

**UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS EXECUTIVE BOARD**  
**First regular session 2022**

**BACKGROUND NOTE**  
**Response to sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment**

**I. Update by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**

1. At the Annual Session in June 2021, UNDP provided the Executive Board with an update on progress and presented our new Strategy and Action Plan on the Prevention of Sexual Harassment (SH) and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA), 2021-2022. This new Strategy and Action Plan builds on the last strategy (2019-2020) and continues to focus on the four priority areas of Prevention; Reporting and Response; Support to Victims/Survivors and Accountability – while taking into account the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

2. We are confident that we now have good policies, systems and processes in place which are aligned to international standards and UN-wide guidance, and we are collaborating closely with our sister agencies. We are also starting to see an increase in SH and SEA reports – after a drop in 2020 likely as a result of COVID (see section 5(c) below). Nevertheless, we know there is still much to do – particularly in providing support to victims and survivors as well as working with our implementing partners on SEA issues – two critical priorities in the new Strategy.

3. The objectives of the 2021-2022 Strategy are:

- to significantly reduce the incidence of SH and SEA committed by UNDP personnel;
- to ensure that each case is identified and addressed quickly and effectively with a focus on the well-being and protection of the victims/survivors and strict accountability for perpetrators;
- to ensure that proper safeguards are embedded into all UNDP operations, including programme activities implemented both by UNDP and through our Implementing Partners;
- to minimize SH and SEA risks, and ensure appropriate response action.

4. Below are some examples of the work we have undertaken since our last progress report in June:

5. On *sexual harassment* our efforts are focused on creating an environment for our colleagues to be able to come to work knowing that they are safe and free from all forms of harassment. Examples include:

(a) *Continuing to **raise awareness** and ensure all our staff – in particular our managers - have a high level of understanding about these issues and know what to do to prevent and respond:*

- The **Administrator continues to raise the issue** through regular town halls, all staff messages, presentations to the Executive Board, and discussions with leadership, e.g. the 2021 UNDP Leadership Summit
- Our Bureau and Office **Directors discuss the issue** with their personnel across the world. Our Country Offices organise briefings for personnel, implementing partners and communities locally, where the COVID allows
- Completion rates in 2021 on our SH and SEA **mandatory training courses** (which were updated in 2021) were 90% (PSEA) and 91% (SH) for staff, and 82% (PSEA) and 81% (SH) for all personnel combined.
- Around 1200 UNDP personnel have participated in **trainings and presentations** this year including a series of webinars run by OAI and OHR with 14 country and regional offices
- A new **monthly UNDP podcast** launched in August on SH and SEA prevention includes information on reporting, the rights and responsibilities of UNDP personnel and workplace culture.
- We are looking at options for new digital ‘assets’ – e.g., a banner on intranet pages; icons on different platforms and signatures – to further raise the profile of SH and SEA
- Information and learning resources on our internal and external websites have been updated.

