Ethiopia PSEA Network
Term of Reference

Background

In 2016, the Ethiopian Humanitarian Country Team (EHCT) requested the Protection Cluster to develop a national strategy to support inter-agency efforts to prevent and to respond to sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) in humanitarian contexts. The objective of the request was to establish accountability mechanisms to advance the support available for at-risk communities and groups by enforcing zero-tolerance for attempted and actual acts of sexual exploitation and abuse by UN staff, (I)NGOs and partners. The Ethiopia PSEA Network was then established in March 2018. Moreover, as a first inter-agency network initiative upon request by the former Humanitarian Coordinator and the Protection Cluster, UN Women submitted a proposal to fund a pilot-project in three regions of Ethiopia: Somali (Liban, Dewa, Afdar, Fafan, Siti and Erer), SNNPR (Gedeo), and Oromia (West Guji). The project was approved by the Ethiopian Humanitarian Fund (EHF) in 2019 to support inter-agency PSEA efforts to prevent and to respond to sexual exploitation and abuse in the IDP-targeted areas of operation. This would be achieved through the roll-out of risk mitigation actions and activities, tailored to the individual needs of the three high-risk regions targeting both humanitarian stakeholders and affected populations.

Undeniably, in Ethiopia, PSEA is an issue of great importance, as the country continues to be affected by various emergencies. These, amongst others, include inter-ethnic conflict and related IDPs, COVID-19 pandemic, drought, desert locust's infestation, and floods. As a result, some of the most marginalized and at-risk populations in Ethiopia – especially women and children - have then been impacted by multiple shocks, creating an emerging protection crisis in-country. In particular, COVID-19 has worsened the already dire humanitarian situation in-country, and – during the Mid-Year Review (MYR) of the 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) – the number of people targeted for humanitarian assistance by the EHCT was doubled from 7 million to 15.1 million. Indeed, it is within this context that the risk of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) is high as lessons learned from suggest that the surge in (new and non-traditional) responders, combined with stringent movement restrictions and unequal access to resources/information, may lead to a concentration of power, wielding to the detriment of vulnerable people and groups. This can lead to negative coping strategies, thereby increasing SEA risk in Ethiopia.

Description

The Ethiopia Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Network (hereinafter called Ethiopia PSEA Network or the Network) functions under the auspices of the Ethiopia Humanitarian Country Team (EHCT) and Resident Coordinator (RO) to implement international inter-agency commitments on PSEA preparedness and response, including the Secretary-General's Bulletin: Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13)[1]. As such, the Ethiopia PSEA Network will be co-chaired by two EHCT members that will be responsible to give regular reports to the EHCT and to the RC. It is the RC who has the ultimate oversight of the network, and may delegate regular oversight to the Task Force of the Network.[2]

Principles

The humanitarian community in Ethiopia affirms the commitment of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) to promote and protect the rights of affected populations enshrined in international humanitarian and human rights law. As such, the humanitarian community in Ethiopia recognises their full responsibility in fulfilling their mandate to guard and protect vulnerable persons from sexual exploitation and abuse as well as to address such violations in an intersectional, gender-specific and survivor-centred manner in their work. In particular, they must ensure capacity building and awareness raising to ensure that their staff and partners neither abuse their powers nor influence affected communities to exploit and harm others.

Membership

Membership to the Ethiopia PSEA Network is open to all UN agencies, INGOs, NGOs, and government partners operating in humanitarian context in Ethiopia that either (a) have SEA complaint handling and response policy in place or (b) commit to developing an internal complaint handling and response procedure. Each of these

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[1] See ST/SGB/2003/13:
https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/SE%20ST%20SGB%202003%2013.pdf
[2] See Ethiopia PSEA Network Task Force Terms of Reference

organizations will be represented in the Network by one PSEA Focal Point, and preferably an alternate. PSEA Focal Points will coordinate the implementation of PSEA activities within their agency/organization as well as participate in network activities. These include, for instance, trainings, information campaigns, site monitoring, and the establishment and ongoing maintenance of community-based complaint mechanisms (CBCMs) for SEA reporting. As such, all focal points – based on experience and interest, will be requested to join one of the following working groups of the network: (a) Communicating with Communities, (b) Capacity Building, or (c) CBCM/CFM. All PSEA Focal Points must be able to make decisions on behalf of their agencies in an inter-agency forum.[3]

Upon request, participation as an observer is open to all UN agencies, NGOs, INGOs, and key/government partners. Moreover, cluster leads and humanitarian working groups are encouraged and invited to attend the Ethiopia PSEA Network meetings. Observers may transition into full membership, including voting privileges, by committing to develop complaint and handling procedures for SEA. Cluster leads and working group co-chairs will provide two-way coordination and communication between their sector and the network. Moreover, the Ethiopia PSEA Network – through its co-chairs - will engage in outreach with non-member and/or non-observer organisations as part of ongoing activities. At a minimum, all members of the network should be aware of the inter-agency PSEA complaint referral system and be able to receive complaints, regardless of their relationship to the Network. The Network will advocate for the strengthening and/or establishment of internal complaint handling systems for all organizations and agencies operating in Ethiopia, and will offer support as needed.

