

UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS Executive Board Annual session 2023

Background note on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) and Sexual Harassment (SH)

These background notes on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment have been prepared in response to decision 2022/2 of the Executive Board requesting an update on how each organization is improving its organizational culture to address all forms of sexual harassment, and its actions to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment in its policies, procedures, operations, and through improvement of organizational culture at headquarters, regional and country levels, at the annual session, starting in 2022, and asks that this includes analysis of their implementation of system-wide initiatives, including the Implementing Partners Protocol, the Implementing Partner Capacity Assessment and Clear Check.

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

1. UNDP is pleased to provide an update on progress achieved on preventing and addressing SH and SEA in 2022 including the results of our annual PSEAH survey. The results of this survey have been taken into account in our new Strategy and Action Plan, 2023-2024 which was prepared by UNDP's corporate Taskforce on the Prevention of SH and SEA (the Taskforce) and approved by the Executive Group of the Administrator in April 2023. A copy of the Action Plan is attached at Annex 1 as requested by EB decision 2022/2, paragraph 7.

Overview of progress achieved in 2022

2. In 2022, UNDP continued implementing its second UNDP Strategy and Action Plan, 2021-2022, focusing on the four critical areas of prevention, reporting and response, support to victims/survivors and accountability. The Strategy includes four main objectives:

- i. to reduce the incidence of SH and SEA being committed in the first place
- ii. to ensure that once we have a case, that it is dealt with quickly and effectively
- iii. to ensure that proper safeguards are embedded into all UNDP's operations and programmes
- iv. to minimize SH and SEA risks.

3. At the centre of this work is our commitment to the well-being and protection of victims and survivors and the strict accountability of perpetrators.

4. In parallel, all Country Offices and HQ Business Units are mandated to put in place their own SH and SEA Action Plans which reflect these corporate priorities and objectives. These 'local' Action Plans provide a critical tool to bring together personnel around a shared understanding and approach and to hold our offices and personnel accountable. In 2022, 100% of UNDP Bureaus and Offices had developed and implemented these Action Plans in line with a common template to ensure proper alignment with corporate priorities. The guidance and template for the 2023 Action Plan has now been revised to reflect the results of the 2022 PSEAH survey and the priorities of the 2023-2024 Strategy and Action Plan.

5. To take stock of progress achieved at the country level in 2022 and to guide the next Strategy and Action Plan, UNDP ran its annual survey of our Country Offices' response to SH and SEA. 130 Country Offices participated – our highest response so far. The results of the survey – including individual Country Office reports – have been shared with all the Regional Bureaus for Country Offices to follow up on the results.

Following are some of the key results of the survey which have already been taken into account in our 2023-2024 Strategy and Action Plan.

Levels of awareness of SH and SEA standards

6. The results of the annual survey show a very high level of awareness across all personnel in the organization which is important in terms of prevention. 97% of those who responded confirm that UNDP leadership is actively involved in SEA prevention work; for example, many PSEAH Focal Points are given direct access to the Resident Representative (RR) on all PSEAH issues and many RRs regularly issue information resources on sexual misconduct, raise the issue at all staff meetings and enforce mandatory training; 100% confirm that UNDP personnel are well informed about SEA standards and know what to do when something happens both in terms of reporting and accessing support, for example, some Country Offices undertook their own internal surveys to review staff awareness of the policies and reporting mechanisms; others integrated a special PSEAH segment in their induction processes for new staff. These results correlate with the results of the external survey from the UN Office of the Special Coordinator on facts and perceptions of UN personnel related to the prohibitions of SEA. For example, 94% of the respondents agreed that UNDP takes action to raise awareness among UN staff and related personnel to prevent SEA. 96% believed it is their responsibility to report an act of SEA by a colleague from UNDP, while 93% believed it was their responsibility to report an act of SEA by an individual employed by another UN entity, UN affiliated peacekeeping personnel, a UN implementing partner, supplier or vendor.