- (b) *Creating a **safe work environment** where our staff feel they can speak up and report:*
- The response to our **Respectful Workplace Facilitators (RWFs)** programme which provides a confidential resource for anyone experiencing harassment, continues to be positive with 26 RWFs already trained in 24 countries with plans to expand to a further 20 RWFs and 18 countries by the end of 2021. Our RWFs are handling 45 individual cases so far, demonstrating a high level of trust in the programme
  - Our **in-house staff counsellors** continue to provide support and counselling to SH victims/survivors
  - The **Gender Team** have launched a programme which is looking at how men can be positive instruments of change. In addition, as part of developing the new Gender Strategy 2022-25 there will be a series of conversations with Country Offices including on promoting organizational cultures that are free from sexual misconduct.
- (c) *Continue to build trust in all parts of our **internal justice system** – recognizing that victims/survivors will only come forward if they really believe that something will be done, and quickly*
- In 2020, the **numbers of reports** dropped to 13 (from over 30 the previous 2 years), likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. So far this year, we have 22 reports (16 SH, 5 SEA, 1 SA), showing an upward trajectory from 2020.
  - SH and SEA cases continue to be prioritized with an average of **6 months for investigations** – within the industry standard. UNDP currently has 12 former personnel entered in the **ClearCheck** database where UN agencies record SH/SEA perpetrators and vet new hires. We are now in the process of expanding screening against ClearCheck to include national staff, Service Contractors, PSAs, and consultants and are providing training to Country Offices accordingly.
  - Since the last quarter of 2020 and until mid-November 2021, UNDP has substantiated and taken disciplinary or other appropriate action in seven cases of staff members who engaged in sexual misconduct (6 SH, 1 SEA). In two SH cases, the disciplinary measures of separation from service and demotion were imposed. All other cases concerned staff members who separated during the investigation or following charges of sexual misconduct. In all cases where a disciplinary process could not be initiated or finalized due to the staff member's separation, a letter was issued to the individual and placed in their official file, specifying that the staff member would have been charged or disciplined due to sexual misconduct if the employment relationship had continued.
  - In addition to imposing disciplinary measures to staff members and taking other appropriate action, including inclusion in ClearCheck, UNDP submits to the UN Office of Legal Affairs (OLA) credible allegations of sexual misconduct for referral to national authorities for possible criminal accountability. In 2020, this resulted in a former staff member being criminally charged by national authorities. In 2021, 50% of all staff cases submitted to OLA were transmitted for consideration of referral to national authorities.
  - Of interest, our analysis of the incident cases in 2020-2021 indicate that over half of SH cases received relate to historical incidents which would have exceeded the 6-month time frame to report to OAI prior to the May 2018 policy amendment which now allows for historical matters to be reported. There are also still significantly more cases of SH being reported than of SEA or sexual assault. In 2021, we have also observed a continuation of the trend of resignations of staff members against whom there are allegations of sexual misconduct, mostly during the investigation stage.

6. For **sexual exploitation and abuse**, our ambition and objectives are no different for the communities that we work with and support, but SEA is often more complex to deal with – especially in crisis contexts. Examples of actions taken include:

(a) ***Continuing outreach and awareness raising with UNDP personnel on SEA***

- Our first cadre of PSEA focal points have proved invaluable in terms of driving progress on the ground – particularly in high risk countries. Next training runs from Nov-February 2022. Ultimately our plan is to have a trained PSEA focal point in every country office where we work.
- UNDP’s results in the UN Secretariat 2020 PSEA survey (external to UNDP) were positive on the levels of awareness and understanding. For UNDP there were 2853 respondents from 72 duty stations. Over 95% understood the need to report SEA; over 90% confirmed there were clear policies on SEA where they worked; 89% confirmed that action was taken to raise awareness on SEA; 85% said there was clear information on how to report SEA and 80% said there was clear information on where to refer victims of SEA.

(b) ***Strengthen collaboration with Implementing Partners (IPs) and Responsible Parties (RPs) to ensure they understand UNDP standards and the importance of this issue (high priority)***

- A cross bureau Task Team was launched in June to clarify corporate expectations on addressing SEA and SH issues with IPs/RPs selected for UNDP development projects. It also serves as an advisory group in making specific changes to risk assessment tools to properly identify SEA and SH risks present when working with IPs/RPs, as well as developing risk mitigation measures such as tools to enhance the capacities of partners to adequately address SEA and SH. The Task Team will launch its first package of outreach materials in early 2022.
- Our standards on SEA are clearly stated in our project document template and related partner agreements. Our IPs/RPs officially accept these standards when they sign these agreements.

(c) ***Raise awareness of SEA among beneficiaries of UNDP projects and programmes and intensify work around reporting and support services for victims/survivors in line with the Victim Assistance Protocol***

- We are working with 5 UN agencies to pilot the UN’s new electronic incident reporting form (e-IRF). 8 new UNDP Incident Reporting Officers in South Sudan, Mali, Jordan and CAR will be trained in December-January
- New guidance has been developed for UNDP personnel and impacted communities to report SEA to OAI within 36 hours – to be rolled out in January 2022.
- Follow up discussions with other agencies on the effectiveness of community-based complaint mechanisms – particularly in light of the recent IASC report and recommendations – are underway.
- The results of the Gender Seal Certification process now underway in 85 countries and especially Indicator 3.A (*‘corporate policies preventing SH and SEA localized and implemented’*) will be used to inform the Task force of progress at country level.
- In the 2020 survey of Country Offices’ response to GBV during the COVID-19 pandemic, half of respondents indicated that their Country Office was providing direct and/or indirect support (financial or technical) to civil society organisation service providers and nearly 4 out of 10 were adapting and/or expanding services such as shelters, safe spaces and essential housing, along with psycho-social support and advice for individuals experiencing or at risk of GBV.
- In line with the “UN Protocol on the Provision of Assistance to Victims of SEA” (the “Protocol”), UNDP has developed an internal SOP for victim assistance (for SH and SEA) on the services that need to be provided, by whom and the coordination mechanism needed.

