**UNDP RESPONSE**

**TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT (SH) AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE (SEA) IN 2019**

**Introduction**

1. UNDP is strongly committed to upholding UN values and prohibits all forms of harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination and abuse of authority in its workplace as well as any sexual misconduct with regards to the populations the Organization serves, either by UNDP personnel or by UNDP implementing partners. The prohibition of sexual harassment (SH) and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) is embedded in the UN Staff Regulations and Rules, in UNDP’s Policy on Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Discrimination and Abuse of Authority, the UNDP Legal Framework for Addressing Non-Compliance with UN Standards of Conduct, the UNDP Code of Ethics, as well as in the UN Secretary General’s Bulletin on sexual exploitation and abuse ([ST/SGB/2003/13](http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=ST/SGB/2003/13)) which applies to all UN, including UNDP personnel.
2. Since February 2018 UNDP implemented a series of concrete measures to enhance its response to SH led by the Taskforce on the Prevention of Sexual Harassment established under the auspices of the UNDP Administrator. The scope of the Taskforce was later expanded to include SEA. The Taskforce, Chaired by the Administrator’s Deputy Chief of Staff brings together representatives of the Ethics Office, Office of Audit and Investigations, Bureau for Management Services’ Office of Human Resources, Security Office and Legal Office, Bureau for Programme and Policy Support, Communications, Regional Bureaus and Country Offices, and UN Globe. It meets monthly and regularly reports to the Administrator and his Executive Group of Directors on progress.
3. In early 2019 UNDP, jointly with UNFPA and UNOPS, commissioned an independent review through Deloitte of our organizational responses to SH and SEA. The review acknowledged a strong internal system - institutional framework, policies and structures - to prevent and respond to instances of all forms of sexual misconduct. It also recognized a high degree of alignment among agencies and efforts to strategically leverage common system solutions. The review made several recommendations jointly across all three agencies and specifically for each of the agencies, including UNDP.

**Progress achieved**

1. To further enhance its response to SH and SEA and address the recommendations of the independent review, UNDP developed and has been implementing a holistic strategy built on four pillars: ***prevention, reporting and response, victim/survivor support, and accountability***.
2. The objective of this strategy and the supporting action plan is to significantly reduce the incidence of SH and SEA committed by UNDP personnel and ensure that each such case is identified and addressed quickly and effectively with a focus on the well-being and protection of the victim/survivor and strict accountability for the perpetrator. The strategy also aims to ensure that proper safeguards are embedded into all UNDP operations, including programme activities implemented both by UNDP and through its Implementing Partners, and that SH and SEA risks are minimized, and appropriate responses are ensured. In line with the strategy, and the recommendations of the Deloitte review, the following was achieved in 2019.

***Prevention***

1. In 2019, UNDP continued refining its policy framework, which is aligned with the model policy developed by the interagency working group under the High-Level Committee for Management (HLCM) of the UN Chief Executives Board (CEB).
2. A range of training and information sessions, on-line resources, proactive outreach to personnel, and regular communication by senior leaders (including by the Administrator who specifically raised the issue at all three sessions of the Executive Board and his three all staff Townhall meetings in 2019) was prioritized to continue raising awareness of SH and SEA among all UNDP personnel, with a special focus on managers and their role in responding to SH and SEA. Around 2,000 UNDP personnel participated in presentations and trainings in 2019. In addition, in 2019, 91% of staff and 87% of Service Contract holders passed the mandatory on-line course on prevention of SEA, and 92% and 85%, respectively, passed the mandatory course on the prevention of harassment, SH, and abuse of authority. These courses are also mandatory for all UN Volunteers.
3. Recognizing that sexual misconduct is closely linked to other workplace challenges and the organizational culture, a pilot programme of Respectful Workplace Facilitators (RWFs) was launched under the umbrella of the Ombudsman’s Office in 23 Country Offices. RWFs are members of UNDP personnel, trained in conflict management skills and managed directly by the Office of the Ombudsman for the Funds and Programmes (Ombudsman). They are nominated to serve on a voluntary basis as a confidential resource for anyone who may be experiencing any harassment, abuse of authority, discrimination or conflict in the workplace (not just sexual harassment). The pilot will be evaluated in 2021 and a decision will be taken on whether to expand it further.
4. In line with the “[United Nations Protocol on Allegations of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Involving Implementing Partners](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fintranet.undp.org%2Funit%2Fohr%2Fpsea%2FShared%2520Documents%2FUN%2520Protocol%2520on%2520SEA%2520Allegations%2520involving%2520Implementing%2520Partners%2520-FINAL%2520version%2520approved%2520by%2520HLSG%252026%2520Feb.pdf&data=02%7C01%7Cirina.stavenscaia%40undp.org%7C8818445913d7477095a408d6ff37b87b%7Cb3e5db5e2944483799f57488ace54319%7C0%7C0%7C636977012675878932&sdata=G2mgzi9gys9Wlz%2BousE7icQiPj1YbyRXxPzR%2BQSUtRw%3D&reserved=0)”, the UNDP Project Document Template was updated to include language on the obligations of all Implementing Partners (IP) to prevent and respond to SEA and SH. Country Offices are informing their Implementing Partners of these requirements and are working to identify potential risks and challenges. Recognizing that not all Implementing Partners are immediately able to comply with UNDP’s high standards, work is on-going - within UNDP’s capacity, authority, and available resources - to help the IPs build their capacity and mitigate already existing risks. The IP screening tool was revised to reflect SEA and SH issues and is being implemented. SEA and SH was included as a risk sub-category in UNDP’s Enterprise Risk Management Framework. UNDP’s Social and Environmental Standards (SES) were also updated and now include provisions addressing risks of gender-based violence, SH and SEA. Moreover, in order to address and take action where SH and SEA is committed by non-IP contractors, the Corporate and Institutional team in the Legal Office is undertaking the substantial task of updating all relevant corporate contracts and agreements to include enhanced requirements that will ensure compliance with the applicable legal framework.
5. In 2019 country-level capacity was strengthened, with 20 dedicated UNDP PSEA Focal Points[[1]](#footnote-1) serving in high-risk settings selected and trained at the first inter-agency workshop jointly with UNFPA, UNICEF, and UNOPS. Their key role is to support an effective response to SEA in all aspects of UNDP’s work in their respective countries. Full time PSEA Coordinators in Iraq and Haiti will be fully or part funded by UNDP.