7. At the end of 2022, 86% of UNDP personnel had completed their mandatory training on SH and SEA. We will continue to promote our mandatory courses but in addition, in 2023, the Taskforce will roll out a series of webinars across the whole organization to again raise the profile of the issue and provide guidance and support to all personnel. Taking into account the results of the 2022 survey, these webinars will include a continuing focus on the mechanisms and tools for reporting and accessing support, both for victim/survivors and witnesses of sexual misconduct; provide guidance on working with implementing partners including undertaking capacity assessments and, provide advice and training on how best to support local populations on SH and SEA. In addition, a new interactive training course which uses innovative gamification methodology and behaviour change insights will be launched in 2023.

8. On SEA, 72 Country Offices reported that they had taken action to raise awareness among local populations that UNDP works with and supports to help them understand UNDP SEA standards, prevention measures and local reporting mechanisms. Examples include reminding project staff of their SEA obligations during field visits and disseminating leaflets or using local radio stations to inform local communities. In addition, 76 Country Offices reported that they had organized discussions with at least 50% of their Implementing Partners (IPs) on our standards on sexual misconduct. Examples of activities include training local CSOs on UNDP's norms and standards (do no harm; codes of conduct, addressing harassment etc) and partnering with the private sector to promote zero tolerance in the workplace. While we are seeing progress in these areas we need to do more. Activities to broaden our reach and further strengthen our engagement with IPs and local populations are prioritised in our new Strategy and Action Plan.

9. 126 of our 130 Country Offices now have dedicated PSEAH Focal Points in place to help raise awareness and drive forward action in this area. Most have clear Terms of Reference and access to resources. Many have established links with their gender experts/gender teams recognizing the strong links with work on gender-based violence. Training and retraining these focal points will be prioritized by the Taskforce in 2023. In addition, there are now 40 Country Offices participating in the Respectful Workplace Facilitators programme with a total 66 facilitators. This joint programme in partnership with the Ombudsman's office is now in its third year. The RWFs provide guidance and support to individual personnel in navigating available resources as well as ensuring a safe and confidential space to discuss issues and concerns. The RWFs have handled a total of 94 cases to date – showing a growing level of trust in the programme. The

Ombudsman Office continues to receive additional requests from Country Offices and offices in Headquarters to participate in this initiative.

Reporting, investigating and response

10. UNDP's systems and processes for responding to sexual harassment through our internal justice system are well established, in line with best practice, and are well known to UNDP personnel as shown by the results in the annual survey. We will continue to raise the profile of these reporting mechanisms across the organization and in particular with new personnel.

11. UNDP's Office of Audit and Investigation (OAI) has three dedicated sexual misconduct investigators and explicitly prioritizes all SH and SEA cases taking an average of 6 months for investigations to be completed. We also have 3 in-house counsellors to provide personnel with dedicated and confidential support. All sexual misconduct cases are tracked through UNDP's confidential case management system and reported to the UNDP Associate Administrator and Administrator. OAI's Annual Report to the Executive Board includes an overview of all sexual misconduct cases and their outcomes. When complaints of sexual misconduct involve Implementing Partner (IP) personnel, UNDP refers them to the respective Country Office to manage as per our IP agreements and UNDP's own rules and guidelines, and provides advice and support as required.

12. In 2022, OAI received 31 allegations of sexual misconduct (16 SH, 12 SEA and 3 sexual assault). As of April 2023, OAI received 9 reports (6 SH, 3 SEA, and 0 sexual assault). Of the 40 cases opened over 2022-2023, 20 were closed after assessment, 7 were unsubstantiated after investigation and closed, 2 were referred to the Office of Legal Services, 10 are still under investigation and 1 is under assessment. In 2022 OAI substantiated 7 cases (5 from 2021 and 2 from 2022). In 2022, where the victims/survivors of sexual misconduct were identified, all were female, and all the alleged perpetrators were male. In 2023, of the 9 reports received so far, there are 8 female and 1 male victims/survivors. UNDP has placed 13 names in Clear Check since its launch in 2018. As appropriate, cases of SEA are passed to national authorities for further investigation and action.

