



Yemen

Standard Operating Procedures for Handling Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Complaints by the Inter-Agency PSEA Network

The United Nations have a **zero-tolerance policy** toward Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) and every transgression will be acted upon.

These Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) define measures to be taken when there is a suspected or alleged incident of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) committed by humanitarian/development actors, which include UN Agencies/missions and partner INGO/NGOs/Community-led organizations and authorities. It outlines a standardized approach for recording and referral of all complaints received (via any complaint and feedback channel), implementing [Secretary-General's Bulletin ST/SGB/2003/13](#) on "Special measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (PSEA)" (9 October 2003) and the [Secretary-General's Report A/71/818](#) (28 February 2017) on "Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse: a new approach", which emphasizes the importance of (1) prioritizing the rights and dignity of survivors; (2) ending impunity through strengthened reporting and investigations; (3) engaging civil society and external partners; and (4) improving strategic communication for education and transparency. Additionally, the SOPs provide information on assistance to survivors and key principles to keep in mind when recording and processing complaints.

These SOPs supersede any earlier SOPs or directives in relation to recording and processing SEA complaints by the PSEA Network in Yemen. Implementation will be monitored by the PSEA Network Co-Chairs and PSEA Coordinator and reported to the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator.

Procedures related to sexual harassment of staff members are not included in these SOPs; more information on preventing and addressing sexual harassment and other forms of sexual misconduct can be found on the dedicated [IASC PSEA website](#).

1. Definitions

1.1 Complaint

A "complaint" is any expression or report of any alleged misconduct or wrongdoing by UN staff, partner staff, or any humanitarian/development actors, even if unaffiliated with the UN. These SOPs only cover SEA complaints.

1.2 Sexual Misconduct¹

- **Sexual Exploitation:** Any actual or attempted abuse of position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including but not limited to profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from sexual exploitation of beneficiaries; it includes trafficking and prostitution.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions; it includes sexual slavery, pornography, child abuse and sexual assault.
- **All sexual activity with a child** (under age 18) regardless of consent or local age of majority. Mistaken belief as to age is never an excuse.

❖ **Important clarification**

- **Sexual Harassment** (versus SEA): is an unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature; it includes sexual advances, unwanted verbal or physical conduct. It creates an intimidating work environment. In Sexual harassment (SH), both the perpetrator and the victim/survivor are employees working in the humanitarian sector. The victim/survivor and perpetrator could be working in the same organization or

¹ As per the ST/SGB/2003/13.



in different ones. SH refers to situation that occurs between personnel and does not refer to misconduct perpetrated against beneficiaries, forcibly displaced persons or host communities.

- **Gender-Based Violence** (versus SEA): is an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed differences between males and females. It includes acts that inflict physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion, and other deprivations of liberty. SEA can be seen as a form of GBV, as victims/survivors of SEA are often abused because of their vulnerable status as women, girls, boys, or even men in some circumstances.

1.3 Humanitarian/Development actors

- **UN agencies/missions:** Any sexual misconduct allegedly committed by an individual or group working for a UN agency/mission in Yemen.
- **Partners and contractors:** Any sexual misconduct allegedly committed by an individual or group working for INGO/NGO and community-led organizations partnering/contracting with a UN agency/mission in Yemen.
- **Actors not affiliated with the UN:** Any sexual misconduct allegedly committed by an individual or group working for an INGO/NGO and community-led organizations not affiliated with the UN but providing humanitarian and/or development assistance/programmes, as well as any individual or group associated with the international community, including but not limited to donors, diplomatic community, charity organizations, human rights entities, etc.
- **Government/ Law enforcement:** Any sexual misconduct allegedly committed by an individual or group working for or representing civilian or non-civilian authorities, including de facto authorities, to provide or facilitate the provision of humanitarian and/or development assistance/programmes.
 - In SEA situation, the perpetrator is a humanitarian/development actors (working for the UN, I/NGOs, civil society organizations and government entities) whereas the victim/survivor is a forcibly displaced person, a beneficiary, a person of concern, or other person in a position of vulnerability in need of assistance (can also include host communities in some circumstances) - in other words, referred refugee, asylum-seeker, internally displaced persons (IDPs), [refugee and/or IDP] returnee, and stateless persons, migrants etc.

1.4 Victim, Survivor² and Witness of SEA

- **Victim:** A person who is, or has been, sexually exploited or abused.
- **Survivor:** Reference is made to the term 'Victim' above. 'Victim' is a term often used in the legal and medical sectors, while the term 'survivor' is generally preferred in the psychological and social support sectors to a person who has experienced sexual or gender-based violence because it implies resilience.
- **Witness:** A person who observed, or has direct knowledge of, something under investigation.

