



ZERO TOLERANCE FOR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

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" by establishing mechanisms under his authority. In February 2018,³ 2019,⁴ 2020⁵, 2021⁶ and 2022⁷ the Secretary-General provided updates on the implementation of the strategy, which was further reviewed in February 2023.⁸

To reinforce ongoing system-wide efforts, in September 2022, the position of the Special Coordinator on improving the United Nations response to sexual exploitation and abuse (Special Coordinator) was strengthened by revising the terms of the appointment from when-actually-employed to a full-time position at the Under-Secretary-General level. His role is to coordinate the implementation of the strategy throughout the United Nations system and to ensure a harmonized approach through the development of aligned mechanisms and procedures and standardized protocols and tools. The new Special Coordinator took office in September 2022.

Below are some key initiatives undertaken or built upon in accordance with the Secretary-General's commitment to combat sexual exploitation and abuse since 2016. The electronic version with active links is available at www.un.org/preventing-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/content/fact-sheet-on-initiatives-to-prevent-and-respond-to-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse.

I. Prioritizing the rights and dignity of victims

| Initiative | Status |
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| 1. Secretary-General appointed the 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 victims' rights approach is integrated into prevention and response | First appointment: August 2017 |
| 2. A statement on the rights of victims of sexual exploitation and abuse and complementary guidelines for United Nations personnel , which will underline the United Nations' commitment and responsibilities for putting the rights of victims at the centre of efforts to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse and serve as a common point of reference for all United Nations system personnel and others working under the United Nations flag, are under development by the Victims' Rights Advocate | Workshop of regional and national experts on victims' rights held in May 2019; internal consultations began on draft statement in July 2020; final version expected to be released in 2023 |
| 3. The Victims' Rights Advocate and her Office are building partnerships with national human rights institutions through the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, to strengthen awareness among national human | Ongoing |

¹ See [A/71/818](#) and [A/71/818/Corr.1](#).

² In 2016, as part of the strategy to ensure high-level engagement in the relevant entities across the United Nations system, the High-level Steering Group on preventing sexual exploitation and abuse was established. It includes the Chef de Cabinet as Chair; the Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications; the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, on behalf of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee; the Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel; the Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance; the Under-Secretary-General for Operational Support; the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations; the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs; the Assistant Secretary-General for Development Coordination; the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; the Special Coordinator on Improving the United Nations Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse; the Victims' Rights Advocate; the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict; the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict; the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children; the Director General of IOM; the Administrator of UNDP; the Executive Director of UNFPA; the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; the Executive Director of UNICEF; the Executive Director of UN-Women; the Executive Director of WFP and the Director General of WHO. The Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services and the Assistant Secretary-General for Development Coordination participate as observers.

³ See [A/72/751](#) and [A/72/751/Corr.1](#).

⁴ See [A/73/744](#).

⁵ See [A/74/705](#).

⁶ See [A/75/754](#).

⁷ See [A/76/702](#).

⁸ See [A/77/748](#).