13. As it is now almost 5 years since the launch of the Taskforce, OAI will do a detailed review of the 141 reports received over that period to understand what this data is telling us in terms of trends and impact to learn lessons and further inform our approach going forward. We already know for example, that a contributing factor when cases are closed during the initial assessment period is because victims/survivors choose to withdraw their complaint – including because they are scared about their own safety and security, or are concerned about stigma, or fear that retaliation may lead to loss of employment. We need to understand these trends better to enhance the psychological safety victims/survivors need in taking these allegations through to the end, both to give them closure but also to deal with the perpetrators.

Addressing SEA

14. Preventing and addressing incidences of SEA perpetrated against members of the communities that UNDP works with, and supports is especially important – and also highly challenging, especially where we work through implementing partners and responsible parties.

15. A key area of work in 2022 around reporting and response – in line with UNDP's new Integrated Results and Resources Framework (IRRF) indicators on SH and SEA - was to make sure that our Country Offices had effective reporting and support systems in place to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse of local populations. The results of our survey indicate that: 100% of Country Offices had informed all personnel of our standards on SEA including the SG's Bulletin. In addition 76 Country Offices had organized discussions with at least 50% of their Implementing Partners on meeting UNDP standards with regards to SEA including on reporting and response; 70 Country Offices confirmed that they had a reporting mechanism in place for local communities to report SEA allegations and 85 Country Offices reported that

they had identified local victim/survivor support providers to assist victims/survivors of SEA– for example, psycho social, legal or medical support.

16. Again, while we continue to see progress in these areas on SEA, we need to do more, and these are areas of focus in our new Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2024. For example, the Taskforce has developed a new Guidance Note to be rolled out in 2023 on assessing the capacity of Implementing Partners to tackle SH and SEA with a package of resources to support IPs, as appropriate, to address any identified gaps. Again, this will be part of our dedicated training in 2023.

Interagency collaboration

17. UN collaboration around SH and SEA at the country level is impressive with examples of UNDP participating in joint UN PSEA Action Plans or joint standard operation procedures for reporting and addressing allegations. 118 COs confirmed that there is a UN PSEA Network in place of which 102 of these Networks meet frequently. 111 Networks have clear workplans and 46 have a dedicated budget. While predominantly UN-based, many PSEA networks include representatives of NGOs, government entities and other partners and 103 of these Networks report directly to the UN Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator. In addition to being part of the inter-agency Networks, 105 UNDP Country Offices have their own UNDP-specific mechanism to take forward their annual Country Office SH and SEA Action Plans. 92 of these UNDP specific mechanisms report directly to the Resident Representative or Deputy Resident Representative – showing the strong commitment and leadership of UNDP senior management on this issue.

18. At the corporate HQ level, UNDP participates in the CEB High-Level Committee for Management (HLCM) Working Group on SH, and the UN PSEA Task Force led by the UN Office of the Special Coordinator (OSC). We are also members of various technical working groups, e.g., the working group on IPs. UNDP continues to use common mechanisms and tools such as the Clear Check database which is the interagency database that includes names of perpetrators of SH and SEA to prevent them from being rehired. UNDP also uses the iReport SEA Tracker, which is the UN system-wide reporting mechanism. We also take into account UN wide standards in our policies and guidelines, for example, the Model Policy on response to SH and the various protocols including those on implementing partners and victim support. We actively share resources, e.g., trainings and best practices, with our sister agencies.

Ensuring accountability

19. At the end of 2022, the Administrator issued the annual management letter to the Executive Board and UN Secretary General confirming that UNDP had met its key obligations in relation to preventing and addressing sexual misconduct. However, the Administrator can only issue this management letter once he has received formal confirmations from each Head of Bureau and Office that they – and all personnel under their direct responsibility – have also met their key obligations. Again, this was done in 2022. In this way, all personnel of UNDP are called to account.

20. All ASGs have a Compact with the Administrator. This compact includes a mandatory objective on building an inclusive working culture that is free from discrimination and exploitation and abuse. In addition, all UNDP supervisors and managers have a mandatory effective people management goal on promoting diversity and inclusiveness in UNDP, including tackling all forms of discrimination and harassment.

21. 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”.

