual harassment and whistle-blower protection	Meetings held in May and October 2018





ZERO TOLERANCE FOR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

7. WFP established a PSEA Advisory Group with key stakeholders from each operational region, to provide a learning and knowledge sharing platform and to strengthen WFP PSEA Focal Point capacity to fulfil their roles. Advisory Group consultations and review of guidance and tools will inform the WFP PSEA strategy and work plan.	Ongoing; First Consultation held in September 2018
8. UNFPA appointed a senior focal point for PSEA at the Assistant Secretary-General level , who is assisted by a full time PSEA Coordinator and an ad-hoc inter divisional working group at the directors' level	Ongoing
9. UNHCR appointed a senior coordinator (director) to lead its work on sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment supported by a working-level multifunctional team. The Senior Coordinator reports directly to the Deputy High Commissioner, who chairs an emergency task force on sexual exploitation and abuse with director-level membership	May 2018
10. UNHCR released its sexual exploitation and abuse strategy with an action plan taken forward by cross-divisional teams at Headquarters and in the field. Key initiatives include: an evaluative review of UNHCR policies and procedures on sexual exploitation and abuse, the establishment of an independent helpline, a new communication strategy, strengthening of UNHCR investigation capacity and disciplinary processes and reinforced vetting and reference-checking mechanisms http://www.unhcr.org/5b2cb6284	May 2018
11. UNICEF Executive Director issued a public statement on her commitment to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse and launched an independent review of UNICEF's response, aimed at examining what was working and areas that needed improvement; identifying ways of deepening management accountability; and improving the organization's policies and systems and its responses, as well as its culture https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/unicefs-position-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse-and-sexual-harassment	February 2018 Planned completion of the review September 2018
12. UNICEF completed an internal review of sexual harassment investigations, conducted by an independent law firm, as an additional step towards culture change and a zero-tolerance environment	August 2018
13. UNICEF amended its programme cooperation agreements and conducted global training for all	June 2018





regional and country offices and partners on the United Nations protocol on allegations involving implementing partners. A toolkit for partners is also under development	
14. The UNDP Administrator has requested all Country Offices to develop and implement a comprehensive action plan to prevent and respond SEA.	Completed 30 September 2018
Inter-Agency Standing Committee initiatives The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) is the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination of humanitarian assistance. It is a unique forum involving the key United Nations and non-United Nations humanitarian partners. It was established in June 1992 in response to General Assembly resolution 46/182 on the strengthening of humanitarian assistance. IASC principals are the heads of all IASC member agencies or their representatives and meet twice a year, chaired by the Emergency Relief Coordinator. The Task Team on Accountability to Affected Populations and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse aims to create a system-wide “culture of accountability” in function and resourcing within each humanitarian organization alongside system-level cohesion, coordination and learning.	
Initiative	Status
1. Executive Director of UNICEF appointed Inter-Agency Standing Committee Champion on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse /Sexual Harassment for the humanitarian sector	July 2018 Function previously held by IOM
2. IOM launched a project to strengthen the humanitarian community’s collective ability to reduce and effectively respond to sexual abuse and exploitation by aid workers, providing technical assistance to Humanitarian Country Teams and PSEA Networks to institutionalize PSEA based on the 2016 IASC PSEA Toolkit	Established 2016; ongoing
3. Adoption of formal/informal community-based complaint mechanisms in humanitarian operations to receive allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse	Established 2016; ongoing
4. Development of IASC 2016 protection from sexual exploitation and abuse toolkit through inter-agency community-based complaint mechanisms ⁶ https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/accountability-affected-populations-including-protection-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/documents-50	Rolled out in 2016

⁶ The 2016 toolkit includes the best practice guide for humanitarian actors on inter-agency community-based complaint mechanisms, and the global standard operating procedures on inter-agency cooperation in community-based complaint mechanisms.





5. Mandatory training and regional training of trainers for community-based complaint mechanisms ⁷	2017-2018. Three regional Training of Trainers on Community-Based Complaint Mechanisms (Regional ToTs in Eastern Africa (June 2018), MENA (July 2018), and Western-Central Africa (Sept 2018)) and country-tailored workshops in 2017 (Chad, Iraq, Lebanon, Malawi, Nigeria, Turkey (refugee response and cross-border Syrian Arab Republic response) and Yemen)
6. Deployments on request to support or establish preventing sexual exploitation and abuse in-country initiatives	Bangladesh, 2017, and Syrian Arab Republic, 2018

⁷ Training countries were Chad, Iraq, Lebanon, Malawi, Nigeria, Turkey (refugee response and cross-border Syrian Arab Republic response) and Yemen.

