PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 14

PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION (PSEA) AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT (SH)



14. Protection from Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (PSEA) and Sexual Harassment (SH)



Approaches requirements

14ai. Entity-wide Action Plan developed and implemented (or on track for implementation) based on risk assessments across the entity globally on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse using a victim-centered approach

and

14aii. Entity developed, disseminated, and implemented an entity-level protection sexual harassment measures using a victimcentred approach for their actions, in line with UN system standards and good practices



Meets requirements

14bi. Entity-wide Action Plan developed, resourced and implemented (or on track for implementation) based on risk assessments across the entity globally on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse using a victim-centered approacheeande 14bii. Entity developed, disseminated, and implemented an entity-level protection sexual harassment measures using a victimcentred approach for their actions, in line with UN system standards and good practices

and

14biii. Report on the PSEA actions taken provided to entity's governing body and the Office of the Special Coordinator on improving the UN response to sexual exploitation and abuse (OSCSEA)

and

14biv. Report on SH measures taken provided to the entity's governing body



Exceeds requirements

14ci. Entity-wide Action Plan developed, fully-funded and implemented based on risk assessments, across the entity globally on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse using a victim-centered approach

and

14cii. Entity developed, disseminated, and implemented an entity-level protection sexual harassment measures using a victimcentred approach for their actions, in line with UN system standards and good practices

and

14ciii. Report on the PSEA actions taken provided to entity's governing body and the Office of the Special Coordinator on improving the UN response to sexual exploitation and abuse (OSCSEA)

and

14civ. Report on the SH measures taken provided to the entity's governing body

and

14v. Update of progress achieved in the promotion of a lasting change in organizational culture, behavior and attitudes towards all forms of SEA and SH included in its annual report to entity's governing body



What is the Protection from SEA and SH indicator?

Protection from Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA)

Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) are rooted in power imbalances, often exacerbated by inequalities, particularly gender inequality. The <u>UN has recognized sexual exploitation and abuse as a system-wide challenge</u> that requires a unified and coordinated response. To address this, the UN collaborates with partners, communities, and member states to implement a harmonized, inclusive, and effective approach to preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse.

The UN aims to uphold high standards of conduct, ensuring that those responsible for sexual exploitation and abuse are held accountable, while also providing support and assistance to victims.

In 2003, the Secretary-General's issued a bulletin on special measures for protection from and sexual exploitation and abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13), which established the standards of conduct applicable to all personnel of the United Nations, including personnel of separately administered organs and programmes of United Nations system organizations. The UN Secretary General has emphasized the need for emphasising the need for a robust transformation in all aspects of our operations and resource allocations, with a focus on preventing sexual exploitation and abuse and promoting a "speak-up" culture within the Organization.

2024 Report of the Secretary-General on Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (HERE: <u>A/78/774</u>)

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) received 162 reports of sexual exploitation and abuse in 2023, an increase of 65 per cent from the 98 reports received in 2019.

The overall increase in reports of all types of misconduct received by OIOS was 28 per cent during the same period. In 2023, OIOS opened 130 investigations into complaints of sexual exploitation and abuse (up from 85 in 2022), 30 of which were being investigated jointly with national investigation officers from the respective troopand police-contributing countries.

In line with the new strategy (SMR 71/818), launched in 2017 the Secretary-General called on all Agencies, Funds, and Programmes to step up, adopting stronger measures to prevent, detect, report, and take decisive action against those who commit these abhorrent acts.

As part of his strategy, the Secretary-General has UN entities to adopt new measures and strengthen existing ones to better prevent, detect, report and take action against personnel, who commit these inexcusable and abhorrent acts. For PSEA, the strategy called for the development of action plans and submission of action plans by UN entities.