22. UNDP also provides input to the UN Office of Legal Affairs for the Secretary-General's annual report on "Criminal accountability of United Nations officials and experts on mission," which includes reporting on sexual misconduct cases referred to national authorities.

Monitoring results and assessing impact

23. UNDP's report to the First Regular Session of the Executive Board 2023 provided details of the mechanisms we use to monitor and measure results including through our IRRF indicators, the mandatory outputs in our Integrated Work Plans; tracking mandatory training statistics and reports of sexual misconduct allegations and through various surveys. The purpose of the annual PSEAH survey is to ensure that the key elements of the corporate strategy and action plan are being implemented. Now in its third year, the survey has provided a rich source of data on progress including identifying those areas where we need to do more. Added to this, UNDP's global staff survey provides important additional data on those people that choose not to report and the reasons why.

24. Ensuring that proper safeguards are embedded into all UNDP's operations and programmes is critical. SH and SEA are included in our enterprise risk management (ERM) system. In 2022, 56 Country Offices confirmed that they had assessed SEA risks for at least 50% of their programmes and projects and reflected SEA risks in the relevant risk logs. This is an area of focus in our new Strategy and Action plan. To support our Country Offices, the Taskforce is finalizing a new SH and SEA Risk Framework to support their efforts to properly identify SH and SEA risks in programmes/projects and put in place relevant mitigation measures.

New Strategy and Action Plan and Priorities for 2023-2024

25. The new Strategy and Action Plan 2023-24 maintains the key focus areas and objectives from the previous plan as detailed in para 1. However, taking into account the results of the survey, renewed focus will be given to:

- a) outreach to local communities with a particular focus on community-based reporting systems and local support services for victims/survivors of SEA
- b) outreach to and support for implementing partners/responsible parties with a particular focus on raising awareness, capacity assessments and capacity building
- c) Effective identification of risks and putting in place timely risk mitigation measures in projects and programmes

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

Since the previous update to the Executive Board in February 2023, UNFPA has persistently implemented its survivor/victim-centered Strategy on Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) in accordance with the 2023 action plan. This action plan, attached herewith, outlines several tangible objectives, quantifiable activities and results across the four strategic pillars of UNFPA:

- (1) Effective prevention of SEAH by staff and partners;
- (2) Prompt, organized, and survivor/victim-centered responses to each incident;
- (3) High-quality assistance and support for SEAH victims; and
- (4) Comprehensive incorporation of measures within a strong institutional safeguarding framework.

UNFPA continues to work towards greater impact and effectiveness in countries of intervention and to foster an organizational culture that empowers people and communities to speak up for themselves and others. In these efforts, UNFPA prioritizes the rights and dignity of victims and ensures that all stakeholders and offenders are held accountable.

The 2023 PSEAH priorities were developed with attention to delivering impact in countries and taking into feedback from PSEA focal points and key stakeholders across the organization, as well as the strategic priorities of Member States and inter-agency efforts. All programmed activities are progressing as planned, engaging key UNFPA stakeholders at headquarters and in regional and country offices.

1. Institutional safeguarding framework

Effective In-country PSEA structures

In 2022, UNFPA developed and introduced a technical training programme for its network of over 250 PSEA focal points. The training, available in English, French and Spanish, comprises six modules addressing key PSEA processes and focal points' responsibilities:

- (1) SEA risk management;
- (2) Assessing implementing partners (IPs);
- (3) Communication and awareness raising;
- (4) Inter-agency coordination;
- (5) SEA case management; and
- (6) Support for SEA survivor/victims.

Regional and country offices also received bilateral advisory assistance. An in-person workshop with regional PSEA focal points was held in August 2022 to discuss the requirements for further PSEA implementation and ensuring the PSEA function's fitness for purpose.

The workshop's conclusions informed the 2023 PSEAH workplan. Building on the technical training programme, UNFPA continues to strengthen organizational capacity and communication. The 2023 activities include increased engagement with senior managers to visibly mobilize them for PSEAH, development of a PSEA handbook for practitioners, a series of training-of-trainers sessions for PSEA focal points to better equip them for conducting awareness-raising activities within their offices and with affected populations, development of a new PSEAH intranet for enhanced communication and knowledge sharing, and an updated training programme providing more opportunities for field experience sharing.