2. PSEA Network

2.1 Key principles

- **Programme criticality:** In the context of prevention and response to SEA, addressing allegations and complaints received by the Network may be qualified as a PC1 activity, and ensuring the effective implementation of Complaint and Feedback Mechanisms (CFM) should be prioritized in programming and practice. The PSEA Coordinator position should be PC1.
- **Obligation to report.** All humanitarian/development actors have an obligation to receive and report suspicions of SEA.

² Please note that the terms 'victim' and 'survivor' are used interchangeably for the purpose of these SOPs. 'While there is a gradual shift inside the UN in using of terminology from victim to survivor which is motivated by the fact that the term survivor implies power and strength in recovery, it is important to have in mind that people who survived traumatic experience should decide by themselves how to be described. That is to say, the way the term used might not accurately capture the individual experience of someone who went through sexual misconduct. See UN Glossary on SEA, 24 July 2017, available at: <https://hr.un.org/materials/un-glossary-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse-english>



- **Protection from retaliation:** All actors who report SEA are protected from retaliation.

2.2 Roles and Responsibilities

2.2.1 Overview of the PSEA Network

In 2016, the Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) for Yemen established the inter-agency Yemen Protection from SEA Network (PSEA Network) to implement the *Secretary-General's Bulletin on Special Measures for PSEA* and promote accountability to affected populations.

- **Independence.** The Network serves as an independent inter-agency body for PSEA coordination and oversight, referral of complaints, establishment and review of policies/guidance, and implementation of the *PSEA Action Plan Priorities for Yemen*, endorsed by the UN Country Team. It organizes training and awareness raising to reduce risks and mitigate the effects of violations and support advocacy efforts on PSEA.

2.2.2 Accountability structure. The architecture of the PSEA Network is summarized below:

- **RC/HC:** The Network is supported by regular RC/HC oversight. The RC/HC engages in monitoring, discussion, and feedback to overall efforts and implementation by the PSEA Coordinator. The RC/HC bears the final responsibility for ensuring that victims/survivors have access to appropriate, immediate and longer term assistance, the development of complaints and feedback mechanisms, ensuring coordinating inter-agency allegation referrals and reporting regularly to the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) as well as to the Emergency Relief Coordinator on PSEA in relation to humanitarian operations, and including PSEA as a standing agenda item at the HCT and UN Country Team meetings (UNCT).
- **Humanitarian Country Team (UCT)/UN Country Team (UNCT):** The HCT and Heads of agencies/organizations as well as UNCT members are accountable for implementing PSEA and for ensuring that organizational processes and procedures supporting PSEA are in place, working effectively, and are monitored and reviewed, in line with the IASC Minimum Operating Standards (MOS) on PSEA³ and global commitments to Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP)⁴.
- **PSEA Coordinator:** Under supervision of the RC/HC, the Coordinator is responsible for overseeing and supporting PSEA activities of all affiliated organizations in Yemen. The Coordinator:
 - Provides day-to-day technical support and expertise to the PSEA Network.
 - Regularly reports to the RC/HC on trends analysis of anonymized data of PSEA reported cases and works closely with PSEA Network Co-Coordinator/Co-Chairs.
 - Supports Network members to establish and maintain a community-based complaints mechanism (CBCM) by: linking the CFM of Network members through agreed referral pathways; establishing new complaint channels where reporting gaps are identified; and building capacity of all persons that operate complaint channels on the inter-agency referral protocols.
 - Attends the Yemen Accountability to Affected Population (AAP)/Community Engagement (CE) Working Group, the IASC PSEA meetings, and meetings chaired by the Development Support Office (DSO) on PSEA.
- **PSEA Co-Chairs:** Two designated co-chairs support the Coordinator in the above functions. Since 2022, the PSEA Network has been co-chaired by designated staff from UNHCR and UNICEF.⁵ They are responsible for ensuring action is taken on allegations and complaints if received by the Network. In the event where more information is needed (i.e. where information on responsible organization for SEA report is unknown), PSEA Co-Chairs will conduct activities with the Network members to gather information and identify the organization for initial referral.