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| rights institutions of the specific challenges of upholding the rights of victims of sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations staff and related personnel | |
| 4. The Office of the Victims' Rights Advocate, in consultation with OHCHR and UNICEF, has produced a framework to create and maintain a roster of lawyers and/or legal aid organisations willing to offer pro bono legal assistance to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations staff and related personnel in criminal and/or civil proceedings, including in relation to paternity and child support claims, as permissible under applicable national laws | Roster framework to be launched in 2023 and piloted in selected countries |
| 5. WHO is establishing a survivor support function to coordinate and enhance access to, and the quality of, services and protection for all who allege sexual misconduct against them | Expected: third quarter of 2023 |
| 6. Development of a methodology to seek feedback from victims of sexual exploitation and abuse initiated by the Office of the Victims' Rights Advocate, with a view to strengthening the provision of assistance to victims that takes account of their perspectives and needs | Methodology completed in April 2022; piloting anticipated in early 2023, subject to availability of funding |
| 7. The Office of the Victims' Rights Advocate, jointly with OHCHR and IOM, launched a training module to provide all United Nations staff and related personnel, third-party contractors and implementing partners with a clear and practical understanding of the rights of victims and what a victim-centred approach to sexual misconduct means | January 2023 |
| 8. Frequently asked questions booklet on the scope and duration of assistance for victims of sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations staff and non-staff personnel: link | November 2022; translated into French and Spanish |
| 9. Trust fund established in 2016 and managed by the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance to provide resources to support victim assistance services and projects: link Using the approximately \$4.3 million available, project funding has been disbursed or committed in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Liberia and South Sudan 2021 annual report: link | Fundraising appeal: September 2022 Annual cycle outreach resulted in the receipt of 420 proposals Final shortlisting continues with a view to funding projects in the second quarter of 2023 |
| 10. OHCHR-led development of a United Nations policy on a human rights-based approach to sexual exploitation and abuse, which complements the conduct and discipline and criminal accountability approaches and which contains a comprehensive legal and policy framework for prevention and response, placing victims at the centre: link | Endorsed by the High-level Steering Group on preventing sexual exploitation and abuse in February 2022 Translated into Chinese, French, Russian, Spanish and Ukrainian |
| 11. WHO established a victims assistance fund to provide easy and timely support for victims and survivors of sexual exploitation and abuse, in close collaboration with the Office of the Victims' Rights Advocate, to supplement projects run by the Office | December 2021; ongoing |
| 12. UNICEF developed a training package on the implementation of the United Nations protocol on the provision of assistance to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse and provides training to United Nations country teams, humanitarian country teams, inter-agency protection from sexual exploitation and abuse networks globally: link | November 2021; ongoing Translated into Arabic, French, Spanish and Portuguese |
| 13. The Conduct and Discipline Service developed a victim assistance tracking system for all peace operations to have a comprehensive information system on assistance and support provided to victims; reporting functionalities are under development | In use by conduct and discipline teams since 2019; initial training provided and additional training material added in 2021 |
| 14. Frequently asked questions booklet on the work of the Victims' Rights Advocate and senior victims' rights officers: link | June 2021; translated into French and Spanish |





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| <p>15. UNICEF, in collaboration with the Office of the Victims' Rights Advocate, the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, IOM, UNFPA, UNHCR and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, developed a technical note on the implementation of the United Nations protocol on the provision of assistance to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse that provides guidance to practitioners in all operational contexts: link</p> | <p>June 2021; ongoing Translated into Arabic, French, Portuguese, Spanish and Ukrainian</p> |
| <p>16. UNDP undertook a deep-dive study of victim assistance provided in 12 countries. The responses show some clear trends regarding how UNDP supports victims/survivors, the partners that it works with and how it communicates response mechanisms to victims</p> | <p>May 2021</p> |
| <p>17. Mapping of victims' rights approaches and services: in line with the Secretary-General's instruction in his 2018 report (A/72/751, para. 28), the Office of the Victims' Rights Advocate undertook a pilot mapping of services available across the United Nations system and beyond to provide victims of sexual exploitation and/or abuse with assistance and support in 13 countries. These services include, but are not limited to, the areas of prevention, medical, psychosocial and legal assistance, livelihood support and accountability. The mapping exercise builds on existing work and provides a clear overview of gaps, challenges, lessons learned and good practices to inform the development of additional tools, policies and programmes: link Full reports of the country mapping profiles are available upon request</p> | <p>Project completed May 2020; a follow-up survey was administered to United Nations entities in February 2021 to elicit updates for inclusion in the country profiles on the web page of the Office of the Victims' Rights Advocate</p> |
| <p>18. UNHCR issued a policy on a victim-centred approach in response to sexual misconduct and provides guidance to the entities involved in and responsible for operationalizing a victim-centred approach, through the incorporation of key principles in relevant training sessions and learning packages, awareness-raising activities and field guidance: link</p> | <p>December 2020; workshops began in 2021; ongoing</p> |
| <p>19. The United Nations protocol on the provision of assistance to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse describes the principles underpinning the role of the United Nations to provide assistance and support to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse and contains some guidance on the roles and responsibilities of United Nations actors in the field to ensure coordinated and immediate victim assistance: link</p> | <p>Endorsed by the High-level Steering Group on preventing sexual exploitation and abuse on 12 December 2019</p> |
| <p>20. Senior victims' rights officers with system-wide mandates appointed in the four countries for which the highest number of allegations have been recorded (Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti and South Sudan). These officers serve as the main contact for all victims, as people who are trusted and dedicated to integrating and strengthening a victim-centred, gender- and child-sensitive and non-discriminatory approach into all activities to support and assist victims in those countries. Owing to a lack of available and/or dedicated resources, the Victims' Rights Advocate recommended the appointment of a focal point to champion victims' rights; as of December 2022, the United Nations country teams in Guatemala, Uruguay and State of Palestine have designated focal points: link</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> |
| <p>21. The Victims' Rights Advocate organizes and participates in events and webinars to foster an online community of practice among senior victims' rights officers, focal points for victims' rights and coordinators on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, to encourage the exchange of good practices and peer-to-peer support and thus enhance assistance and support for victims, including during the COVID-19 pandemic</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> |