The first session of this training programme focused on raising awareness of SEA among personnel, partners and affected populations, disseminating new resources from the IOM, WFP and Translators without Borders campaign on 'PSEA at the frontline'.

The terms of reference for PSEA focal points have been revised to clarify responsibilities and strengthen this vital role within the safeguarding framework.

Country-focused interagency collaboration

UNFPA leads several initiatives under the IASC PSEAH strategy for 2022-2026 and supports the new Champion, SCHR (International Civil Society Organization Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response), in advancing key priorities.

UNFPA continues to manage the rosters of inter-agency PSEA coordinators, replenished in 2022, and lead inter-agency PSEA networks, with full-time and part-time coordinators in nine IASC priority countries. UNFPA is also working with the IASC and NORCAP on implementing the new "PSEAcap" modality for deploying PSEA coordinators in high-risk humanitarian contexts.

In accordance with its strategy to operationalize a survivor/victim-centered approach to PSEAH, the IASC is forming an expert panel tasked with conducting research and consultations, assessing the effectiveness of current standards,

policies and practices governing SEAH investigations, and ensuring they are effective, survivor/victim-centered and trauma-informed. UNFPA will coordinate and support the expert panel's activities.

Implementing partner assessments

UNFPA is continuing to operationalize the IP protocol by ensuring all new partners are assessed for PSEA prior to selection, with the exception of partners engaged in humanitarian response. In such cases, partners will be assessed at the earliest possible opportunity. UNFPA continues to assess existing partners and aims to assess at least 95 per cent of its partners by the end of 2023.

UNFPA continues to take an active lead in the global inter-agency IP Protocol working group to ensure coordinated operationalization of the protocol. The working group expanded in 2023 as a result of outreach and active engagement with the Office of the Special Coordinator on improving the United Nations response to SEA. UNFPA co-led, with WFP, two sessions on the IP protocol at the request of the Special Coordinator's Office for the PSEA community. UNFPA is leading the development and roll-out of the PSEA module of the UN Partner Portal, which will facilitate sharing assessment findings and jointly developing and monitoring capacity strengthening implementation plans for shared partners. The launch was delayed until May/June due to the portal's complexities. As part of the inter-agency working group, UNFPA is actively contributing to developing a joint approach for operationalizing the IP protocol for government partners, including adapting the common assessment tool.

In 2022, UNFPA undertook a review of the operationalization of the protocol. The review's data established a baseline for monitoring the effectiveness and impact of UNFPA implementation and trends in improving partner capacity. The report found relatively strong compliance with the internal policy of UNFPA, despite not all partners being assessed before selection. It also discovered uneven scoring quality in partner assessments, indicating a need for further PSEA focal point training. Regarding partner capacity, results showed that partners often lacked reporting channels, appropriate investigation procedures and survivor/victim assistance referral systems. Consequently, UNFPA will continue building the capacity of partners and sharing resources in these areas.

UNFPA remains dedicated to collaborating with other United Nations entities to operationalize the IP protocol in a coordinated manner.

Risk management

UNFPA continues to support developing PSEA risk registers in country and regional offices and disseminating the guidance and practical tools developed in 2022. Recommendations for designing safer programmes will also be communicated to UNFPA programme managers, particularly regarding cash contributions.

Monitoring and measuring progress and results

UNFPA has established indicators to monitor compliance and progress on PSEAH throughout the organization.

In line with the 2020 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR), the QCPR 2021-2024 monitoring framework PSEA indicator, and indicators of other United Nations development system agencies, a dedicated PSEAH indicator is included in the Integrated Results and Resources Framework (IRRF) of the UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2022-2025.

To obtain a more refined view of PSEA internal activities and inter-agency engagement in regions and countries, UNFPA will introduce a new monitoring and reporting framework in 2023. This framework will comprise indicators for business units to report on a quarterly basis. This new report will also identify best practices, gaps, challenges and support needs.