Responsibility

It is the senior management within each organisation/agency that are accountable for PSEA preparedness and response; thus, ensuring that organisational processes and procedures supporting a survivor-centred approach to PSEA are in place and work effectively through continued monitoring and review. Following this, the Ethiopia PSEA Network with support from the Ethiopia PSEA Task Force will serve as the primary body for coordination, support, and oversight of PSEA between its members. As the risk of SEA, and responsibility for action, is shared across all clusters of the humanitarian response in Ethiopia, the Ethiopia PSEA Network will be established under the Inter Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG), and will report on a regular basis to the ICCG coordinator and the Resident Coordinator. The guiding Terms of Reference for the Network are as follows:

1. **Coordination**
   The Network will be co-chaired by UN Women and UNFPA in 2021. Responsibility for PSEA activities will be divided equally amongst network members, which the co-chairs will manage and coordinate by:
   o   Liaising with IASC Task Team on AAP and PSEA;
   o   Work closely with members of the Inter Cluster Coordination Group;
   o   Establishing an effective PSEA strategy and action plan to be implemented by all actors engaged in the humanitarian response;
   o   Ensuring a dedicated PSEA Focal Point is committed from each agency/organization;
   o   Holding regular meetings every month, with ad hoc meetings as necessary.

2. **Engagement**
   o   Advocating for effective engagement and commitment from Humanitarian Country Team and Government entities to implement PSEA action plan and strategy;
   o   Ensure communication and awareness raising with affected populations and humanitarian stakeholders/service providers as a part of a so-called "two-way" process;
   o   Increasing capacity of humanitarian actors/service providers, including network focal points, humanitarian country team members, clusters, and government counterparts, on prevention, protection and reporting SEA in an intersection, gender-specific and survivor-centred manner.

3. **Prevention and Protection**
   o   Liaising with CP/GBV Area of Responsibility and Protection Cluster to receive and refer victim of SEA for immediate survivor-assistance and proper reporting services;
   o   Working Closely with assistance service providers in Ethiopia to ensure readiness to address the particular needs of sexual exploitation and abuse survivors;

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[3] See Ethiopia PSEA Network Focal Point Terms of Reference

o   Ensuring that network activities will follow a survivor-centered approach, and respect the principles of informed consent and the best interests of the survivor;

o   Advocating for and supporting mandatory and regular training of all network focal points, clusters, humanitarian workers/service providers and senior management;

o   Advocating, with network members and partners, to strengthen systems to prevent SEA, e.g. Human Resource practices, Codes of Conduct that include PSEA, and field level agreements.

4.   Response

o   Ensuring that member agencies and organisations have effective internal complaints and investigation procedures in place which adhere to principles of confidentiality;

o   Establishing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the Network as well as inter-agency Community-Based Complaint Mechanisms (CBCMs);

Note: The Ethiopia PSEA Network is not responsible for investigating complaints. This function rests solely with the entity that employs the individual against whom a complaint has been alleged, in line with internal policies.

5.   Commitment

o   Implementing of the PSEA Action Plan;

o   Establishing SOPs, covering referral pathways, reporting lines, and follow-up procedures;

o   Advocating for the rights, protection and well-being of affected populations, in particular women, children and adolescents of diverse intersectional backgrounds, for the prevention of and response to SEA, as a priority throughout humanitarian programming;

o   Collaborating on awareness-raising for the community on their rights, how to report abuse, and appropriate behaviour of all humanitarian staff/service providers.

General Information for 2021

●   The monthly interagency network meetings will be held on the first Monday of the month.
●   The timings of the meetings, in agreement with UN OCHA, will be 15:30-16:30.
●   The meetings will be held either (a) online or (b) at UN Women/UNDP, as the co-chair of the Network.
●   The meetings will be co-chaired by UN Women and UNFPA , please see Network co-chair ToR.

Endorsed by the Ethiopia PSEA Network on February XX, 2021
and by the Ethiopia Humanitarian Country Team on February xx, 2021.