

Updates on UNOPS activities for the Prevention of Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse

Spring 2020, UNOPS

Independent review of Sexual Harassment (SH) and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) by Deloitte

- Independent review on SH and PSEA by Deloitte with UNDP and UNFPA was conducted in Q1 2019 and the following actions have been implemented to follow their recommendations throughout 2019.
 - UNOPS launched a public webpage dedicated to PSEA.
 - IAIG strengthened the system to allow individuals to make complaints by creating an online reporting tool/portal. This is open to reports of any type of wrongdoing including Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) and SH.
 - The Corporate Task Force covering SEA shared the corporate PSEA action plan and guided Regional Management & Oversight Advisors regarding the monitoring of the implementation of the regional and local action plans for PSEA. The NY office, Asia Regional Office have established their respective regional action plan for PSEA. The UNOPS offices in South Sudan and Myanmar have established their respective country action plans for PSEA.
 - A corporate action plan for the Prevention of SH has been distributed to the country offices identified as high-risk duty stations as a result of the UN Safe Space survey to assist these offices with the creation of their respective local action plans. The UNOPS offices in Afghanistan and South Sudan have established a country action plan for the Prevention of SH.
 - UNOPS adopted a new enterprise risk management system. UNOPS risk categories are embedded into the system and include SEA/SH as one of the relevant categories.
 - A misconduct risk management toolkit and a SEA risk management toolkit have been circulated to the regional offices through the Management & Oversight Advisors.

Prevention and Communication

- Since 2018, every January, UNOPS Executive Director submits to the Executive Board a Management Letter where she assumes personal accountability regarding UNOPS prevention and response efforts against SEA. In 2020, our country directors or equivalent participated in this exercise with regional directors and HQ directors to sign an equivalent Management Letter to assume personal accountability regarding taking appropriate action to prevent and respond to SEA cases within their areas of responsibility. UNOPS has 74 leaders who have made this commitment and this increases awareness of the area and their personal responsibility as well as an

organisation certification. Based on the assurance from the certifications submitted, the UNOPS Executive Director submitted her Management Letter on 30 January 2020.

- Effective 1 January 2019, the online course “Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN Personnel” is mandatory for all personnel. The completion rate of the online course is 74.58 % inclusive of all personnel as of 20 March 2020. The following offices/units have the completion rate of 100%: Columbia, Saint Lucia, Cambodia, Philippines, Laos, and Bangkok Shared Service Centre.
- PSEA awareness-raising posters were created, translated into French, Spanish, and Arabic, and distributed to the field offices to display in the office during 2019.
- UNOPS has fully implemented the use of the Clear Checks pre-employment screening tool in 2019, verifying that no letter of appointment is issued or ICA contract is awarded to an individual not fitting the standards set by the UN system regarding SH and SEA.
- PSEA ‘No Excuse’ card has been prepared and ready for circulation in 2020.
- A new Strategy for the Prevention of SH and SEA has been issued by UNOPS.
- The “Model Code of Conduct to Prevent Harassment, Including Sexual Harassment, at UN System Events” was included in the PQMS process “Manage Workplace Environment” as of 5 July 2019.

Reporting and Victim Assistance

- In 2019, the Internal Audit and Investigations Group opened eight cases involving allegations of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and three cases involving allegations of Sexual Harassment. Out of the eight cases involving SEA allegations, IAIG reported seven allegations to the Secretary General's Office because they contained sufficient information to identify an act of sexual exploitation and abuse against an identifiable perpetrator or identifiable victim.
- A process in PQMS (UNOPS internal policy tool) providing guidance on how to “Manage Protection of Victims” has been established as of 15 February 2019, which includes the provision of victim assistance (including families, for example, children born as a result of SEA.) UNOPS HQ urged country offices participating in the United Nations Incident Report Form pilot to contact the local Victims’ Rights Advocate’s office throughout 2019.
- In Deloitte’s report, the UNOPS Network of Peers¹ is recommended as a best practice. To expand the membership further, a new cohort of Network of Peers will be trained in August² 2020 to support the resolution of internal disputes related to Harassment, Abuse of Authority, and Discrimination³.

¹ The Network of Peers is a dispute resolution mechanism to address internal grievances where the formal and informal resolution of disputes are handled, as a first step, by peers, selected based on their competencies and leadership capabilities, and trained to address Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Abuse of Authority and other interpersonal challenges that colleagues may face.

² Postponed from March 2020 due to COVID-19 travel restrictions.

³ Sexual Harassment cases are investigated by professional investigators, but the members of the Network of Peers are able to serve as an additional source of support to victims and assist them during meetings and other interventions regarding their allegations

Promoting Implementing Partner Accountability

- UNOPS Myanmar Office created a cross-cutting manual for implementing partners which includes PSEA items in 2019.

Local Engagement

- PSEA focal points were formally designated at five duty stations (Jordan, Haiti, South Sudan, DR Congo, Central African Republic) to report any allegations related to SEA in the official UN Incident Reporting Form. The role of the focal points was clarified by issuing Terms of Reference. UNOPS HQ urged field offices to join the established PSEA local networks and the Community-Based Complaints Mechanisms if existing in the country. Local offices are encouraged to share the best practices with the rest of the organization.
- The PSEA focal points participated in the UNFPA-led PSEA workshop in October 2019, which was a good example of inter-agency collaboration in the field of PSEA. The scheduled training led by UNFPA in March 2020 was cancelled due to COVID-19 travel restrictions.

Key priorities in 2020-2021

- UNOPS keeps committed to the implementation of the action plan and the strategy to prevent SH and SEA in 2020-2021. Specific priorities will include:
 - UNOPS personnel shall have the recurrent opportunities to know the rules related to the prevention of SH and SEA. The refresher training for PSEA will become available in 2020-2021.
 - The country-level capacity to report complaints and support victims will be strengthened by expanding the internal PSEA community.
 - UNOPS policy governing the framework for the implementation of projects through the award of grants to implementing partners or beneficiaries will include the measures for PSEA so that this will be implemented across the organization.