

**Communication Strategy**  
on the  
**Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)**  
**Afghanistan**  
**2020-2021**



**Afghanistan Interagency PSEA Country Task Force**  
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## Background



Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) by Humanitarian Workers directly contradicts the core values of humanitarian action and is a protection failure on the part of the aid and humanitarian community. SEA inflicts harm on those whom humanitarian worker is obligated to protect, as well as jeopardizes the credibility of all assisting agencies.

## Purpose and Scope

This document presents the Afghanistan PSEA taskforce vision for preventing and responding to SEA in Afghanistan and sets out a concrete list of actions to raise awareness of PSEA concepts and tools amongst various stakeholders in order to creating and maintaining a safe and respectful environment for the people we serves and for all humanitarian agencies' staffs and related personnel. This Includes UN, INGOs', NNGOs' staff members, consultants, individual contractors, volunteers, interns, and experts on

Working closely with partners and communities, Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and UN country team (UNCT) has significantly stepped up its fight against SEA. This work is informed by, and taking place in tandem with, the work of related actors including the broader UN system, donors, and civil society organizations.

Deteriorating and widening insecurity continues to expose increasing numbers of people to life-threatening harm and injury, including risks of sexual exploitation and abuse. The rapid influx of humanitarian workers, and other service-related providers in affected areas, creates increased risks of SEA.

Women and girls continue to be at a greater risk of such violence due to displacement, the breakdown of social structures, a lack of law enforcement, the potential further entrenchment of harmful gender norms, and the loss of livelihood opportunities for both men and women in the community.

mission.

The Strategy also acknowledges the complexity and limitation to HCT/ UNCT authority in relation to SEA perpetrated by implementing partner personnel, including Government personnel, and limited and insufficient data on prevalence of SEA in Afghanistan. However, it does include measures to address and prevent these violations including supporting partners to fully integrate PSEA into national programme in both development and humanitarian contexts,

creating and activating the Interagency Task Force for Afghanistan, by the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) in June 2019, creating a joined-up accountability culture that abhors, sanctions and prevents SEA and protects victims.

### Afghanistan Context

Although there is insufficient data on the prevalence of SEA in Afghanistan, global evidence suggests rates of SEA is high in conflict settings. In Afghanistan reporting SEA cases or open discussion on SEA becomes much more difficult due to stigma associated with reporting such cases, and yet there has been anecdotal evidence that suggests that SEA including Gender based Violence (GBV) is widespread and growing including in Schools.

The growing body of research on gender in Afghanistan underscores the widespread cultural acceptance of any form of violence including SEA as well as men's disproportionate power and control over women's lives and bodies. Harmful social norms, present persistent and multifaceted threats to Afghan women that affect SEA awareness and reporting.

The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) in June 2019 re-activated Interagency Task Force for Afghanistan, in order to ensure protect beneficiaries of assistance and vulnerable populations in affected communities. The task force works to support the humanitarian architecture to ensure SEA as a critical issue is a central part of coordinated humanitarian action.

As part of the measures to communities and to strengthen systems wide approach to address SEA, the PSEA taskforce continues to work on an inter-agency approach and actions on SEA

guided by the Inter agency Action plan. The taskforce action plan has the following thematic areas-:

- Risks of SEA reduced, and systems strengthened to identify, manage and mitigate such SEA risks
- Social and institutional structures, and the population are mobilized for the prevention of SEA.
- Improved access to reporting mechanisms and response services for victims of SEA
- Increased enforcement and compliance with standards/policies on PSEA.
- Improved effectiveness and efficiency in coordination and management of PSEA programmes in Afghanistan

To ensure strengthening of common voice and reach to beneficiaries with information and awareness that contributes to achieve the key thematic areas of the Inter agency action plan- the taskforce decide to develop a communication strategy that will guide common messaging and outreach on SEA in Afghanistan across various target groups accordingly.

### Vision

Realizing the right of individuals and communities that partners serve to access the protection and assistance they need without fear of sexual exploitation and abuse; the right of UN and other humanitarian related agencies staff members and related personnel to feel supported, respected and empowered to deliver assistance in an environment free from sexual harassment; and the right of survivors of SEA to access timely and confidential investigation and effective and safe assistance and support.

## Principles

With a strategic focus on: Accountability, prevention and gender equality; reporting mechanisms that are safe and trusted; Investigations and sanctions that are swift and credible; quality response that is survivor-centred and fostering supports engagement in the fight against SEA and SH.