***Reporting and response***

1. To further facilitate reporting and swift response to allegations and substantiated cases of sexual misconduct, the capacity of both the investigations team (2 additional specialist investigators) and the Administrative Law legal team (1 lawyer) were strengthened. This helped to ensure investigations took an average of 6 months to complete, and that swift and appropriate actions were taken in matters involving staff members where allegations were substantiated.
2. As a complement to internal reporting mechanisms, an externally managed independent helpline was extended for a second year in 2019, providing an important additional safe space for UNDP personnel to share concerns, seek advice and report allegations. Later in 2019, its scope was expanded to include all forms of harassment and other misconduct in the workplace.
3. Combined with proactive outreach and building trust in the internal justice system, all these measures led to an increase in the number of reported cases of both SH and SEA from an average of around 6 reports a year up to 2017, increasing to 32 reports in 2018 and 31 reports in 2019, involving both staff and non-staff personnel.
4. In line with an inter-agency agreement, all credible allegations of SEA and updates on cases were reported to the UN Secretariat on time.

***Victim/survivor support***

1. UNDP remains committed to ensuring that its response to SH and SEA is victim-centered and that the interests of the victim/survivor are considered as a priority when dealing with both allegations and substantiated cases of SH or SEA. For example, UNDP’s specialist SH and SEA investigators make a particular effort to ensure that they keep the alleged victims/survivors informed during the investigation stage, while maintaining strict confidentiality in accordance with due process.
2. In line with its Policy for Protection Against Retaliation, UNDP ensured protection from retaliation for all UNDP personnel who reported SH and SEA, including victims/survivors of SH in the workplace.
3. Support for specialist counselling services through the Rome Institute for UNDP personnel-victims/survivors of SH in the workplace was further extended in 2019.
4. Specific guidance was issued to all UNDP Country Offices on the importance of community-based complaint mechanisms for victims of SEA. Also, Country Offices were requested to identify local mechanisms for the protection from all forms of gender-based violence to ensure that victims/survivors of SEA and SH get the required support. This work is on-going and remains a key priority.

***Accountability***

1. To ensure an organization-wide response to SH and SEA, each UNDP Office is responsible for developing an Action Plan on the prevention and protection from SH and SEA. All Heads of Offices submitted an annual certificate to the Administrator on the implementation of these Plans by December 2019. Following this, as requested, the UNDP Administrator provided an annual management letter to the UNDP Executive Board and the UN Secretary General outlining UNDP’s response to SH and SEA in 2019. All Directors of Bureaus and Heads of Independent Offices are also held accountable and reported to the Administrator or Acting Associate Administrator on the achievement of the SH and SEA-related indicators in their Annual Compacts for 2019. A specific indicator on creating a safe and inclusive environment for staff was included in all supervisors’ 2019 annual performance reports.
2. Relevant provisions were added to UNDP’s recruitment and selection, and procurement policies and processes in order to reduce the likelihood of UNDP hiring perpetrators of SH and SEA. UNDP also submitted names of SEA and SH perpetrators whose contracts/letters of agreements with UNDP have been terminated to the inter-agency Clear Check database, which is where all agencies record such perpetrators and vet new hires. During 2019, detailed Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for the Clear Check database were finalized. They detail the scope of application of the database within UNDP and the procedures to be followed for data entry.

**Key priorities for 2020-2021**

1. In 2020-2021, UNDP will continue the implementation of its strategy and action plan, with the main focus on ensuring consistent implementation and sustained impact of different measures on the ground. Specific priorities for 2020-2021 include:
2. Outreach, training and communication to continue raising awareness about SH and SEA among UNDP personnel, beneficiaries, and implementing partners.
3. In close collaboration with other UN Agencies, identifying and strengthening national and community-level mechanisms for complaints and victim support and increasing awareness of beneficiaries and vulnerable groups of these mechanisms and access to them.
4. Enhancing capacity to identify and address risks of SH and SEA in all aspects of UNDP operations.
5. Effectively dealing with all cases of SH and SEA in all UNDP offices, programmes/projects; ensuring support to victims/survivors and the accountability of perpetrators.

1. While the accountability for actions by the personnel of UNDP Implementing Partners lies with the respective individuals and their organizations, in line with national jurisdictions, UNDP will continue to ensure the required safeguards and mechanisms related to its own operations are in place and will make sure that its implementing partners are aware of the standards and expectations in this regard.
2. In late 2020, UNDP intends to conduct a survey of actions taken at the country level with a view to obtaining evidence of the results and impact achieved.

UNDP Prevention of SH and SEA Taskforce

17 April 2020

1. Afghanistan, Burundi, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Colombia, DRC, Ethiopia, Iraq, Lebanon, Mali, Myanmar, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Syria, Turkey, Ukraine, Uganda, Yemen [↑](#footnote-ref-1)