2. Prevention

Screening - Clear Check

UNFPA continued to screen all new recruits in Clear Check for previous involvement in sexual misconduct and added four new subjects to the database in 2022. UNFPA also participated in and supported inter-agency discussions to expand the Clear Check platform's use to include other forms of misconduct.

Speak-up organizational culture

In 2021, UNFPA conducted a survey to gather personnel perspectives on how the organization addresses prohibited workplace conduct. Results showed high awareness of rights and responsibilities, knowledge of where to turn when issues arise and how to report. However, the survey also revealed a lack of trust in reporting and response mechanisms. In response, UNFPA is working to strengthen its speak-up culture through (a) improved prevention and early resolution, and (b) increased trust in existing response mechanisms.

The UNFPA Integrity Group, which includes PSEAH, the Office of the Executive Director (OED), the Division for Human Resources, the Legal Unit, the Office of Audit and Investigation Services (OAIS), the Ethics Office and the Office of the Ombudsman, coordinates a comprehensive action plan with the following key initiatives:

(a) Transparent communication. A series of all-personnel webinars is planned to discuss formal and informal resolution mechanisms, present support services available to victims and affected individuals and examine obstacles to reporting in UNFPA offices. The first webinar, held in April 2023, presented a roadmap for handling formal complaints of sexual harassment and prohibited conduct. A new one-stop online portal providing user-friendly access to informal and formal justice systems of UNFPA has been launched.

(b) Capacity building. The "Impactful Conflict Management for Leaders" training programme, mandatory for all UNFPA senior managers and delivered in partnership with the Office of the Ombudsman, is ongoing. New training programmes and resources will also be developed to encourage early intervention, particularly focusing on the role and responsibilities of bystanders. The online courses on PSEA and on sexual harassment and other forms of prohibited conduct remain mandatory for new personnel.

(c) Support and assistance to affected individuals. UNFPA expanded its mental health and well-being team and in February 2023 introduced six regional counsellors, dedicated to promoting the psychological health and well-being of UNFPA personnel and contributing to a healthy work environment.

(d) Progress measurement and continuous improvement. UNFPA will continue to measure progress over time, including through global staff surveys and the CEB survey on sexual harassment, and will carry out data-driven prevention.

3. Response

UNFPA continues to report all allegations of SEA in the United Nations public tracker and share information on SEA allegations in-country with the senior-most United Nations official. Joint training sessions will be delivered with the UNFPA Office of Audit and Investigation Services (OAIS) to all PSEA focal points to enhance reporting and share information on the investigation process.

In the first quarter of 2023, OAIS received three allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, which all implicate implementing partner personnel, and three allegations of sexual harassment. These reports are under preliminary assessment or investigation.

4. Assistance

UNFPA rolled out the United Nations Protocol on Assistance to Victims of SEA in 2022. PSEA focal points continue to be active in country PSEA networks to ensure that mappings of services are established, gender-based violence and child protection referral pathways are integrated into PSEA procedures and collaboration with the GBV Area of Responsibility is effective.

In 2023, UNFPA continues to implement two projects funded by the Secretary-General Trust Fund in Support of Victims of SEA, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan. These projects aim to provide holistic support for victims of SEA and populations at risk in humanitarian hubs presenting high risks of SEA.

III. Update by the United Nations Office of Project Services (UNOPS)

Introduction

Since its last comprehensive update to the Executive Board in January 2023, UNOPS has continued implementing its survivor/victim-centered Strategy on Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) under the action plan for 2023.

This annual action plan, annexed hereto, sets out a number of concrete objectives, measurable activities and results across the four objectives for UNOPS: (1) effective policy oversight; (2) victim's rights to assistance; (3) victim-centered investigations; and (4) SEAH risk management. All programmed activities are progressing as planned.

Policy and entity oversight

UNOPS has been able to implement a number of key elements this year. Most importantly, key personnel are now on board, including the PSEAH Corporate Coordinator, and the Victim Support Specialist. Retainer pools of PSEAH experts are being recruited to support regional and country offices to implement various activities in their action plans. These experts will be in place to support UNOPS operational and strategic support at all levels, including helping country offices to roll out training and conducting various risk assessments.