In 2019, the <u>United Nations Protocol on the Provision of Assistance to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse</u> (the 'Protocol') was endorsed by the United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Steering Group on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, as part of its commitment to advancing a UN systemwide approach to the support that is provided to victims of SEA. The Protocol puts forward a set of core principles, norms and operational measures to protect the rights and dignity of victims and improve our response and support for their needs. The Protocol outlines the accountability of all UN entities to ensure that appropriate assistance is promptly provided to victims of SEA, and the roles and responsibilities for doing so based on the existing UN and humanitarian architecture at country level.

United Nations Protocol on the Provision of Assistance to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse 12 December 2019

Victim assistance is the provision of services to individuals with needs directly arising from sexual exploitation or sexual abuse perpetrated by United Nations staff or related personnel. According to the Protocol [HERE]:

- The provision of safe, quality assistance is part of the accountability of the United Nations system in response to SEA.
- Every child and adult complainant or victim of sexual exploitation and abuse has the right to receive services
 irrespective of whether the victim cooperates with a United Nations or other investigation or accountability
 procedures, regardless of decisions by organizations or others to investigate the case and regardless of
 the outcome of an investigation.
- Victims are not required to identify the perpetrator or prove that they are victims of SEA to access services.

The Office of the Special Coordinator on Improving the UN response to sexual exploitation and abuse (OSCSEA)

Established in 2017, the main mandate of OSCSEA was to improve the UN's response to sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA). This office was tasked with several key responsibilities:

- 1. **Coordinating the UN's response** to SEA allegations, ensuring there was a unified and robust response across the organization.
- 2. **Supporting and strengthening systems and policies** within the UN to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse, including ensuring accountability for perpetrators.
- 3. **Improving assistance to victims** of sexual exploitation and abuse, with an emphasis on providing support for the survivors in a respectful, confidential, and victim-centered manner.
- 4. Advocacy and oversight of the implementation of measures designed to prevent and address SEA, including engaging with member states, UN agencies, and external stakeholders to reinforce the organization's commitment to combatting these issues.
- 5. **Reporting and transparency** on SEA incidents and improving the handling and processing of allegations to ensure accountability and deterrence.

Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

In 2007, the General Assembly adopted the <u>UN Comprehensive Strategy on Assistance and Support to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse</u>. It ensures coordinated aid for victims, covering medical care, psychosocial support, legal assistance, and basic needs like food, clothing, and shelter. The strategy applies to UN staff, consultants, volunteers, contractors, peacekeepers, and partner organization personnel.

In 2017, the Secretary-General established the role of the Victims' Rights Advocate (VRA) to ensure lasting support for victims of sexual exploitation and abuse across the UN system. The Victims' Rights Advocate collaborates with governments, civil society, and human rights organizations to build strong support networks and ensure that local laws provide meaningful remedies for victims.

Senior Victims' Rights Officers (SVROs) were appointed in 2016 to areas with high rates of sexual exploitation and abuse allegations. They ensure that victims are treated with respect, sensitivity, and compassion, and receive timely assistance. Senior Victims' Rights Officers also keep victims informed on their case status and support paternity and child support claims when children are born from these incidents.

In 2016, the Secretary-General established the <u>Trust Fund in Support of Victims of Sexual Exploitation</u> <u>and Abuse.</u> The Trust Fund has been instrumental in bridging service gaps by providing vital support to complainants, victims, and children born as a result of sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as fostering resilience through community outreach and targeted assistance programmes.

Addressing Sexual Harassment (SH)

Harassment of any type is antithetical to the principles of the UN, and sexual harassment undermines its credibility and degrades its staff. The Secretary-General and UN system leaders committed to a zero-tolerance approach to tackling sexual harassment, to strengthening victim-centred prevention and response efforts, and fostering a safe and inclusive working environment across the UN system.