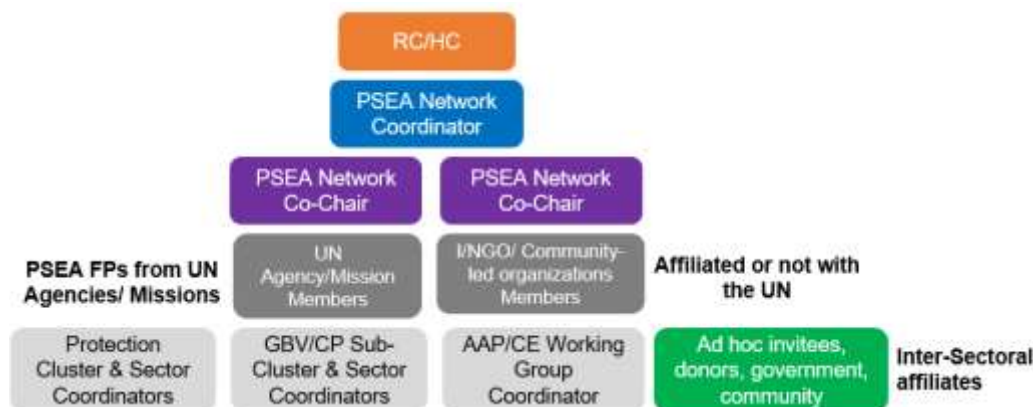
³ IASC, *Minimum Operating Standards Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by own Personnel (MOS-PSEA)*, 3 December 2017, available at: [Minimum Operating Standards \(MOS-PSEA\) | IASC / PSEA \(interagencystandingcommittee.org\)](https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/minimum-operating-standards-mos-psea/)

⁴ IASC, *Revised Commitments on AAP and PSEA*, 1st November 2017, available at: <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-revised-aap-commitments-2017-including-guidance-note-and-resource-list>

⁵ However, the co-chair roles could be held by different agencies in the future, pending availability.



- **Network Members:** Membership includes Focal Points from each of the UN Agencies/Missions operating in Yemen⁶, Gen Cap adviser (hosted by the Humanitarian Coordinator's Office or a UN agency) and seats for I/NGOs and civil society organization⁷, including community-led organizations, in line with an agreed representation structure and procedures⁸. Each member is obliged to mainstream this SOP and all relevant PSEA Network guidance and principles into their respective agency/mission/organization programming. Only designated Focal Points (main and alternate and preferably gender-balanced) can represent and make decisions as part of the Network.
- **PSEA focal points (FP):** Staff designated at the senior and technical levels and usually members of the PSEA Network. They have an obligation to receive and refer potential SEA complaints for action, including investigation, in accordance with their internal organizational procedures, to report complaints/allegations made against humanitarian aid and development workers engaged by their organization to the PSEA Network, and to update the Network on progress in relation to complaints referred to their organization. At the same time, PSEA FP should update its organizational FPs (if they are different) with new guidance and requirements, training opportunities as well as Network's activities related to their own responsibilities.
- **Affiliates:** Coordinators from the National Protection Cluster, the GBV/Women Protection and Child Protection (CP) sub-Clusters/AoR, and the AAP/CE Working Group are also invited to attend PSEA Network meetings.



3. Recording and Processing of SEA complaints

3.1 Key Principles

- **Duty to report.** Humanitarian/development actors always have a duty to report allegations of SEA that they become aware of, even if a survivor/victim wishes to remain anonymous or does not wish to formally lodge a complaint.
- **Confidentiality⁹, data protection, timeliness, “Do No Harm”:** In all circumstances, whether through dedicated CFM or other communication channels, humanitarian/development actors should abide by principles of confidentiality, data protection, timeliness, and “Do No Harm”¹⁰ when handling, recording,

⁶ Appointed PSEA FPs for the following UN Agencies/Missions: FAO, ILO, IOM, OHCHR, OSESGY, RCO, UNDP, UNDSS, UNFPA, UNHABITAT, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNOCHA, UNOPS, UNWOMEN, WFP, WHO.

⁷ Any non-profit, voluntary citizens' group which is organized on a local, national or international level.

⁸ As a minimum standard organization willing to join the Yemen PSEA Network should: express zero tolerance policy towards SEA and impunity, have a PSEA policy in place and Code of Conduct referring to PSEA and sexual harassment.

⁹ “While reporting SEA is mandatory for the majority of humanitarian workers, this obligation may in practice conflict with the principles of confidentiality and the right of the survivor to choose how s/he would like to address an SEA incident. [Agencies and organizations] will need to internally reconcile this potential conflict, balancing both the rights of the survivor and the safety of the broader community, along with the internal policies of participating agencies [organizations]. One possibility is to inform the survivor of the mandate to report on SEA before proceeding with complaint intake.” IASC Best Practices Guide on Inter-Agency Community-Based Complaints Mechanisms, p45, available at: <https://psea.interagencystandingcommittee.org/resources/best-practice-guide-inter-agency-cbcms>

¹⁰ The principle of “Do No Harm” is broadly defined as ensuring that humanitarian/development actors ensure that they prevent and mitigate and negative impact of their actions on affected populations.



referring, and resolving SEA complaints and feedback. Access to/sharing of information is restricted and should create an environment enabling victim/survivors to submit allegations and receive appropriate assistance without stigmatisation. This should include due consideration for survivor/victim safety and dignity.