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| II. Transparency, accountability and ending impunity | |
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| Initiative | Status |
| 1. Development and endorsement of a 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 | Finalized 2017; expected to be promulgated as a Secretary-General's bulletin in 2023 |
| 2. Digitization of the incident reporting form to centralize and streamline intake of complaints across the United Nations system | Expected: second quarter of 2023 |
| 3. UNICEF, with the participation of United Nations entities, the Development Assistance Committee of OECD and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, formed an inter-agency working group to develop a global framework for cooperation with government partners on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse | Expected: second quarter of 2023 |
| 4. Development by OIOS of harmonized guidelines for investigations of sexual exploitation and abuse for United Nations investigative bodies | Expected: second quarter of 2023 |
| 5. Updated mandatory training and e-learning on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse for all Secretariat personnel, including field missions, through Inspira | Updated February 2023 |
| 6. UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP and WHO built a module for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse in the UN Partner Portal to enable mutual recognition of assessment, capacity plans and monitoring of partners | December 2022 |
| 7. Seventh annual system-wide survey for United Nations staff and related personnel in 154 locations; results disaggregated and shared with heads of participating entities | Completed September 2022 |
| 8. OIOS training for military national investigation officers ; the Policy, Evaluation and Training Division of the Integrated Training Service of the Department of Peace Operations developed a training of trainers' course for national investigation officers | 2022; ongoing |
| 9. UNHCR developed an e-learning course on sexual exploitation and abuse investigations for partner organizations: link Also available on the DisasterReady platform: link | December 2021 |
| 10. UNHCR, on behalf of the United Nations system, piloted the Misconduct Disclosure Scheme of the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (link), through the United Nations Global Centre for Human Resources Services ("OneHR"), targeting recruitments in the international category, then at operational level for local and affiliate workforce recruitments was undertaken. UNHCR aims to broaden the use to cover all decentralized recruitments | November 2021; ongoing |
| 11. Roll-out of a mobile phone application available in the Apple App Store and on Google Play, pro bono by Ericsson, featuring United Nations e-learning materials on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse | English: January 2021; French: October 2021 |
| 12. Database launched to support the work of the standing review committee on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2272 (2016) addressing sexual exploitation and abuse in peace operations; the database serves as a repository of information and allows for more efficient analysis of matters under review by the Committee, in accordance with the provisions of the resolution | October 2020; implementation ongoing |
| 13. Complementing the United Nations protocol on allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse involving implementing partners, a harmonized implementation tool to strengthen the accountability and capacity of implementing partners was developed: link | Issued September 2020 |