**7. On accountability and lesson learning:**

- All UNDP country, regional and headquarters offices submitted their SH and SEA action plans in December to allow the Administrator to report to the Executive Board and to the Secretary General
- All managers in UNDP have a mandatory result in their annual performance goals plan related to people management which refers to their obligation to create a working environment free from harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination, and abuse of authority.
- All ASG/Directors report on specific SEA indicators as part of their annual performance Compact with the Administrator.

- Tracking of progress on SH issues is done through the Annual Survey on Reporting of SH for the CEB Task Force on Addressing SH. External reporting on SEA allegations is tracked through the UN iReport SEA Tracker.
- The Administrator reports all disciplinary measures and actions taken in cases of misconduct, including on SH and SEA, in the “UNDP Annual Report of the Administrator on Disciplinary Measures and other Actions Taken in Response to Fraud, Corruption and other Wrongdoing”.
- Our Global Staff Survey (GSS) in 2020 included a question asking colleagues to share if they were subjected to harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination, abuse of authority or any biased treatment at work. In 2018 the number of colleagues reporting that they were subject to SH was 7% of the total (approximately 65 respondents), this dropped to 5% (approximately 42 respondents) in 2020.
- New SH and SEA indicators have been included in the IRRF for the new Strategic Plan 2022-2025 under Organisational Effectiveness and Efficiency.
- We welcome the report from MOPAN, and were pleased to receive satisfactory marks for our work on SH and SEA following their comprehensive review. We also welcome and will take into account their analysis on areas where we can do more and better.
- We continue to work closely with our UN sister agencies and with the Secretariat to maximise the coherence, and effectiveness of our response and share lessons. As co-chair of the interagency workstream on learning and communications, we are working with other entities on the development of the UN communications strategy on SH as well as the behavioural science-driven recommendations on the future learning and awareness building activities.

8. In conclusion, our ambition with this new Strategy is to intensify our efforts, effectively implement the policies and processes we have in place and, with the support and commitment of all our personnel, further strengthen the organization where everyone including those we work with and support can be confident that they will be safe and free from all forms of harassment including SH and SEA.

## **II. Update by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)**

1. In 2021, UNFPA Executive Director Dr. Natalia Kanem held the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Championship on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (PSEAH). This role provided a unique opportunity for UNFPA to advance a system-wide, victim-centred approach to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse across the humanitarian system while leveraging its core expertise as the lead agency in the area of gender-based violence (GBV).
2. UNFPA's core objective in 2021 was to strengthen leadership, coordination and accountability to ensure a structured and coherent approach to prevention, response and victim assistance. To this end, and since the last progress report in June, UNFPA continued to implement and has completed a number of key initiatives both under the PSEAH Championship and the regular PSEAH action plan 2021.