- **Proactivity and accessibility.** Humanitarian/development actors should proactively raise awareness about available CFM and provide instructions on how to lodge complaints. Multiple secured Complaint and Feedback channels will be made for complainants/survivors and other persons to raise allegations, rumours and concerns regarding potential SEA cases.
- **Communication with Communities/ Information Education Communication.** Inter-agency CwC products¹¹ and IASC Core Principles¹² on SEA and Key Messages on Sexual Harassment (SH) that every humanitarian worker should adhere to have been designed and shared by the Yemen PSEA Coordination team to its members. Humanitarian/development actors should use and disseminate the CwC/Information Education and Communication (IEC) materials accordingly to ensure harmonize approach across the country and accountability towards the affected population in Yemen.
- **Accountability.** Awareness-raising materials should adhere to agency/organization branding and logos, incorporating partner logos as relevant, to enhance consistency, transparency, and trust.
- **Data protection.** Confidentiality is critical in all handling of personal data, including password protection of files and limited dissemination.

3.2 Complaint and Feedback Mechanisms

- **Submission via available CFM:** Any beneficiary or member of the host community can make a complaint on behalf of themselves or someone else through the confidential and dedicated CFM channels (Hotlines/SMS, PSEA Focal points, Information Feedback Point/Helps desk, designated Email address and Complaint and Feedback Boxes) where accountability staff have been specifically trained for onward referral. CFM channels should maximize accessibility, safety and confidentiality for persons across the Age, Gender and Diversity spectrum (including persons with disabilities and children). Child-friendly CFM are available and accessible to children of different ages, gender and backgrounds.
- **Submission via PSEA Network confidential email address:** if an incident involves other humanitarian/ development organization (UN Agencies/Missions/INGO/NGO) or authorities (civilian or non-civilian) than your organization, reports should be made to the PSEA Network's dedicated and confidential email (rcspseyemen@unicef.org), for further coordination with relevant actors and processing of the complaint.
- The PSEA Network **standard SEA complaint intake form**¹³ can be used by humanitarian/development actors for referring SEA complaints. Use of this form is not mandatory but serves to harmonize information collected for the complaint. Prior to recording¹⁴, a complainant should be informed of the mandatory reporting and confidentiality policy for humanitarian/development actors.

3.3 Recording SEA complaints

The PSEA Network coordination team ensure that all the SEA complaints received through designated CFM are reported, logged, referred and followed-up by the concerned organization through a centralized repository.

Upon receipt of the complaint through designated CFM channels, the recipient of the complaint will notify the complainant/victim/survivor that the complaint will be referred to the organization's PSEA Focal Point/Head of the concerned organization for action (if a specific organization is identified) and/or to the PSEA Network Coordination (if no specific organization is identified via the PSEA confidential email address). The recipients of the complaint will inform the complainant/victim/survivor that reporting the allegation will be handled with strict confidentiality and not be shared with any other people exclusively

¹¹ See Annex VI.

¹² See Annex V.

¹³ See Annexes I and II. A copy of the standard inter-agency SEA complaint intake form, and a flowchart of the process, are included with these SOPs.

¹⁴ Get the basic incident information in the form and ask only relevant question to get a clear understanding of the complaint so that I can be referred to the concerned organization relevant focal points. This typically consists of addressing: What, Where, When and Who. **Don't ask Why.**



designated and limited staff of the affiliated organization or the PSEA Network in line with the **need-to-know principle**.

The organization's PSEA Focal Point of the concerned organization and/or PSEA Network Coordinator upon receipt of a complaint will acknowledge receipt and record it using an excel spreadsheet or similar common tracking/recording methodology that is password protected and only accessible by designated staff according to their internal processes. Complaint received through the PSEA Network designated email address will be only accessible by the PSEA Network Coordination team (PSEA Coordinator and co-chairs).

The organization's PSEA Focal Point of the concerned organization and/or PSEA Network Coordinator upon receipt of a complaint will provide the complainant/victim/survivor with information regarding how to access services. The PSEA focal point or PSEA Coordinator will inform the complainant/victim/survivor that any service would be provided upon their informed consent/assent for children.