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| 14. The United Nations Sustainable Development Group included sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment regulations in its memorandums of understanding and standard administrative arrangements : link | Effective 4 December 2019 |
| 15. The Conduct and Discipline Service developed a misconduct risk management tool : link | September 2019; ongoing capacity-building sessions |
| 16. The Conduct and Discipline Service developed a sexual exploitation and abuse risk management toolkit : link | June 2018 |
| 17. ClearCheck ⁹ database aimed at preventing United Nations personnel who were dismissed for substantiated allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, or who left the Organization while an investigation was pending, from being deployed or reemployed at the United Nations: link | Launched June 2018; ongoing |
| 18. United Nations contractual conditions for consultants and individual contractors require compliance with the Secretary-General's bulletin on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13) | Ongoing |
| 19. Staff members required to acknowledge in writing , upon entry, reassignment and yearly, their knowledge and understanding of United Nations standards of conduct regarding sexual exploitation and abuse and the consequences for violating them | Ongoing |
| 20. Issuance of 2019 note verbale on the repository of national police laws on sexual exploitation and abuse: link | Issued January 2019; 11 legal frameworks |
| 21. Reissuance of 2016 note verbale on the repository of national military laws on sexual exploitation and abuse: link | Reissued August 2018; 61 legal frameworks |
| 22. Development of a glossary (second edition) on sexual exploitation and abuse in the context of the United Nations English: link French: link | Initiated: 5 October 2016; updated: 24 July 2017 |
| 23. High-level Steering Group on preventing sexual exploitation and abuse , ¹⁰ chaired by the Chef de Cabinet of the Secretary-General and composed of the heads of the offices, departments, funds and programmes involved in strengthening the system-wide response to sexual exploitation and abuse | Established 2016; meets regularly |
| 24. United Nations annual action plans on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse | Submitted for 2017 (35); 2018 (37); 2019 (50); 2020 (207); 2021 (208); and 2022 (216) |
| 25. Annual management certifications : members of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) and resident coordinators submit certifications on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse | Submitted in December for 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 ¹¹ and 2022 ¹² |
| III. Engaging Member States, civil society, external experts and organizations | |
| Initiative | Status |
| 1. Secretary-General's circle of leadership on the prevention of and response to sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations operations , composed of Heads of State and Government willing to make a visible personal commitment to ending impunity for sexual exploitation and abuse: | Ongoing; members are 104 current or former Heads of State and Government |

⁹ The following United Nations entities participate in the screening tool: all Secretariat entities, as well as FAO, IAEA, ICAO, IFAD, ILO, IMO, IOM, ITC, ITU, UNAIDS, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNODC, UNOPS, UNU, UNRWA, UN-Women, UNWTO, UPU, WFP, WHO, WIPO, WMO and WTO.

¹⁰ See footnote 2 for membership list.

¹¹ 2021 certifications provided to date by FAO, IAEA, ICAO, IFAD, IMF, IMO, IOM, ITC, ITU, UNAIDS, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIDO, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, UNOPS, UNRWA, UNU, UN-Women, UPU, WFP, WHO, WIPO and WMO.

¹² 2022 certifications provided to date by FAO, IAEA, IFAD, ILO, IMF, IOM, ITU, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIDIR, UNIDO, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, UNOPS, UNRWA, UN-Women, UNWTO, UPU, WFP, WHO, WIPO, the World Bank and WTO.