The following principles underpin and inform this strategy:

- The children, women, men and communities that being served have the right to be treated with dignity and respect and to receive assistance without threat of exploitation and abuse;
- Zero tolerance for SEA. As such, it has a responsibility to create and maintain an environment that prevents sexual exploitation and abuse and a responsibility to provide timely, confidential, and effective investigation, assistance and support to survivors.
- All development and humanitarian personnel including contractors (under any circumstance and all times) have the right to work in an environment free from sexual harassment. Personnel in this case refers to all staff members, consultants, individual contractors, volunteers, interns, experts on mission, individuals serving on loan., or persons working for humanitarian through an employment agency.

- All partner personnel are expected to act with tolerance, sensitivity and respect for diversity. They have the obligation to ensure that they do not engage in, condone or tolerate behavior that would constitute sexual harassment.
- All agencies will ensure to strengthen its capacities to address the SEA cases with professionalism, safety, confidentiality, maintaining high trust of SEA victims.

## Rationale for communication strategy

*“Breaking the silence”*, engaging communities and raising awareness on the risks of sexual exploitation and abuse, building trust, providing information on available reporting channels and response mechanisms is critical to preventing of SEA. Ensuring that victims are empowered to speak up, while respecting their culture and beliefs and that victims and populace know where and how to safely report SEA when it does take place is pivotal.

These are core priorities for the IASC (The main coordination forum of the humanitarian sector) and its member organizations.<sup>1</sup> Standard 4 of the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Minimum Operating Standards on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (MOS-PSEA) calls on IASC members to support the distribution of “awareness raising tools and materials to be used for beneficiary awareness raising activities” and to “communicate in detail

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<sup>1</sup> See IASC Strategy on Protection from and Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (November 2018) and IASC Plan for Accelerating

the expectations regarding beneficiary awareness raising efforts on PSEA”.

### Communication Guide

- To meet this standard, there is a need for effective communication, public advocacy and community engagement interventions based on clearly defined approaches, audiences, key messages and channels.
- This will be guided by key principles and principles including Accountability to Affected Population, Do No Harm, Best interest of the Child and ethical Reporting on vulnerable groups amongst others.
- Ethical reporting on vulnerable groups – especially children and women.

### Goal of the SEA Communication Strategy

- Improve awareness, knowledge, and behavior change on beneficiaries, UN staff and UN contactors, I/NGOs, all humanitarian workers and Contractors on Prevention of sexual exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) in Afghanistan as well as reporting mechanisms and support to victims

### Specific Objectives

- Increase public awareness on PSEA.
- Strengthen knowledge among vulnerable populations on how to mitigate SEA Risks and available reporting channels.

- Promote dialogue among humanitarian architecture on SEA prevention and humanitarian actors’ responsibility.
- Advocate further with Government on creating the enabling environment to prevent, mitigate and address and respond to PSEA in Afghanistan.
- Increase community participation on designing of context friendly complaint response mechanism. Get the help of people on safe reporting channels and means which increases the trust of victims to defeat the level of prevailing stigma.

### Operationalization

**Internal and External Coordination and Collaboration:** Successful implementation of the Strategy relies on strong coordination and cooperation at various levels: i) across all parts of partners at national, subnational level and community level; ii) build on on-going outreach, and activities that are carried out by related teams who are working on protection, AAP, GBV, CP iii) UNCTs, HCTs and RC Offices.

**Communication:** Clear, timely and open communication is a key enabler of this strategy. A dedicated and tailored internal and external communication strategy will frame communication efforts. The strategy will take into account of the various contexts in which Humanitarians services are available and support field Offices and staff with SEA communications in those contexts.

**Normative and Regulatory instruments:** In country PSEA Taskforce will establish clear and accessible normative and regulatory instruments

that will guide the operationalization of this Strategy. These will include a coherent and complementary set of policies and procedures; an accountability framework according to the Afghanistan SoPs that sets out roles and responsibilities at every level.

### Key audiences

- ✓ General public
- ✓ Beneficiaries of Humanitarian and development aid (Women, girls, men and boys) from high risk provinces and districts
- ✓ Key in country humanitarian/development partners
- ✓ Government officials/Local authorities
- ✓ Religious groups and Contractors ( those who engage into supply chain, consultants, advisors).

### Key approaches

#### 1. Mass media campaigns

Developing PSEA champions with high profile personalities and influencers – men, women adolescents as Champions in the prevention of PSEA. Facilitating media sessions with journalist to better understand SEA. Using relevant national, regional and global days to amplify messages around SEA.