As expressed during the First Session in January 2023, UNOPS has also implemented new metrics to measure progress on PSEAH. One new indicator has been included in the headquarters' quarterly business review on PSEAH. The indicator looks at the percentage of UNOPS units that have a PSEAH Action Plan in place. Our PSEAH Corporate Coordinator is rolling out guidance and training to regional and country offices to ensure Action Plans are responsive, feasible and properly resourced.

UNOPS has also included three separate indicators in the strategic results framework to be measured annually. These are:

- Percentage of HQ units, multi-country and country offices that have a PSEAH Action Plan
- Percentage of UNOPS personnel having received an annual PSEAH training
- Percentage of UNOPS personnel who feel that if they reported a case of misconduct, the agency would take appropriate action

As requested by the Executive Board in 2022, we are also increasing efforts to ensure that those who are responsible for areas of the PSEAH strategy and Action plan have the right skills, knowledge and tools to do so. In February and March of 2023, UNOPS launched its first series of general training on PSEAH for personnel in regional and multi-country offices. This training builds upon the mandatory training and dives deeper into the specific requirements each office and team within UNOPS has in our fight against SEAH. This training will continue to be rolled out across all UNOPS operations to reach 100 per cent of personnel receiving refresher training in 2023.

UNOPS also expects to train all PSEAH Focal Points in a new training in 2023. A specific training aimed at PSEAH Focal Points was launched in March 2023. 100 percent of Focal Points will be trained in 2023 on their specific roles and responsibilities as they relate to PSEAH. The training includes an overview, information about how to receive allegations, how to implement UNOPS risk assessments and how to operationalize the Global Strategy through the development and implementation of the local context Action Plan. The response to these training sessions has so far been very positive.

To support our Focal Points further, UNOPS has developed performance indicators for them to ensure this role is given the requisite time and dedication as well as to provide them with an opportunity to receive feedback and recognition from management. This is important as we establish PSEAH as a core requirement in all offices and teams. One hundred per cent of Focal Points will be expected to have PSEAH-specific objectives in their performance plan moving forward.

The Interdivisional PSEAH Task Force continues to meet to support the implementation of the Corporate Action Plan. A main focus of 2023 in the Task Force has been to share best practices across regions and business units. In further establishing the PSEAH Task Force, terms of reference for the group have been validated.

In line with the requests of the Executive Board, UNOPS is putting into place a number of different measures to ensure that leadership at all levels continue to be aware of their responsibilities in preventing sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment. In 2023, UNOPS developed a micro-module for new leaders on PSEAH. This is also available to existing leaders who wish to expand their knowledge on the topic. In 2023, UNOPS will also for the first time establish a PSEAH Action Plan for business units at the corporate level. These Action Plans will focus on leadership responsibility in creating enabling environments and raising awareness on prevention and reporting of SEAH.

In response to the Board's request for an analysis on the use of Clear Check, UNOPS was one of the first organizations of the UN system to implement Clear Check, on 1 April 2019. In 2022 the following checks were performed:

- For UNOPS ICAs, 6,263 SEA Clear Checks have been performed.
- For UNOPS Staff Members, 136 SEA Clear Checks have been performed.

We continue to be diligent in recording relevant information in the system and are committed to joining inter-agency efforts to strengthen the system and limit human error, as its reliability is dependent on the effective and timely reporting of cases by participating organizations.

Victims' right to assistance

UNOPS takes note of the Board's request to continue to take action to ensure a victim/survivor-centered, system-wide and coherent approach. In January 2023, UNOPS onboarded a new Victim Support Specialist to coordinate support to victims and ensure they are fully informed and supported before, during and beyond the investigation period as needed. To date, the support provided has been remote counseling and referrals to in-country medical and psychosocial support in collaboration with UN partners. The Specialist will be supporting administrative justice units in ensuring their standard operating procedures and processes align with the principles of the victim-centered approach. UNOPS is also updating its internal policy on victim protection to ensure any person making a report of SEAH is properly safeguarded and referred to the rights services as necessary.