### **Interagency Standing Committee (IASC) PSEAH Championship**

3. Building on the work of the previous Champions, IOM, UNICEF and UNHCR, UNFPA focused on three priority areas:
  - (a) Bolstering country mechanisms, including in-country inter-agency PSEA networks.
  - (b) Improving access to quality assistance and information for victims of sexual exploitation and abuse.
  - (c) Strengthening coordination and coherence among key actors working on protection.
4. To take these priorities forward, UNFPA implemented five key initiatives:
  - (a) Establishing a roster of trained and vetted interagency PSEA Coordinators to ensure rapid deployment of qualified human resources. Coordinators have been deployed to five IASC priority countries in 2021 and further deployments are underway. The roster will be transferred to the IASC Secretariat in 2022 and discussions about a sustainable interagency funding mechanism are underway to ensure predictable resourcing for the roster and PSEA work on the ground in the coming years.
  - (b) Rolling out an advocacy campaign in 35 IASC priority countries reaching more than 1.3 million people with information on their rights, reporting channels and assistance available.
  - (c) Establishing a PSEA training package for GBV caseworkers to address the needs of victims of sexual exploitation and abuse. The training has been developed in consultation with more than 200 PSEAH and GBV experts in 26 countries and will be piloted starting in January 2022.
  - (d) Commissioned an external review to provide an independent assessment of the IASC's collective progress on PSEAH over the past decade. The review report, which was submitted to IASC Principals in November 2021, points to positive developments, not least a constant and consistent commitment from IASC Principals on protection from sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. It also pointed to several critical issues that need to be collectively addressed as a priority moving forward.
  - (e) In November 2021, UNFPA convened a high-level roundtable including IASC leaders, representatives of Member States and civil society organizations to provide an opportunity to discuss the review findings, take stock and chart a collective way forward. In collaboration with IASC members and the Secretariat UNFPA is now preparing a draft program of action to serve as a roadmap for the IASC in the coming years.
5. UNFPA is committed to carrying this work forward and supporting the IASC community and future Champions in charting a sustainable path ahead together.

### **UNFPA regular PSEAH workplan 2021**

6. In 2021, UNFPA continued the implementation of its PSEAH strategy and completed all programmed activities.

### *Management and coordination*

7. *Interagency collaboration.* UNFPA continued its engagement in interagency initiatives, including with the Office of the Special Coordinator, the Victims' Rights Advocate, and the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) Task Force on Sexual Harassment. Emerging interagency guidance and products are being implemented on a continuing basis and with appropriate guidance to country offices, including the Note on Advancing a Common Understanding of a Victim-centred Approach to Sexual Harassment, the Technical Note on the Implementation of the UN Protocol on the Provision of Assistance to Victims of SEA, as well as Guidance on Sharing Incident Information on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse with the Senior Most UN Official in-Country.

8. In October 2021 UNFPA has become adherent to the OECD DAC Recommendation on Ending Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance. UNFPA is pleased for this opportunity to collaborate, share knowledge and experience with other institutions.

9. *Delivering at country level.* UNFPA continues to lead interagency PSEA networks with full- and part-time Coordinators in 10 IASC priority countries and supports PSEA networks worldwide through its global network of PSEA focal points. UNFPA also participated in IASC support missions to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic to provide proactive field support and identify concrete steps for strengthening prevention, response and assistance on the ground. Further joint support missions to select priority countries are envisaged in 2022.

10. *Implementing partner accountability.* UNFPA continues to operationalize the United Nations Protocol on Allegations of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Involving Implementing Partners. As of 13 December 2021, 59% (595 out of 1015) of its NGO implementing partners with a valid work plan in 2021 have been assessed.

11. UNFPA also continued to lead interagency initiatives to strengthen capacities and accountability of Implementing Partners. Results achieved include among others the roll-out of an IP protocol package to provide guidance for UN personnel and shared NGO partners. UNFPA also continues to play a leading role in the interdivisional working group which continues to expand its scope and number of participating agencies.

12. *Management compliance.* In December, UNFPA initiated its annual PSEAH management accountability exercise to ensure organization-wide compliance with ST/SGB/2003/13. As in previous years, certification by managers across the Organization will form the basis of the UNFPA's management letter to the Executive Board in January 2022.

13. *Impact assessment.* In December 2021, UNFPA conducted a Survey on Protection from Prohibited Workplace Conduct. The survey takes a holistic view on all workplace abuses, including discrimination, abuse of authority, harassment, sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse, as they often share power imbalances as a common root cause. The survey will be repeated at regular intervals; it will inform communication and training plans and serve as a benchmark to measure progress.

14. As in previous years, UNFPA participated in the UN system-wide annual PSEAH perception survey. The results show a high level of understanding and trust in UNFPA's commitment to zero tolerance. Nearly all of 994 participants understand the general concepts of SEA (99%) and are familiar with reporting obligations for staff (97%) and implementing partners (95%). Nearly all believe that UNFPA has a strong commitment to zero tolerance (99%), takes adequate action in response to SEA (98%) and provides clear information on how to report (97%) and where to refer victims (93%). Also, 93% of the respondents received induction or refresher training within the last 12 months, which was unanimously considered effective.