In May 2018, CEB issued a CEB Statement on Addressing Sexual Harassment within the Organizations of the UN System in which UN system leaders unequivocally reiterate their firm commitment to upholding a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment. To realize these commitments, CEB established in November 2017 the CEB Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment within the organizations of the UN system ('Task Force'), to drive joint action in key priority areas. In November 2018, the CEB Task Force developed the Model Policy on sexual harassment to lead to the issuing of consistent and strengthened sexual harassment policies throughout the UN system. On 14 June 2023 the UN System-wide Knowledge Hub on Addressing Sexual Harassment was launched. This effort to strengthen collaboration and partnerships across the United Nations system to eliminate sexual harassment serves as a vital tool, consolidating resources, tools, and best practices from across the UN system to address sexual harassment. The Hub is available to all UN personnel, Member States, civil society, and the public, fostering transparency and accountability.

UN Secretary-General's Task Force on Sexual Harassment

Harassment of any type is antithetical to the principles of the UN, and sexual harassment undermines its credibility, denies the principles of non-discrimination on the basis of sex and gender, and degrades its staff. The Secretary-General and UN system leaders committed to a zero-tolerance approach to tackling sexual harassment, to strengthening victim-centred prevention and response efforts, and fostering a safe, equal and inclusive working environment across the UN system. To realize these commitments, the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) established in November 2017 the CEB Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment within the Organizations of the UN system ('Task Force').

"Sexual harassment results from a culture of discrimination and privilege, based on unequal gender relations and power dynamics. It has no place in the United Nations system. Leaders of UN System organizations reiterate their firm commitment to uphold a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment; to strengthen victim-centred prevention and response efforts; and to foster a safe and inclusive working environment."

CEB Statement on Addressing Sexual Harassment Within the Organizations of the UN System

Elements derived from the Gender Equality Acceleration Plan (GEAP)?

We have no tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment and put the rights and dignity of victims and survivors at the forefront of all prevention and response.

- ✓ A system-wide action plan for supporting victims' rights adopted by all entities to ensure that victim rights are consistently upheld, with a special emphasis on making sure personnel, partners and programme participants can access support in all locations.
- ✓ Working closely with the UN Office of the Victims' Rights Advocate, all leaders in every entity of the UN system will begin dissemination Q4 2023.
- ✓ An action plan for supporting victims' rights adopted by all entities by Q2 2024.
- ✓ UN entities to agree on resourcing of PSEA at country level. UN Women to work with RCs/HCs to provide oversight of this PSEA mechanism and ensure it is implemented with victims' rights at the centre.

- A small group working on technological solutions will be established under HLCM.
- ✓ All leaders will stay vigilant and take action against sexual harassment and everyday sexism.



Who are the business owners for this indicator

The adequate planning and reporting on PSEA and SH would be the primary responsibility of an entity's senior-most official responsible for human resources management, ethics or specialized body focused on PSEA and SH. For SEA all heads of entities and offices, along with RCs (at country level) are required to sign and submit a management letter.



What are the requirements for this indicator

There are **five key requirements** for this indicator that entities are asked to progressively achieve progress on during the UN-SWAP 3.0 period.

Requirement 1: Entities should have **developed and implemented, or be on track to implement**, a comprehensive, entity-wide Action Plan on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, using a victim-centered approach.

Requirement 2: Entity should have developed, disseminated, and implemented an entity-level protection sexual harassment measures, using a victim-centered approach.

Requirement 3: Entities should **report to their governing bodies** and OSCSEA on the PSEA actions taken.

Requirement 4: Entities should report to their governing bodies on the SH measures taken.

Requirement 5: Update of progress achieved in the promotion of a lasting change in organizational culture, behavior and attitudes towards all forms of SEA and SH included in its annual report to entity's governing body.

A more in-depth explanation of each requirement is provided below, clearly indicating what is required to select each rating. These explanations are accompanied by additional sections containing **useful resources** and **examples** to support you to determine your entity's rating.

Requirement 1: Action Plan on SEA developed, resourced and implemented

Approach requirements	14ai. Entities should have developed and implemented, or be on track to implement, based on risk assessments, an entity-wide Action Plan on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Protection from Sexual Harassment, using a victim-centered approach.
Meets requirements	14bi. Entities should have developed , resourced and implemented , or be on track to implement , based on risk assessments , an entity-wide Action Plan on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Protection from Sexual Harassment, using a victim-centered approach.