UNOPS is in the process of providing capacity to PSEAH focal persons on the victim-centered approach and the importance of providing victims with context-specific support to cater to their immediate needs. UNOPS is furthermore mapping the service provision in its areas of operation, to ensure that assistance rendered is both age and need appropriate and follows already established standard operating procedures in each country. Further to ensure coherence UNOPS is working closely with the UN system's Office of the Victim Rights Advocate to ensure that it adopts best practices in engaging and assisting victims.

Investigations

In 2022, UNOPS Internal Audit and Investigations Group (IAIG) received 17 complaints involving allegations of sexual misconduct, out of which it opened 12 cases.

Three cases related to sexual exploitation and abuse. One case was found to be unsubstantiated and one was substantiated. The third one was outside of IAIG's mandate and was referred to the appropriate body. In addition, IAIG received two allegations of sexual assault. One case was found to be unsubstantiated while the other was substantiated. All cases of sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual assault were reported to the Office of the Secretary-General, which makes these publicly available.

IAIG opened seven cases of sexual harassment in 2022. It closed five cases, three of which were substantiated. The two other cases were outside of IAIG's mandate and were referred to the appropriate body.

In line with the UNOPS victim-centric approach, IAIG prioritizes cases of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment with specially trained investigators and shortened case durations. It also ensures that appropriate victim support services are provided.

By the end of 2022, IAIG had closed 10 of the 12 cases of sexual misconduct, after an average duration of 89 days. The two cases still open at the end of the year had both been open for less than two months.

In 2022, IAIG continued to provide support to senior management in relation to protection against sexual exploitation and abuse. It co-chairs the UNOPS Working Group on Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, supporting management's implementation of many initiatives of the Secretary-General. For example, as the investigative body, IAIG is responsible for reporting to the Office of the Secretary-General all allegations where there is sufficient information to identify an act of sexual exploitation and abuse by an identifiable perpetrator or against an identifiable victim. These include allegations related to both UNOPS personnel and personnel working for its implementing partners. These statistics are then made publicly available on a real-time basis.

In addition, IAIG participated in a briefing on the responsibilities of regional authorities regarding sexual misconduct investigations, together with UNOPS new Corporate Coordinator for Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment. IAIG also continued to provide guidance to local offices on an ad hoc basis.

IAIG helps management facilitate the participation of UNOPS in Clear Check, an inter-agency screening tool set up to prevent the hiring and rehiring of offenders. All personnel recruited by UNOPS are run through Clear Check. IAIG also reports current or former UNOPS personnel who were dismissed due to substantiated allegations of sexual harassment or sexual exploitation and abuse, or who left the organization with a pending investigation or disciplinary case. In 2022, IAIG also responded to 12 Clear Check verification requests from other United Nations agencies.

IAIG continues its close coordination with other United Nations agencies on these issues, through its membership in the UN Representatives of Investigation Services (UNRIS) and by attending conferences organized by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the United Nations Chief Executives Board Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment in the organizations of the United Nations system.

Risk management

UNOPS continues to implement various risk management tools to identify risks in our project implementation and identify mitigation strategies. The first tool kit being rolled out systematically across our operations is the Health, Safety, Social and Environmental Safeguards (HSSE) PSEAH Tool Kit. As

part of the HSSE management system, certain PSEAH requirements are mandatory for all projects including a risk assessment. All infrastructure projects are then required to include certain PSEAH activities such as providing site workers with induction on basic PSEAH expectations and signing a Code of Conduct. This toolkit also contains additional material that can be used by projects to perform more extensive activities for the prevention of SEAH.

UNOPS takes note of the Executive Board's interest in receiving an analysis of UNOPS implementation of the Implementing Partners Protocol as well as the Implementing Partner Capacity Assessment. The assessments of implementing partners are progressing as planned. UNOPS has a comprehensive global capacity-building plan being rolled out in Q2 to ensure all personnel responsible for conducting the assessments are adequately trained. It is expected that UNOPS will be in full compliance with the Protocol by the end of June 2023.