3.4 Processing SEA complaints

Complaints received are treated as a matter of **high priority** and referred to relevant entities that are accountable **within 36 hours** where possible. Referral of complaints in all instances should take the safety of the survivor/victim/witness into consideration and victim/survivors/witnesses should be protected from retaliation. The PSEA Coordinator will follow-up on all complaints and referrals received through the PSEA Network confidential email address on an ongoing basis for quality assurance.

A referral of an allegation by the PSEA Network is **not** a determination of SEA or misconduct. The PSEA Network does not presume guilt in the absence of a conclusion following an investigation conducted by the concerned organization.

3.4.1 Complaints against UN Agencies/Missions: Complaints involving UN agencies/missions are systematically referred to the Representative/Director of the UN agency/mission in Yemen and the designated PSEA focal point of the concerned organization. When the complaint directly involves a head of agency/mission, the complaint is referred to the ethics/investigation office of the concerned agency/mission at their Headquarters (HQ).

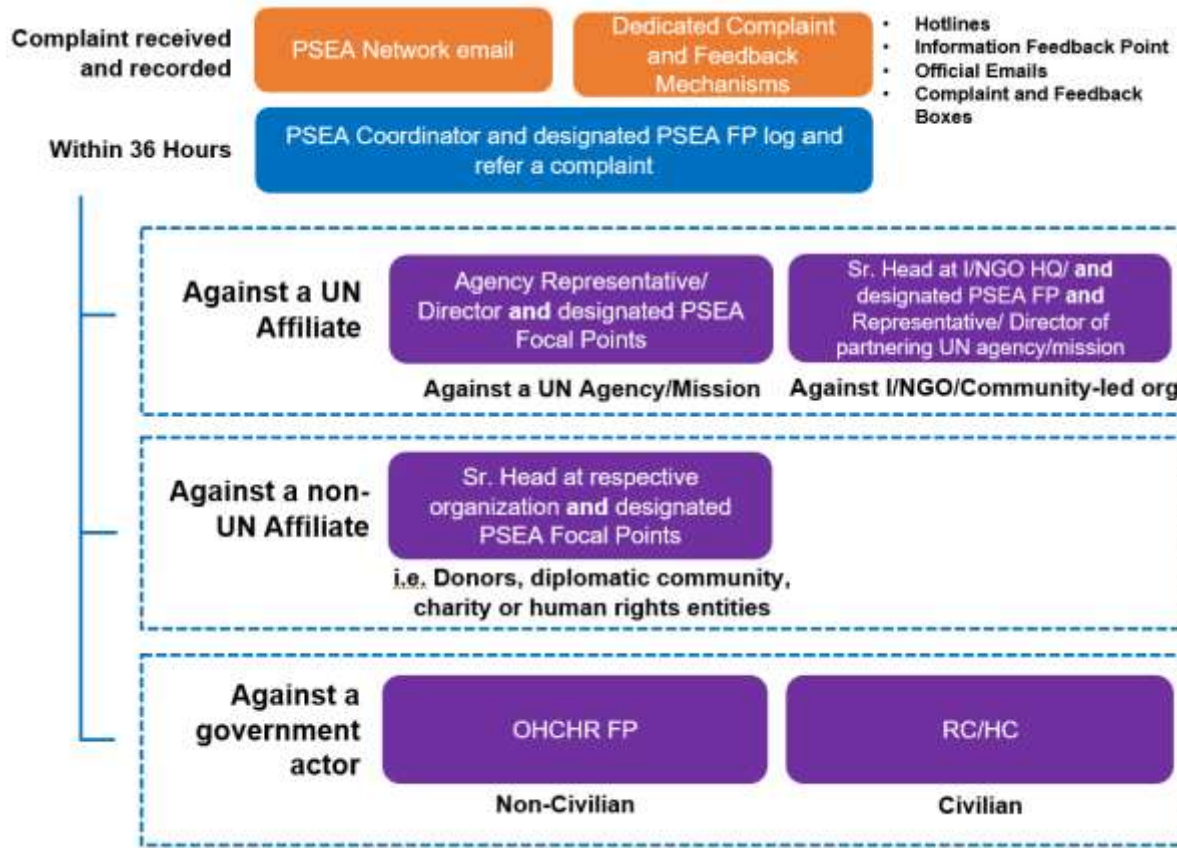
3.4.2 Complaints against NGOs/INGOs affiliated with the UN: Complaints involving NGOs/INGOs/Community-led organizations implementing partners are referred to the most senior person at the respective HQ and the designated PSEA focal point of the concerned organization and the UN partnering agency/mission for further action (the Representative/Director of the UN agency/mission in Yemen and the designated PSEA focal point of the concerned organization). Where referral of SEA complaints to the involved NGOs/INGOs may put the safety of a victim/survivor and/or witness at risk, complaints may be raised to the funding/partnering agency only, who will have the responsibility to follow-up.