Exceed requirements	14ci. Entity-wide Action Plan developed, fully-funded and implemented based on risk assessments, an entity-wide Action Plan on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Protection from Sexual Harassment, using a victim-centered approach.
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To approach and meet for this indicator, entities are expected to demonstrate planned entity wide measures and victim-centered actions implemented to address SEA and SH across all its operations, programs, and locations. The actions should be holistic, covering prevention, response, and accountability. Importantly, it must prioritize the needs and rights of victims, ensuring that their safety, dignity, and access to support services are central.

To exceed requirements, implies that entities should not only have a comprehensive list of measures and actions but also identify specific risks related to SEA and SH in its work, environments, and populations served. The risk assessment should evaluate the likelihood and potential severity of SEA and SH occurring, based on factors such as the context of operations, vulnerability of affected populations, the behavior of staff or peacekeepers, and local challenges.

Requirement 2: Measures on SH developed, disseminated and implemented

Approach requirements	14aii., 14bii. and 14cii. Entity developed, disseminated, and implemented an entity-level protection sexual harassment measures using a victim-centred approach for their actions, in line with UN system standards and good practices
Meets requirements	
Exceed requirements	

Requirement 3 and 4: Report on the PSEA actions and SH measures taken

Approach requirements	N/A
Meets requirements	14bii. and 14cii. Report on the PSEA actions taken provided to entity's governing body and the OSCSEA
Exceed requirements	
Approach requirements	N/A
Meets requirements	14biv. and 14civ. Report on the SH measures taken provided to entity's governing body
Exceed requirements	

To meet and exceed requirements for this indicator, entities should ensure that a **report on the PSEA** actions and SH measures taken, is provided to the entity's governing body. Currently, Regional Coordinators, office heads are required to submit a management letter to the OSCSEA for PSEA on the actions taken.

In principle, this implies that entities are expected to take concrete actions to prevent and address SEA and SH and ensure that a report detailing these actions is regularly submitted to their governing bodies (such as the Executive Boards, senior leadership, or other equivalent oversight bodies).

The report should show concrete efforts beyond mere compliance, showcasing proactive steps taken to prevent SEA and SH, and ensuring there are measures in place for monitoring, evaluating, and improving the responses to these issues, including and not limited to:

- 1. **Accountability**: Entities must hold themselves accountable for their actions in preventing and responding to SEA and SH.
- 2. **Transparency**: Entities should be transparent about the progress and challenges in addressing SEA and SH, demonstrating clear actions taken and results achieved.
- Engagement with Governing Bodies: Governing bodies should be actively engaged in reviewing
 the reports and holding entities accountable, which may include providing guidance or requiring
 corrective measures if necessary.
- Commitment to Lasting Change: Entities must go beyond temporary solutions, demonstrating sustained and effective efforts to change organizational culture and address the root causes of SEA and SH within the UN system.

All <u>United Nations personnel are required to uphold the highest standards of conduct</u>, and the UN takes all reports of wrongdoing seriously. Sexual exploitation and abuse violate international standards and harm victims, and such acts are strictly prohibited. Personnel are strongly encouraged to report any instances of sexual exploitation and abuse they become aware of, with the option to do so anonymously. Reports will be handled confidentially and shared only with those who need to know.

The UN mandates that all staff or affiliated personnel report incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse. Retaliation for reporting such concerns should also be reported.

Requirement 5: Promotion of a lasting change in organizational culture

Approach requirements	N/A
Meet requirements	
Exceed requirements	14cv. Update of progress achieved in the promotion of a lasting change in organizational culture, behavior and attitudes towards all forms of SEA and SH included in its annual report to entity's governing body

To exceed the requirements for this indicator, entities must demonstrate tangible progress in fostering lasting changes in organizational culture, behavior, and attitudes towards all forms of SEA and SH, as outlined in their annual report to the governing body.