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| www.un.org/preventing-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/content/circle-leadership | | |
| 2. | Voluntary compact on preventing and addressing sexual exploitation and abuse: link | Ongoing; 105 Member State signatories |
| 3. | Technical-level meeting co-chaired by the Victim’s Rights Advocate and the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources to exchange good practices and lessons learned among Member States on paternity and child support claims | Expected: 2023 |
| 4. | Informal strategic dialogue with all Member States , chaired jointly by the Special Coordinator on improving the United Nations response to sexual exploitation and abuse and the Chair of the CEB Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment within the Organizations of the United Nations System | 20 May 2022 |
| 5. | Statement of the Secretary-General on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and on putting victims’ rights and dignity at the forefront: link | 18 September 2021 |
| 6. | High-level meeting to share good practices on conduct and discipline on strengthening the conduct of peacekeeping personnel hosted by the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance and the Department of Peace Operations with the participation of permanent missions in the setting of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative: link | 28 June 2021; web page launched December 2021 |
| 7. | Meetings convened by the Special Coordinator and jointly sponsored by representatives of the Heads of State and Government who are members of the circle of leadership , to share good practices and initiatives | 2018: five meetings; 2019: three meetings; 2020: two meetings |
| 8. | Social media campaign by the Secretary-General and his circle of leadership to raise awareness on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and reaffirm the commitment to its eradication: link | 24 September–3 October 2019 |
| 9. | Issuance of a collective statement by the Secretary-General and members of the circle of leadership on the prevention of and response to sexual exploitation and abuse: link | September 2018 |
| 10. | 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 |
| 11. | The Conduct and Discipline Service partners with the African Union on the implementation of its compliance framework related to conduct and discipline, including its policy framework, the screening of personnel, risk management, case management and strategic communication | Ongoing since 2017 |
| IV. Improving strategic communications for education and transparency | | |
| | Initiative | Status |
| 1. | To improve transparency, the United Nations launched a system for publicly reporting on allegations received by all United Nations entities: www.un.org/preventing-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/content/data-allegations-un-system-wide | Ongoing |
| 2. | The Conduct and Discipline Service launched a public reporting platform on allegations of misconduct: link | Ongoing |
| 3. | Brown-bag informal discussion with protection from sexual exploitation and abuse practitioners globally, to provide good practices, guidance and an opportunity for peer learning | 2021 (8); 2022 (10); 2023 (2) |
| 4. | An explainer video on sexual exploitation and abuse to be screened in aircraft carrying troops and police contingents to African missions | Expected: second quarter of 2023 |





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| 5. The Department of Global Communications and the Department of Peace Operations are developing an online toolkit on strategic communications on sexual exploitation and abuse for United Nations leaders | Expected: second quarter of 2023 |
| 6. The Department of Global Communications, in collaboration with agencies, funds and programmes, developed a communications guidance to respond to allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations staff and related personnel | February 2022 |
| 7. The Department of Global Communications and the Department of Peace Operations led training sessions on communications on sexual exploitation and abuse for senior leaders across United Nations duty stations | 2019 (1); 2020 (2); 2021(3); 2022 (2) 2023: scheduled for March |
| 8. Knowledge gateway page: an internal system-wide documentation repository on the prevention of and response to sexual exploitation and abuse | June 2020 |
| 9. Development and issuance of a United Nations stamp to raise awareness of the importance of speaking out to end sexual exploitation and abuse: link | March 2019; ongoing |
| 10. The Department of Peace Operations launched a bilingual (English/French) social media campaign (on Facebook and Twitter: #HonouringOurValues), including infographics, quote cards and videos from personnel, responders, Member States and community members, and created a repository of communication and awareness-raising tools: link | Launched March 2018; ongoing |

V. Additional initiatives by agencies, funds and programmes

| Initiative | Status |
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| 1. UNICEF initiated a scoping exercise with regional and select country protection from sexual exploitation and abuse focal points on engagement with government, in order to inform the development of a global governmental framework, as set out in the report by the Standing Committee on its technical support mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo: link | Expected: second quarter of 2023 |
| 2. WFP initiated the review and update of its administrative issuance that serves as a policy framework on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse | Expected: second quarter of 2023 |
| 3. UNIDIR is developing its policy on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse | Expected: second quarter of 2023 |
| 4. UNIDO is updating its code of ethical conduct to include core principles on sexual exploitation and abuse | Expected: second quarter of 2023 |
| 5. UNIDO initiated a review and update of its framework for individual service agreement, in compliance with the Secretary-General's bulletin, and will promulgate a policy on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse | Expected: second quarter of 2023 |
| 6. UNICEF is developing a safeguarding accountability framework to prescribe core office and staff expectations for creating a protective environment | Expected: second quarter of 2023 |
| 7. Joint regional training workshops for focal points and coordinators to establish effective protection from sexual exploitation and abuse mechanisms | 2019 (3); 2020 (1); 2021 (1); 2022 (2) |
| 8. UNFPA developed a training module on gender-based violence case management responses to sexual exploitation and abuse to strengthen the capacity of gender-based violence case managers to address the needs of victims of sexual exploitation and abuse Piloted in Pakistan, the Philippines, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela | Expected: 2023 |
| 9. UN-Women developed a learning journey for senior managers, which incorporates a module on accountable conduct to promote leadership that cultivates collective care and co-creates systems change | Initiated: 2022; expected: 2023 |
| 10. IFAD is expanding its programme for focal points on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment to cover all its country offices, including specific training to perform the role | 75 focal points trained in 2022 |