3.4.3 Complaints against actors unaffiliated with the UN: Complaints involving an actor not affiliated with the UN but providing humanitarian and/or development assistance/programmes including *inter alia* donors, the diplomatic community, civil society organizations, charity organizations, and/or human rights entities are referred to the most senior relevant person within the involved organization and if known to the designated PSEA focal point of the concerned organization.

3.4.4 Complaints against government actors:

The PSEA Network will further work to ensure strong linkages and engagements with government agencies, and security actors to raise awareness, establish linkages and build internal capacity and systems for receiving, managing and responding to complaints.

- **Complaints against non-civilian governmental actors** are referred to Office of the Human Rights Commissioner (OHCHR) FP member of the PSEA Network for further follow-up with relevant actors. In certain instances, Network members may be required to consult with relevant HQ entities for specific situations.
- **Complaints against civilian governmental actors** are referred to the RC/HC for follow up with the Yemeni authorities (recognised and *de facto*).



3.5 Investigating SEA complaints

- **Responsibility to investigate:** Final responsibility for addressing and investigating a complaint, including taking any necessary disciplinary action, lies with individual concerned organization in line with its internal policy and procedures. However, in cases of SEA committed by UN implementing partners staff, the UN entity shall have the right to investigate SEA allegations, notwithstanding related investigations undertaken by the implementing partner or national authorities. Where the investigation is not conducted by a UN entity directly, the UN partner entity will seek all relevant information to determine whether the implementing partner has taken appropriate investigative and corrective action¹⁵.
- **Key principles:** An investigative process is expected to adhere to the principles of objectivity, impartiality, due process, presumption of innocence and fairness. It should be conducted competently, in accordance with the victim/survivor-centred approach and with the highest levels of integrity. Efforts should be made to protect a complainant's rights to ensure a compassionate, sensitive and non-judgmental investigative process.
- **Independence/non-interference:** The independence of the investigation team from other departments of the organisation and from external parties allows the investigator to conduct the investigation in a fair and impartial way. Investigations should only be undertaken exclusively by dedicated, trained and experienced personnel¹⁶ who must disclose any perceived or real conflict of interest **or** by the established investigative body affiliated with that entity.

In the event the concerned organization may lack the capacity to investigate internally, the PSEA Coordinator, upon request, may facilitate support to the organization to identify PSEA-trained investigators from global investigation rosters, where possible, at the cost of the requesting

¹⁵ See *UN Protocol on SEA allegations involving implementing partners*, 21 mars 2018, available at:

<https://psea.interagencystandingcommittee.org/resources/un-protocol-sea-allegations-involving-implementing-partners>

¹⁶ A very useful resource e-learning course developed by UNHCR to help staff to enhance their skills in investigating allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse against beneficiaries of humanitarian assistance is available in the [Disasterready.org](https://disasterready.org) platform under [Investigating Allegations of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse \(e-learning course for partners\)](#) (csod.com).



organization. Financial support for investigations may also be requested from the [IASC Fund for SEA allegations](#), managed by OCHA at the global level. For UN and INGO implementing partners, the organisation may request the support of these entities to carry out investigations if internal capacity and expertise is not available.

Recognizing that internal investigations capacity and procedures is a gap for many local humanitarian actors, the Yemen PSEA Network, in line with its action plan, will work towards reinforcing investigative capacity at the national level. This resource may, at the request of the concerned organization, provide support to internal investigations, where this is a gap.

- **Findings:** The findings of the investigation must be based on evidence. In the findings, the investigator can make reasonable inferences to reach a conclusion. Individual organizations are encouraged to share their investigative report with the PSEA Coordinator, regardless of findings.
- **Jurisdiction:** Where a case constitutes a criminal matter and where the victim/survivor consents, the case should be reported to the local authorities (local police/public prosecutor) for investigation and prosecution. In such cases, the relevant entities will fully cooperate with the local authorities, in accordance with respective agency / organizational policies and procedures and national laws. A risk analysis, and appropriate safety measures should be applied, to ensure the safety and protection of the victim/survivor. Victims/survivors are also entitled to legal assistance and representation, where required.
- **Role of the PSEA Coordinator:** is limited to receiving, logging, referring and following-up with the concerned organization on the investigation. The PSEA Coordinator can inquire and collect additional preliminary information but **should not** conduct or oversee the investigation.
- **Role of the PSEA Focal Point:** The PSEA focal points should **not** investigate¹⁷ and contact the PSEA Network Coordinator and/or co-chairs when technical support may be needed.