### ***Prevention***

15. *Communication and training.* In 2021, all personnel had to complete or retake the mandatory online training on Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) which is now available in nine languages.
16. PSEAH webinars were held for personnel and managers in all regions to update on new corporate developments and receive feedback and inputs from countries. Induction and refresher sessions were also held for the network of 186 PSEA focal points, an area which will be of increased focus in 2022. Dedicated training on the Implementing Partner Assessment tool was provided to personnel across the organization.
17. In November, UNFPA piloted, jointly with the Ombudsman for the UN Funds and Programmes, a training on “Impactful Conflict Management for Leaders” to strengthen managerial capacities to prevent and respond to workplace issues, including those relating to sexual misconduct. The training includes a dedicated module on a victim-centred approach to sexual harassment and will be rolled out to managers across the Organization over the coming months, targeting in the first phase about 150 senior managers.
18. *Screening of staff.* UNFPA has been participating in the UN system-wide screening database “clear check” since its inception in 2019. In 2021, UNFPA screened a total of 2009 new recruits for past involvement in sexual misconduct and entered 3 subjects in the database.

### ***Response***

19. As at 13 December 2021, the UNFPA Office of Audit and Investigation Services (OAIS) received seven allegations of sexual harassment, a significant decrease compared to eleven allegations received in the same time period in 2020.
20. The number of SEA cases reported remained stable with 12 allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse received since January 2021, compared to 13 allegations received in 2020. Six of the allegations received pertain to Implementing Partners, a slight decrease to the eight allegations received last year.
21. Thirteen additional allegations labelled as “SEA” were self-disclosed by implementing partners. All allegations were reviewed for adequacy of the corrective action taken and appropriate risk mitigation was taken, as warranted.

### **PSEAH workplan 2022 and the new UNFPA Strategic Plan**

22. The work on PSEAH remains an integral part in the UNFPA strategic plan, 2022-2025, and contributes directly to the 2030 commitment to end all forms of gender-based violence.
23. Building on the progress made over the last years, UNFPA remains committed and will continue to work in partnership with local women and communities placing the rights and dignity of victims at the centre of the organization’s efforts.
24. The main focus under the 2022 PSEAH workplan will continue to be on effective implementation and strengthened capacities on the ground to ensure effective prevention and a coherent, structured and prompt response to every individual case.

## **Update by the United Nations Office of Project Services (UNOPS)**

1. In 2021 UNOPS has continued to adapt its operations, systems, policies and practices to cope with challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic. This has allowed the organization to continue implementing projects without major disruptions. The challenges faced by UNOPS have served both as a learning opportunity and a trigger to prioritize transformations aimed at ensuring that our organization and its personnel will be ready to meet the challenges ahead of us, including the prevention of and response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment.

2. During 2021, Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (PSEAH) has remained a priority. Our action in this field has been focused on the following key areas:

### *Continuous improvement:*

3. The Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) assessment report issued in the last quarter of 2021 found that UNOPS has mechanisms and systems in place to regularly track the status of PSEAH cases. Regional plans are mandatory for PSEAH and some country offices have their own plans, based on a risk assessment made by regional offices. UNOPS' PSEAH strategy makes training intentions clear and evidence suggests training and personnel awareness building has been undertaken. Evidence also exists on standards and due diligence processes to ensure that implementing partners prevent and respond to SEAH as well as on the intention to strengthen a victim/survivor-centred approach. UNOPS has clearly identifiable roles and structures (network of peers), including psychological support. A Speak Up hotline exists and UNOPS acts in a timely manner with transparent reporting, through the annual report of internal audit and the Executive Director report, which feed into inter-agency mechanisms.

4. UNOPS underwent a Gender and Inclusion Participatory Audit in 2021 which also covered sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse concerns. UNOPS is considering ways to implement these. This includes increasing coordination between the existing PSEAH Task Force and UNOPS PSEAH experts in regional offices and field offices in order to develop and apply minimum standards across the organization, making PSEAH a requirement under the UNOPS Health, Safety, Social and environmental safeguards for project implementation, developing strategies which are adaptable to national contexts, increasing the modalities and availability of awareness-raising trainings on concepts related to SEAH, and engaging in efforts to increase personnel's trust in internal reporting mechanisms.