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| 11. FAO launched an independent and dedicated hotline for the reporting of all forms of misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse | December 2022; interpretation services in 162 languages |
| 12. IOM and WFP , in partnership with Translators without Borders, rolled out a multilingual outreach package for frontline partners and staff, targeting drivers, contractors and small NGOs on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse at the front line, entitled “ Together we say no ”: link | October 2022; available in 27 languages |
| 13. The World Bank prepared a good practice note addressing sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment in human development operations for task teams supporting borrowers in identifying, assessing and mitigating sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment risks | September 2022 |
| 14. IFAD issued a code of conduct for project parties, in which it set out the standards of conduct expected from each project party involved: link | August 2022 |
| 15. FAO initiated a cross-sectoral policy and process review to support the development of a whole-of-agency approach to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse | Initiated: May 2022; ongoing |
| 16. UNDP , with the participation of IOM, UNFPA, UNOPS, UN-Women, WFP and WHO , developed a new inter-agency training program designed for in-country focal points on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse , with the aim of providing them with a better understanding of their role within their entity and country framework | Launched: November 2021; first series facilitated: December 2021–February 2022 |
| 17. IOM developed a series of virtual training micromodules that contain messages to fight the “forgetting curve”, with an emphasis on a victim-centred approach | December 2021; translated into French and Spanish; additional languages to be available soon |
| 18. WHO implemented a response plan that outlines its actions to respond to all recommendations made in the report of the Independent Commission on the review of sexual abuse and exploitation during the response to the Ebola virus disease epidemic in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: link | December 2021; ongoing |
| 19. UNRWA revised its procurement manual to include strengthened provisions on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse in relation to vendors and suppliers | November 2021 |
| 20. UNICEF included a section on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse in its updated corporate emergency procedures, which are aligned with the sections on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse in the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, as updated in 2020 | June 2021; ongoing |
| 21. UN-Women developed an inclusive workplace strategy to promote a culture change that tackles the intersectional root causes of sexual exploitation and abuse, including race, age, disability, sexual orientation and gender | May 2021; ongoing |
| 22. IFAD issued a guide for borrowers and recipients of funding for preventing and responding to sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse: link | January 2021 |
| 23. UNHCR launched a new sexual exploitation and abuse risk tool to support operations in mapping, analysing and mitigating risks, with particular attention to higher-risk contexts such as remote operations and the rapid scale-up of humanitarian efforts at the outset of large-scale emergencies | December 2020 |
| 24. IOM developed a global training and deployment package for inter-agency coordinators on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, to build a pool of capacitated individuals and provide guidance on response to inter-agency coordinators: link | Training ongoing since 2019 |
| 25. UNRWA updated its technical instructions on medical examinations requiring chaperones in health centres to mitigate risks of sexual exploitation and abuse | 2019; updated: 2022 |





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| 26. IOM deployments to support or establish collective in-country initiatives for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse ¹³ | Ongoing |
| 27. IOM (link), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (link), UNDP (link), UNFPA (link), UNHCR (link), UNOPS (link), WFP (link) and WHO (link) launched websites on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse | Updated regularly |

VI. Inter-Agency Standing Committee

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee is the primary coordination mechanism for facilitating coherent and timely international responses to emergencies and formulating policy for strengthened humanitarian action. Established in 1991 by General Assembly resolution 46/182, the Standing Committee includes United Nations agencies,¹⁴ the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, non-governmental organizations and the World Bank. Standing Committee members have individual mandates but are united by the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence. The Standing Committee produces system-wide policies, guidance and tools to harmonize and improve the collective response.