4. Victims/Survivors-centred approach and Assistance

4.1 Key principles

- **Independence:** The provision of assistance to victims/survivors is **never** linked to the nature of a report or outcome of an investigation.
- **Confidentiality and informed consent:** All victims/survivors are entitled to safe and confidential assistance through the existing GBV referral pathway. The meaning and scope of these concepts are clarified to the victim/survivor in the context of relevant processes or actions as early as possible throughout all process steps and preferably before the victim/survivor shares details.
- **Referral for assistance and support¹⁸:** Offer holistic assistance and support to all victims/survivors irrespective of whether the victim/survivor initiates or cooperates with an investigation or any other accountability or resolution procedure. All victims/survivors should be immediately referred to relevant GBV and/or CP service providers upon their informed consent using the inter-agency GBV referral form as needed¹⁹. It is the primarily the responsibility of the concerned organisation of the alleged perpetrator to ensure that the victim/survivor is referred for required assistance/ services, including covering costs in case assistance is not available via the established service providers. A victim/survivor should be referred to a trusted service provider as soon as possible within **24 hours**. The victim/survivor does not wait for nor depends on the outcome of investigation. Such assistance usually covers, depending on the operational environment, the areas of safety, medical, psychosocial, material and legal support. In case where the SEA complaint pertains to another organization, the organisation receiving the allegation including the PSEA Network should ensure the victim/survivor is referred for assistance; this should not wait for the referral of the allegation to the concerned organization.

¹⁷ Information about an incident or allegation is different than an investigation.

¹⁸ See [Technical note](#) on the [UN Protocol on the provision of assistance to victim of SEA](#)

¹⁹ See Annex III and the 2022 SOP for Gender-Based Violence intervention in Yemen / IRG, GBV Working Group, Yemen.



- **Victim-centred approach²⁰:** a victim-centred approach is a way of engaging with victim(s) that prioritizes listening to the victim(s), avoids re-traumatization, and systematically focuses on their safety, rights, well-being, expressed needs and choices, thereby giving back as much control to victim(s) as feasible and ensuring the empathetic and sensitive delivery of services and accompaniment in a non-judgmental manner.
 - **Well-being, protection and security first:** assistance provided to victims/survivor adheres to the principle of “do no harm” and is provided in a manner which seeks to uphold their rights, dignity and well-being. This may entail the implementation of security measures to protect against retaliation, re-victimization and re-traumatization.

Ensure that safety measures are applied and a plan to mitigate any risk of relation or harm are addressed (e.g. relocation of the victim/survivor to another location/safe space, if required). If there is no capacity to conduct a safety assessment, refer to the qualified GBV and/or CP case worker for support. It is important that case workers are sensitized to the specific needs and concerns of persons with diverse Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression, and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC).

Ensure the victim/survivor is informed of the option to report to the police, where the case constitutes a criminal matter, and provide legal support for this process.
 - **End-to-end/holistic approach:** from the moment when the concerned organization is made aware of a SEA misconduct disclosure, report, incident or situation. Where the concerned organization is providing services to a victim/survivor following a disclosure of SEA, the concerned organization will continue to provide these services as long as appropriate and feasible in accordance with its internal policies.
 - **Give (back) a measure of control, to the extent feasible²¹:** the victim has as much control as feasible over sharing of their personally identifiable information and over any actions in the context of assistance, support, processes and procedures.
 - **Non-discrimination and Inclusion:** Victims/Survivors should receive equal and fair treatment. Be gender responsive and inclusive. Apply human right-based approach. Acknowledge intersectional discrimination and be aware of personal bias.
 - **Dignity and Respect:** All actions taken should be guided by respect for the dignity, choices, wishes, needs, rights, culture and values of the victim/survivor, and consider their informed choices as a central priority. Treat the victim/survivor with courtesy, empathy, and professionalism.
 - **Ask and actively listen:** ask questions and listen to the victim/survivor without bias or judgement. Show empathy in all interactions with a victim/survivor. Make no assumptions of guilt nor of innocence: start from the possibility that what the victim/survivor is reporting may have happened.
 - **Information and Transparency:** keep the victim/survivor informed, in a timely and coordinated manner, of the progress and outcomes of actions or processes that concern the victim/survivor, throughout any process. Giving information is different from giving advice. Telling someone what to do does not help them understand their choices, and the ‘wrong’ advice can have a bad outcome for the victim. Information empowers victims to have control over their choices, and shows that you respect their opinions and judgements.
 - **Child victims/survivors:** assistance and support to child victims/survivors (persons below 18 years of age) of SEA is provided in a manner consistent with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), in particular the principle of the “best interests of the child”²², as per article 3 of the CRC. The child’s best interests must be a primary consideration in all elements of the response. In addition, children shall be assured the right to express their views freely in all matters affecting