Meeting the minimum requirements for preventing SEA and SH is insufficient. To go beyond compliance, entities are expected to show measurable progress in driving positive, lasting changes in their organizational culture and attitudes toward SEA and SH. This requires more than just adherence to rules and regulations; it necessitates a sustained, deeper commitment to transforming how the organization addresses and prevents these issues.

Such progress should be clearly reflected in the entity's annual SEA and SH report, which must be submitted to its governing body or equivalent.



Evidence base

Annual Reports on SEA and SH.

- External Audits and Evaluations.
- Report and results of system-wide or entity surveys on SEA and SH, such as the Annual
 perceptions of personnel survey done by OSCSEA.
- Training and Capacity-Building reports and metrics.

 Policies and strategies providing guidance and standards for implementing, monitoring and reporting on SEA and SH, including on gender equality and human rights.



SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE: POLICIES AND PROTOCOLS

Secretary-General's Bulletins

- ST/SGB/2019/8 Addressing discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, and abuse of authority (10 September 2019)
- ST/SGB/2017/2/Rev.1 <u>Protection against retaliation for reporting misconduct and for cooperating with duly authorized audits or investigations</u> (28 November 2017)
- ST/SGB/2003/13 <u>Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual</u> abuse (9 October 2003)
- ST/SGB/2002/13 <u>Status</u>, <u>basic rights and duties of United Nations staff members 1</u> November 2002
- ST/SGB/2002/9 Regulations Governing the Status, Basic Rights and Duties of Officials other than Secretariat Officials, and Experts on Mission 18 June 2002
- ST/SGB/1999/13 Observance by United Nations forces of international humanitarian law 6
 August 1999

Standards of Conduct

- ST/Al/2017/1 <u>Unsatisfactory conduct, investigations and the disciplinary process</u> 26 October 2017
- Policy documents that incorporate the UN Standards of Conduct (CDU Website)

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE: TOOLS

Risk Management

- DMSPC Misconduct Risk Management Tools
- DMSPC/DPO Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Risk Management Toolkit
- Preparing a Joint SEA Risk Assessment Technical Note
- SEARO (https://psea.interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-sea-risk-overview-index)

Reference

- Comprehensive Assistance Strategy
- UN Glossary on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (English) (2nd Edition, 2017)
- UNSDG 2019 standard legal templates for UN inter-agency pooled funds (MOU, SAA, and Q&A) (link is accessible at mptf.undp.org/document/legal)
- <u>Military Aide Memoire: Commanders' guide on measures to combat Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in United Nations military</u>
- IASC PSEA website
- Rules on sexual conduct for humanitarian workers: IASC Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse [September 2019]

- IASC Learning Package on Protection from Sexual Misconduct for UN partner organizations
- Accountability Chart
- Reports:
 - West Africa Report (OIOS) A/57/465
 - Zeid Report A/59/710
 - o Group of legal Experts A/60/980
 - IASC 2010 Global Review of Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN, NGO, IOM and IFRC Personnel (2010 IASC Global Review of Protection from SEA.pdf)
 - CAR panel report A/71/99
 - IASC Global Report 2021 SEA and SH (IASCExternalReview GlobalReportPSEAH 2021.pdf)

SEXUAL HARASSMENT: POLICIES AND PROTOCOLS

- UN System Model Policy on Sexual Harassment
- UN System Code of Conduct
- CEB Statement on Addressing Sexual Harassment within the Organizations of the UN System
- A Victim-centred Approach to Sexual Harassment within the Organizations of the United Nations
- Overview CEB Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment within the organizations of the UN system ('Task Force'), <u>key priority areas and initiatives</u>

SEXUAL HARASSMENT: TOOLS

- Narrative report on the <u>results of the 2022 survey of UN system entities</u> on Reporting of Sexual Harassment in the UN System
- Launch: UN system-wide Knowledge Hub on Addressing Sexual HERE
- UN System-wide Knowledge Hub <u>HERE</u>
- UN System-Wide Training Module on the Rights and Dignity of Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment HERE



Action Plan on SEA and SH developed and implemented and reporting on the PSEA and SH actions taken

The **UN World Food Programme's (WFP)** approach to Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) prioritizes victims and aligns with the UN Secretary General's Bulletin on PSEA, which defines SEA as gross misconduct and grounds for termination.