| Initiative | Status |
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| <p>1. Chair of the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (President and Chief Executive Officer of World Vision International) appointed as Inter-Agency Standing Committee Champion on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment for the humanitarian sector until the end of June 2023</p> <p>The core priorities established under the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response are based on the work of previous Champions and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee external review on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment for 2021 (link). The chosen priorities are aimed at supporting the Standing Committee’s vision and strategy for 2022–2026 (link) and reflect the contributions that the first NGO Champion can bring, with a focus on community-based, operational impact, namely:</p> <p>(a) to focus on the affected population with a shared definition of a victim- and survivor-centred approach to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, including investigations; (b) to support country capacity by mobilizing resources to deploy inter-agency coordinators on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse to the 15 highest-risk contexts; and (c) to lead changes towards zero-tolerance for inaction against sexual exploitation and abuse across organizational cultures: link</p> | <p>Previous Champions:</p> <p>IOM: June 2011–June 2018</p> <p>UNICEF: July 2018–August 2019</p> <p>UNHCR: September 2019–January 2021</p> <p>UNFPA: January 2021–January 2022</p> |
| <p>2. The Standing Committee endorsed a five-year vision and strategy, in which it identified commitments and time-bound targets to embed sustainable and accountable actions relating to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse within all humanitarian contexts and transformative culture change across the humanitarian sector. A technical advisory group was established, comprising global protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and aimed at safeguarding focal points, to support the implementation of the strategy: link</p> | May 2022 |
| <p>3. The Standing Committee is developing an administrative mechanism for the deployment of inter-agency coordinators on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse in 15 countries with a high risk of sexual exploitation and abuse. The new mechanism will be jointly administered by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Norwegian Refugee Council</p> | Expected: second quarter of 2023 |
| <p>4. The Standing Committee is revising the approach of the community-based complaint mechanisms and will develop a guidance note that will inform the</p> | Expected: second quarter of 2023 |

¹³ 2017: Bangladesh; 2018: Somalia and Syrian Arab Republic; 2019: Asia-Pacific region (with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), Colombia (with WFP), Somalia, Syrian Arab Republic and Turkey; 2020: Cameroon and Turkey; 2021–2022: support provided remotely.

¹⁴ United Nations agencies include FAO, IOM, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UNDP, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN-Women, WFP and WHO.