#### 2. Production of audio-visual materials in English and local language

Production of animations, stories, videos, photo essays.

#### 3. Social media engagement including UN Report

Mobilise young people and relevant communities to engage on online and offline initiatives express their views, complain, seek feedback and test knowledge on PSEA. Face Book Instagram, Snap Chat, WhatsApp and Tik Tok are important platforms for young people to engage locally and regionally with amazing assets and content.

#### 4. Community engagement initiatives

This is crucial in building trust with communities. Communication efforts must be complemented with programme interventions i.e. PSEA messaging during the calendar events, Community Tournaments etc.

#### 5. Innovation

PSEA being a sensitive issue with the Afghan Community breaking the silence would require creative approaches for engagement including through art, theatre (including puppets) , paintings cartoons, songs amongst others. partnerships and co creating with global partners such as Google, Tik Tok. Regional initiatives could be explored as appropriate.

### Key messages

Audience	Actions/activities	Key messages	Channel	Opportunities for engagement	Estimated Cost
<p>-UN staff, contractors, UN Volunteers.</p>	<p>-Orientation session to staff.</p> <p>-Develop, insert and operationalise PSEA clause for implementing partners agreement.</p> <p>-Code of Conduct to be incorporated into very staff contractual agreement.</p>	<p>-UN is here to serve and protect</p> <p>-Zero Tolerance Policy</p> <p>-Vulnerable groups/ populations must be protected at all times and under all circumstances.</p>	<p>-Face – face or online.</p>	<p>-Orientation of new staff</p> <p>-Trainings</p> <p>-Staff meetings</p> <p>-Management meetings.</p>	<p>1500 USD</p>
<p>-Beneficiaries/ Communities.</p> <p>-Women, men, girls, boys.</p> <p>-High risk communities and families.</p>	<p>-Community engagement adaptable to the context</p> <p>-FGDs, games, theatre, drawings</p> <p>-Radio soap, opera, round table discussion on appropriate high viewership</p>	<p>-What is PSEA</p> <p>-Where does it happen.</p> <p>-Who are the key perpetrators.</p>	<p>-Radio</p> <p>-TV.</p> <p>-Interpersonal engagement.</p>	<p>-As an integral part of programme response</p>	<p>5000 USD</p>



	<p>programmes, flyers and posters at key points.</p> <p>-Community dialogues/ outreach.</p>	<p>-We are here to support you.</p> <p>-We can provide help for you - come and talk to us.</p>			
<p>-Policy Makers</p> <p>Ministers, Governors, DGs Heads Agencies, Heads of institutions including schools, universities etc.</p> <p>-SRSG</p> <p>DSRSG/ HC/RC</p> <p>SRSG Violence Against Children (VAC).</p>	<p>-Strategic and sustained engagement with policy makers.</p>	<p>-Need for individual and collective accountability &amp; responsibility</p> <p>-Important to promote a culture nonviolence schools and other institutions.</p> <p>-Let's break the silence together.</p>	<p>-Face to face meetings.</p> <p>-Quiet diplomacy.</p> <p>-Public advocacy – press releases, media interviews.</p>	<p>-Breakfast/lunch meetings</p> <p>-Launching ceremonies (national/regional/global reports) /use of statements</p> <p>-Field or international missions</p> <p>-Global meetings or calendar events.</p> <p>-Country Reporting obligations.</p>	6000 USD
<p>-Development and humanitarian partners including donors.</p>	<p>-Strategic and sustained engagement as supporters of the PSEA.</p>	<p>-Need for individual and collective accountability &amp; responsibility.</p>	<p>-Face to face meetings</p>	<p>-Key donor meetings</p>	3000 USD

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Support efforts around reporting mechanisms, support to victims and holding perpetrators accountable.</li> <li>-Let's break the silence together.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Quiet diplomacy</li> <li>-Public advocacy – press releases, media interviews.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Launching ceremonies/use of statements</li> <li>-Local field or international missions</li> <li>-Global meetings</li> <li>-Country Reporting obligations.</li> </ul>	
-Journalists.	Training/ orientations on PSEA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Vulnerable groups must be protected at all times and under all circumstances.</li> <li>-Zero Tolerance Policy.</li> <li>-We are partners in this together. Let's make it happen for every woman, girl, man and boy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Training and orientation sessions face to face or online.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Launching ceremonies/use of statements</li> <li>-Local field or international missions</li> <li>Training programmes.</li> </ul>	3000 USD