5. In 2021 UNOPS reinforced its Internal Grievance function in order to improve organizational maturity with regards to the fair and transparent management of personnel relations in workplace conflict and to further contribute to UNOPS' Speak-Up culture to support efforts to prevent and respond to SEAH. The Internal Grievance Advisor advises management on formal and informal internal grievance handling, counsels and educates managers and personnel in respect of rights, responsibilities, code of conduct to create an enabling environment, free of SEAH. A further focus of the role will be on the prevention of workplace disputes. In the course of 2021, UNOPS underwent an external assessment of the wrongdoing and grievance management channels. While the final report is yet to be finalized, the initial draft report has not identified any area of specific concern but highlighted a few areas with potential for further efficiency and collaboration. UNOPS is committed to the process of enhancing its grievance mechanism and aligning it with international best practice.

### *Leadership, strategic focus and culture:*

6. In addition to regularly updating and monitoring the implementation of the PSEAH action plans at corporate, regional and local levels, UNOPS relies on issuing strategy documents to give direction and

focus to our efforts in terms of protection against SEAH. Our PSEAH strategy articulates our zero-tolerance policy for SEA and aims to foster a safe work environment for both UNOPS personnel and beneficiaries of UNOPS project activities. It is based around six guiding principles: Zero-Tolerance, Dignity and Respect, Leadership, Manager's conversations, Manager as a role model, and Keeping abreast of changes. Its key intervention areas are Awareness-raising, Evidence-based interventions, Review and data analysis, and Building capabilities.

7. As a further development of our Strategy, before the end of 2021, UNOPS is planning to issue a new training and communication strategy regarding the protection against SEAH. The strategy focuses on internal and external communications plans and tools as well as training plans for UNOPS personnel. It will guide UNOPS leaders and personnel at large to effectively communicate with their peers, supervisors, direct reports and stakeholders with an aim to raise awareness, prevent and respond to SEAH. Resources have also been developed to assist managers and peers with the implementation of the strategy. Some of these include one-pagers to guide conversations on relevant topics, such as reporting, child marriage and transactional sex. This complements existing materials such as no excuse cards and posters. These tools will equip UNOPS managers and personnel at large to have meaningful discussions and conversations about this topic and reinforce UNOPS' Speak Up culture.

8. UNOPS endeavours to maintain and strengthen a victim centred approach to SEA through its policy, guidelines and mechanisms, where all individuals are treated with dignity and respect, and victims are provided support in an expeditious and appropriate manner while the alleged perpetrator's right to due process is respected.

9. Through these leadership activities, we expect to achieve a positive effect on shaping the culture of the organization and achieve long-lasting positive effects in terms of reinforcing protection against SEAH.

*Measures related to prevention and response to SEAH involving implementing partners and contractors:*

10. In terms of our work with implementing partners, we have established a working group to develop a better understanding of what and how adequate safeguards and appropriate actions are needed to strengthen protections against SEAH by UNOPS implementing partners. To this effect, UNOPS commissioned a study to map how and what adequate safeguards and appropriate actions need to be taken to address obligations in UN Protocol on Allegations of SEA involving Implementing Partners in a substantive manner. The report provides an inventory of UNOPS PSEA activities (definitions of IP and protocol interpretations, data collection, actions, materials, guidance, presentation, workshop, training, etc.) focused on IPs and an understanding of the UNOPS delivery chain through IPs. In addition, the inventory documents PSEA activities that have been developed by UN system organizations and international NGOs. The report sets forth recommendations to guide further steps that UNOPS will take in this area. Some of these include:

- Defining the Implementing Partners as per the unique UNOPS business model.
- Developing a **phased approach to the implementation of the Protocol or a less stringent approach based on the nature of implementing partners**. A first phase focusing on grantees (NGO/CSO) and UNOPS Direct Implementation and a second phase, focusing on building capacity and incorporating Government (both central and local level governments) as IPs.
- In the countries where the government partners are receptive to support in the implementation of the protocol an approach can be formulated along with the government for the assessment, monitoring, capacity building and reporting.
- **Compliance with the Protocol requirements implies an investment in human and financial resources for UNOPS. UNOPS PSEA machinery should be strengthened by creating a PSEA senior position at HQ** to, develop policy and guidance at the corporate level, to coordinate and

provide oversight for the operationalization of the protocol, support PSEA focal points network and PMs on the implementation of the protocol at project levels, and join UN system wide activities on PSEA.