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| <p>revision of the 2016 Inter-Agency Standing Committee best practice guide on inter-agency community-based complaint mechanisms: link</p> | |
| <p>5. The Standing Committee developed and launched common indicators on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse to measure country-level collective progress. All humanitarian coordinators are to report against the indicators. The results will be published on the global dashboard in 2023: link</p> | <p>December 2022; results in March 2023</p> |
| <p>6. The Standing Committee launched the sexual exploitation and abuse risk overview (SEARO) composite index, in which it brings together different factors that can influence the risk of sexual exploitation and abuse. The index categorizes countries with humanitarian response operations according to their level of risk, enabling comparisons between countries and assessments on how those risks change over time: link</p> | <p>October 2022</p> |
| <p>7. UNFPA, as then-Champion, led the establishment of a roster of trained and vetted inter-agency coordinators for rapid deployment; an advocacy campaign in 35 Standing Committee priority countries, reaching more than 1.3 million people with information on their rights, on reporting channels and on assistance available; and commissioned an external review to provide an independent assessment of the Standing Committee’s collective progress over the past decade External review on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, 2021: link</p> | <p>January 2021–January 2022</p> |
| <p>8. The Standing Committee website on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse provides resources and features a global dashboard to track progress against agreed action plans and to provide country-level information: link</p> | <p>Updated: January 2022; ongoing</p> |
| <p>9. UNHCR, as then-Champion, led a reflection session for the Standing Committee principals on values, attitudes and organizational culture as it relates to sexual misconduct, with similar sessions held for humanitarian coordinators/resident coordinators. A facilitator’s guide was also developed to support leaders in starting important discussions within their organizations by holding similar sessions: link</p> | <p>2021</p> |
| <p>10. UNHCR launched a case conference training tool to facilitate peer-to-peer exchange on practices among small groups of protection from sexual exploitation and abuse focal points. The tool has been shared with Standing Committee members, with the intention of being used by others</p> | <p>UNHCR pilot: August 2021; Standing Committee roll-out: December 2021</p> |
| <p>11. The Standing Committee endorsed generic terms of reference for coordinators (updated 2019), networks and agency focal points on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, to harmonize and systematize the role of these actors: link</p> | <p>October 2021; translations into Arabic, French and Spanish</p> |
| <p>12. UNHCR published a new report, entitled “A selection of promising practices on organizational culture change”, in which the High Commissioner showcased the innovative work done by different humanitarian and development organizations to curb the power imbalances in the workplace that give rise to sexual misconduct and other forms of abuse: link</p> | <p>May 2021</p> |
| <p>13. UNHCR, as then-Champion, had the following overarching priorities: (a) bolstering prevention; (b) expanding safe spaces to speak out and report sexual misconduct; and (c) promoting the respectful use of authority. Details are provided in the report of the High Commissioner: link</p> | <p>September 2019–January 2021</p> |
| <p>14. UNHCR released a communications package for leaders, intended to guide Standing Committee principals in facilitating meaningful dialogue with staff on sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment and promote a “speak up” culture: link</p> | <p>September 2020</p> |
| <p>15. The Standing Committee field support team on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse includes specialists from eight Standing Committee entities and agencies and provides ongoing support to more than 50 inter-</p> | <p>May 2020; ongoing</p> |





ZERO TOLERANCE FOR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

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| <p>agency coordinators and networks. In-person missions were carried out to support the humanitarian coordinators and humanitarian country teams in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo</p> | |
| <p>16. UNHCR partnered with the International Council of Voluntary Agencies to launch a community outreach and communications fund on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse to support smaller NGOs. Grants were awarded to NGOs working in all regions 15 additional grants were awarded to NGOs in 2022: link.</p> | <p>Fund launched February 2019; ongoing Grants awarded: 2020 (19); 2021 (15)</p> |
| <p>17. Inter-Agency Standing Committee training package on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment for United Nations partners, a collaborative project by IOM, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP and involving the International Council of Voluntary Agencies, the Norwegian Refugee Council and the Core Humanitarian Standard Alliance, entitled “Saying no to sexual misconduct”: link</p> | <p>May 2020; available in Arabic, English, French, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and Ukrainian</p> |
| <p>18. IOM released a compilation of lessons learned related to in-country protection from sexual exploitation and abuse programs to support the interagency response (a) Frequently asked questions on inter-agency protection from sexual exploitation and abuse: link (b) Country examples of protection from sexual exploitation and abuse practice: link</p> | <p>December 2019; April 2020 Translations of frequently asked questions available in Arabic, French and Spanish</p> |
| <p>19. Six core principles relating to sexual exploitation and abuse for humanitarian workers strengthened, with the language of principle 4 updated to note that sexual relationships between humanitarians and beneficiaries that involve improper use of rank or position are prohibited: link</p> | <p>Revised September 2019; translations ongoing</p> |
| <p>20. UNICEF, as then-Champion, established the Inter-Agency Standing Committee plan for accelerating protection from sexual exploitation and abuse in humanitarian response at the country level (link)</p> | <p>2018–September 2019</p> |
| <p>21. The Standing Committee and the CEB Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment within the Organization of the United Nations System convenes regular meetings of investigatory bodies: link</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> |
| <p>22. Adoption of formal and informal community-based complaint mechanisms in all humanitarian and peace operations for the receipt of allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse: link</p> | <p>Endorsed in 2016; issued in March 2018; translated into Arabic, French and Spanish</p> |
| <p>23. The Standing Committee endorsed a set of minimum operating standards for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (link) and implementation guidelines (link)</p> | <p>2013, under revision</p> |