### Key performance indicators and targets

	Key performance indicators	Baseline as of August 2020	Target for December 2020	Target for December 2021
<b>Website</b>				
1.	Number of website users			
2.	Percentage of returning users to website			
3.	Number of views.			
<b>Media</b>				
1.	Number of Media Discussions held			
2.	Number of trainings conducted with journalists			
3.	Number of newspaper articles published with PSEA Task Force mentioned			
4.	No of Public Service Announcements (PSAs), videos broadcasted on radio/TV PSEA prevention.			
<b>Social media &amp; multimedia content development</b>				
1.	Engagements on PSEA content on social media platforms			
2.	Number of video views on PSEA key messages.			
<b>Community Engagement</b>				
1.	No of community engagement activities conducted			
2.	No of people reached			
3.	Number of targeted KAP assessments conducted.			

## ANNEXES

### ANNEX I: Definitions

The following definitions have been adopted by the United Nations System and are common across all United Nations System organizations:

a) **Sexual Exploitation:** any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.<sup>2</sup>

b) **Sexual abuse:** the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.<sup>3</sup>

c) **Sexual harassment:** Sexual harassment is any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offense or humiliation, when such conduct interferes with work, is made a condition of employment or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. Sexual harassment may occur in the workplace or in connection with work. While typically involving a pattern of conduct, sexual harassment may take the form of a single incident. In assessing the reasonableness of expectations or perceptions, the perspective of the person who is the target of the conduct shall be considered.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Secretary-General's Bulletin, Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, ST/SGB/2003/13, 9 October 2003, Page 1

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

<sup>4</sup> 2018, CEB Model Policy on Sexual Harassment, CEB/2018/HLCM/14/Add.1, Page 13

## Annex II \_Key global, regional and national moments

### Key global, regional and national moments for Communication, Advocacy on PSEA

#### January – December 2020

January	1	Kick-off of the 'Decade of Action for delivering the SDGs'.
	21-24	World Economic Forum Annual Meeting - Davos, Switzerland.
	29-31	Global Forum on Childhood Pneumonia - Barcelona, Spain.
February	11	Safer Internet Day with focus on ending violence online and cyberbullying.
March	8	International Women's Day & 25 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action with focus on girls' economic and personal empowerment.
	21	Nawruz.
	22	World Water Day "Water and Climate Change".
April	1-30	Immunization Month, including World Immunization Week (24-30 April).
	6	International Day of Sport for Development and Peace.
	17-19	World Bank Spring Meetings - Washington, D.C.

**Key global, regional and national moments for  
Communication, Advocacy on PSEA**

	24	1 <sup>st</sup> Day of Ramadan – TBC.
May	13	World Press Freedom Day.
	18-23	World Health Assembly – Geneva, Switzerland.
	23	Eid El Fitr – TBC.
	28	Menstrual Hygiene Management Day.
June	1-30	Parenting Month activation.
	12	World Day Against Child Labour.
	19	International Day for the elimination of sexual Violence in Conflict.
	26	International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.
July	11	World Population Day.
	15	World Youth Skills.
	24 Jul - 9 Aug	XXXII Olympic Summer Games with focus on nutrition - Tokyo, Japan.

**Key global, regional and national moments for  
Communication, Advocacy on PSEA**

	Date TBC	Global Nutrition Summit – Japan.
	31	Eid Al Adha – TBC.
August	1-7	World Breastfeeding Week.
	12	International Youth Day.
September	Date TBC	Back to School – Ring the Bell.
	TBC	Release of IGME Child Mortality Estimates.
	8	International Literacy Day.
	21	International Peace Day.
	15-30	UN General Assembly - New York.
October	5	World Teachers’ Day.
	11	International Day of the Girls’ Child.
	18 Oct - 15 Nov	ICC T20 Cricket World Cup linked to nutrition – Australia.

**Key global, regional and national moments for  
Communication, Advocacy on PSEA**

	Oct/Nov	World Expo 2020 – Dubai, United Arab Emirates, regional and national moments
	24	UN day/ World Polio Day.
November	9-19	UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) - Glasgow, Scotland.
	12	World Pneumonia Day.
	17	World Prematurity Day.
	19	World Toilet Day.
	20	World Children’s Day.
	25Nov – 10 Dec	16 days of Activism against Gender based Violence.
December	Date TBC	UNICEF HAC Report 2021.
	1	World Aids Day.
	3	International Day of Persons with Disability.



**Key global, regional and national moments for**

**Communication, Advocacy on PSEA**

	10	World Human Rights Day.
	Date TBC	75 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the United Nations.
	TBC	Launch of State of the World Children’s Report.