- **An organisational wide PSEA capacity building strategy should be developed to ensure that UNOPS personnel understand the Protocol and its implementation.** In particular, Project Managers (PM) and teams need to have a strong background on how to implement PSEA in projects as well as monitor IPs PSEA mechanism.

11. We have finalized a pilot project to determine the needs of our suppliers of goods and services and the learning gained during that exercise will help to inform our work in this area focusing on suppliers going forward but also transferring these lessons learned to implementing partners where applicable.

*Prevention measures for project sites:*

12. In 2021, we developed a package for safeguarding projects against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment occurrences. This includes guidance for project teams, a training package for contractors which targets contractor personnel with managerial and supervisory roles, an awareness raising slide deck which targets site workers and community workers, an individual code of conduct template for project workers and community workers, SEAH awareness posters for project sites and a

PSEAH Toolbox Talk model. Concepts are simplified but clearly convey which behaviour is expected from all individuals working on a UNOPS project. PSEAH has also been integrated in site inspections.

13. It is important to recall that UNOPS is a project-based organization and this impacts the way in which the organization operates. From that point of view, we will be placing an even stronger focus on improving project design in a way that increases awareness and prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment among all individuals present on a project site, so that the risk of these incidents within the site and in surrounding communities is reduced. As per all other aspects of our HSSE work, we believe that engaging and building capacity with our contractors on this topic is a positive contribution. This will have a positive effect for the local communities as well so that the project beneficiaries are fully aware of their rights and how to enforce them.

*Increased training at regional and local levels:*

14. UNOPS regional and local offices have increased the number of training and awareness-raising activities conducted on the topic of PSEAH for UNOPS personnel in 2021. For example, at the UNOPS Jordan Multi Country Office, personnel received a gender and PSEAH induction as part of their onboarding and a PSEAH training is offered to UNOPS personnel on a yearly basis, to refresh their understanding of PSEAH and remind staff about the reporting pathways and protection against retaliation policies. The Asia Regional Office has organized quarterly PSEAH training sessions and PSEAH toolkits have been re-circulated to all offices in the region. The New York Security Cluster provided guidance to all the UNOPS Peace and Security Cluster workforce on reporting mechanisms for PSEA, circulated the UNOPS PSEAH toolkit across UNOPS Peace and Security Cluster programmes and developed a knowledge sharing forum for PSEAH focal points to share knowledge and information about successes and challenges. In the Latin America and Caribbean region, a webinar was conducted about optimal working environments and standards of conduct with a focus on PSH and several offices in the region held awareness-raising training sessions on PSEAH.

*Inter-agency coordination and collaboration:*

15. UNOPS is part of the UN PSEA working group and is also a member of the UN PSEA Task Force led by the Office of the Special Coordinator (OSC), engaging regularly in their bi-weekly meetings. UNOPS' IAIG is a member of the UN Representatives of Investigative Services who collaborate on PSEAH issues and UNOPS works with the other agencies by participating in Clear Check to prevent SEAH offenders from being rehired. UNOPS is also collaborating with several UN agencies on training for PSEA focal points. Inter-agency coordination is also taking place at the regional and local levels. UNOPS reports all credible SEA allegations to the Secretary-General's iTracking system on a real time basis. This information, which includes case status and outcome, is publicly available.

*Increased financial resources and dedicated human resources for PSEAH for 2022:*

16. Additional resources are being considered and allocated to cover different PSEAH initiatives at corporate, regional, and local levels.

*Management Letter exercise:*

17. UNOPS senior leadership remains fully committed to ensuring that beneficiaries and personnel are afforded the appropriate protection against sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment. This commitment materializes in a written submission of the Management Letter on Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse to the Executive Board. As it is customary in UNOPS, our Executive Director will sign and submit the letter upon receipt of equivalent pledges from senior leaders across the organization.

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