- Ethics Office and PSEA Focal Points: The Ethics Office supports prevention measures across the organization, guiding over 300 PSEA focal points in regional and field offices. These focal points are responsible for raising awareness, supporting prevention efforts, and handling SEA reports, which are referred to WFP's Office of Inspections and Investigations.
- Cindy McCain's Role: Executive Director Cindy McCain serves as the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Champion on PSEA and SH through 2024. Her priorities include operationalizing a victim-survivor centered approach, promoting organizational culture change, and supporting capacity strengthening across the sector.

 Women's Advisory Group: This group provides independent expertise to advise on PSEA and SH priorities, with a focus on high-risk countries. The group emphasizes the importance of women-led NGOs and civil society organizations in guiding prevention efforts and victim/survivor support.

The **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** has a zero-tolerance policy for all forms of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (SEAH), whether perpetrated against recipients of assistance or coworkers. Such actions violate human rights and undermine the core values of the United Nations.

UNDP follows the UN Secretary-General's Bulletin on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13) and includes this in its Code of Ethics. Sexual harassment is addressed in the UNDP Policy on Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Discrimination, and Abuse of Authority.

Prevention

- UNDP conducts rigorous pre-employment checks to prevent the rehiring of known offenders, participating in the "Clear Check" system with other UN agencies to track individuals involved in substantiated cases of sexual misconduct.
- UNDP requires all personnel to take inter-agency online courses on preventing sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment, focusing on conduct expectations, consequences of misconduct, and its impact.

Response

- UNDP investigates all allegations of sexual misconduct, imposes sanctions when allegations are substantiated, and may refer cases for criminal prosecution.
- Staff members are not immune from prosecution for crimes, and the UN does not protect staff who commit such crimes.

Assistance and Protection

- UNDP staff members are protected from retaliation for reporting misconduct in good faith, and retaliation is a punishable offense.
- Victims of sexual misconduct receive psychosocial and medical assistance through UNDP's collaboration with partners.

Transparency

- UNDP publishes annual reports on disciplinary actions taken, including cases of sexual misconduct.
- Real-time reports and consolidated data on sexual exploitation and abuse are provided to the Office of the Special Coordinator and published in the Secretary-General's report on protection measures.

How to Report

 All allegations of sexual misconduct should be reported to the Office of Audit and Investigations.

Promotion of a lasting change in organizational culture

- Enhanced transparency on actions taken by the organisation against perpetrators of SEA and SH e.g. WHO
- Secretariat compendium of disciplinary measures
- Considering the interconnection between SEA and SH and the common underlying issues, (especially with discrimination and abuse of authority, etc.)

- all entities that have combined PSEAH policies/procedures to address SEA and SH.
 For example, UN Women, WHO, UNFPA, etc.
- UNICEF's new Safeguarding policy which brings under the same umbrella all
 misconduct that can cause harm to anyone (externally) that comes in contact with the
 UN (although, noticeably, this excludes SH)
- Coordinated safe reporting channels and avenues for personnel and communities, ensuring
 protection from retaliation (preferably coordinate inter-entity to ensure ease of reporting). For
 example, UNOPS developed AWAAZ in Afghanistan (also used for reporting all concerns with
 regards to sexual misconduct) used by PSEA network entities for SEA. Also, one-stop-shop
 portals/hotlines to report all misconduct. For e.g. Secretariat/OIOS, IOM, and many other.
- Dedicated capacity to support victims within entity. For e.g., IOM, WHO, etc.