

Strategy

PROTECTION FROM AND RESPONSE TO SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

IASC Champions on Sexual Exploitation
Abuse and Harassment

November 2018

Endorsed by IASC Principals

Strategy: IASC Championship Role

Protection from and response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) and Sexual Harassment (SH)

Vision

The IASC Champions support the vision of a humanitarian environment in which people caught up in crises feel safe and respected and can access the protection and assistance they need without fear of exploitation or abuse by any aid worker, and in which aid workers themselves feel supported, respected and empowered to deliver such assistance in working environments free from sexual harassment.

Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) and Sexual Harassment (SH) must not be tolerated; they are an unacceptable breach of the fundamental rights of the people we serve and of those with whom we work as well as a deep betrayal of our core values.

Strategy

Recognizing that the IASC is the only forum that facilitates coordination among international humanitarian actors, bringing together UN agencies, the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement, and NGOs;

Tapping into the added value of this broad membership; and

Counting on the support of the Emergency Relief Coordinator;

The IASC Champions will lead efforts within the IASC to better address SEA and SH by:

- (a) setting the tone for all entities
 - (i) internally within the IASC to recognize that addressing SEA and SH is a top priority and dedicate resources accordingly, ensuring in particular engagement in the field and with IASC membership in the NGO community;
 - (ii) beyond the IASC to improve coordination on these issues and foster synergies with the broader efforts within the UN system;
- (b) advocating for reinforced prevention and response measures to SEA and SH based on a victim/survivor centered-approach that are operationalized in the field in a way that is systematic, predictable and resourced accordingly, in line with defined priorities;
- (c) convening IASC and external stakeholders around a shared vision and a cohesive humanitarian approach around SEA and SH; and
- (d) promoting long term culture and attitudinal change towards all forms of sexual misconduct.

Priorities

Until June 2020, the Champions will tackle priorities under three main objectives.

1. Encouraging victims to come forward and a speak up culture

Community-Based Complaints Mechanisms (CBCMs). Building on the considerable work already carried out within the IASC context, ensure that safe, trusted and accessible mechanisms for reporting SEA are available in all humanitarian situations and developed based on contextual assessments that consider the best means of safe and confidential reporting in particular environments.

Reporting and speak up culture within IASC entities. While recognizing that IASC member entities will have their own reporting channels for misconduct, ensure that barriers to reporting SH are gradually removed. This includes addressing key issues such as fear of speaking up and/or retaliation and lack of trust in reporting systems, looking at good practices among IASC entities, bringing forward supportive measures which could encourage reporting, and taking up joint approaches to culture change initiatives as appropriate.

2. Improving quality, survivor centered support and protection

Multifunctional support. Support the implementation of quality and multifunctional assistance for survivors of SEA and SH, including, as appropriate, medical care, psychosocial support, legal assistance and reintegration, , improving the experience of recourse and ensuring a consistent approach among IASC members.

Additional protection measures. Support the implementation of measures to ensure people who report SEA and SH will be safe and protected, pool existing good practices within the IASC to strengthen and harmonize policy frameworks, and join forces in developing additional protective measures for those who have experienced or witnessed SEA or SH.

3. Strengthened vetting, reference-checking, investigation processes and disciplinary measures

Vetting and reference-checking processes. Building upon existing tools and good practices¹ develop IASC-wide common standards for vetting and reference-checking in order to prevent re-employment of transgressors across the sector. This will require additional policy analysis to take into account the specifics of the IASC composition and consideration of issues of data protection, standards for disqualification and mechanisms to ensure consistent record checking.

Investigation and disciplinary processes. Strengthen the capacity of investigation functions within the IASC and ensure that allegations of SEA and SH are met with a robust investigative process based on a survivor centered-approach. Recommendations from the CEB/IASC investigatory bodies meeting (November 2018) and resources made available through the Investigations Fund managed by OCHA will drive interagency work to ensure experienced, professional and adequately resourced services are either available or made available to those with limited capacities. IASC entities will ensure a consistent approach to subsequent disciplinary measures and that those who are found to have engaged in SEA or SH will face the most severe disciplinary sanctions, in particular dismissal.



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¹ See IASC paper on "[Preventing Transgressors from Moving through the System](#)" (May 2018) and extensive efforts under the auspices of the UN Special Coordinator and the Chief Executive Board Task Force on Sexual Harassment to ensure that those who are found to have engaged in SEA or SH, or those who resign while a disciplinary process is ongoing, shall not be recruited by any other UN entity (the Clear Check databases). Reference is also made to the proposed Inter-Agency Misconduct Disclosure scheme, an initiative of members of the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response.