²⁰ [IASC Definition & Principles of a Victim/Survivor-Centred Approach](#), 6 June 2023 and UNHCR, [Policy on a Victim-Centred Approach in UNHCR’s Response to Sexual Misconduct](#), 1st December 2020.

²¹ Where a victim/survivor has not given consent to share information, or if the victim/survivor cannot be contacted, there may be circumstances where the alleged incident is so severe that action must still be taken to report SEA without the victim/survivor’s consent. Unreported SEA cases mean that perpetrators may continue to perpetrate SEA, putting the victim/survivor and/or others, including children, at serious risk of abuse or other harm. This includes the risk of harm of the individual her/himself or others, or if a child is at imminent risk that could threaten his/her life and/or his/her development. In such cases, the utmost care should be taken to protect the identity and ensure the safety of the victim/survivor.

²² The wellbeing of the child will be assessed under the following circumstances age, gender, level of maturity and experiences, as well as other factors such as the presence or absence of parents, the quality of the relationships between the child and family/ caretaker, the physical and psychosocial situation of the child, and her/his protection situation.



them, their views being given due weight in accordance with the child's age and level of maturity, as per article 12 of the CRC.

- **Redress:** Providing space and support in case need to seek remedies from perpetrator, via formal and informal processes as appropriate, including restorative justice and, as needed, support the victim/survivor to access these remedies. Facilitate the pursuit of paternity and child support claims for victims/survivors, where desired and legally applicable, in cooperation with the relevant State.
- **Due process:** due process rights of the alleged perpetrator(s) in accountability procedures are explained to the victim/survivor at the earliest time possible, allowing the victim/survivor to understand how the alleged perpetrator's due process rights may affect her/him/them.
- **Feedback:** Seek feedback from victims/survivors on ongoing processes and procedures and seek to learn from every situation. Should any of the above principles be breached, victims/survivors have a right to complain, and/or provide feedback using individual IASC entity processes, as appropriate, or via the UN Ombudsman and Mediation Services and/or the Office of the Victim's Rights Advocate.

5. Information Sharing procedures, Adaptation and Learning

5.1 Quarterly Data Review and Analysis

On a quarterly basis, anonymized countrywide data will be collated and analysed by the PSEA Coordination Team for trends in demographics and types of complaints/feedback etc. and further shared with the RC/HC (or most senior UN official in country)²³. UN organizations/missions are requested through their PSEA Network appointed FP to share with the PSEA Network coordination team on quarterly basis information on SEA cases²⁴ received involving their organization **and** their implementing partners for the purpose of records and statistics. The sharing of information about SEA allegations with RC/HC at country-level is distinct from the obligation which all UN entities hold to certify annually that all allegations of SEA involving their personnel in-country have been reported to the Secretary-General in the [Data on Allegations UN System-wide | Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse](#) completed at HQ level.

Standard information about SEA allegations shared with RC/HC include (this does not include identifiable information):

- a. The date of the first report to UN entity.
- b. The date of the alleged incident.
- c. Gender, age and number of victim(s).
- d. The nature of the allegation.
- e. Agency/IP concerned by the allegation if known (name of UN or IP agency)
- f. Category of implementing partner (local or international organisation, government).
- g. The general category of the alleged perpetrator (staff/consultant).
- h. Whether the SEA allegation has been referred to the relevant investigative mechanism.
- i. Whether the relevant investigative mechanism has opened an investigation and who will undertake the investigation when an allegation(s) relates to implementing partners.
- j. Whether victim assistance has been offered and if so, is being provided.
- k. Any related actions taken in response to the allegation, or issues of concern that require RC/HC engagement.
- l. Whether press coverage is likely.

5.2 Data security on SEA allegations

The repository will be fed by the Network membership organizations with periodical report and maintained in a confidential and secured manner with limited access by the PSEA Coordinator and PSEA Co-Chairs

²³ As per: Office of the Special Coordinator on SEA / Christian Saunders, *Updated Guidance Note: Requirements and procedures for all United Nations entities on sharing of information on allegations of sexual exploitation and/or abuse related to United Nations staff and related personnel and implementing partner personnel with the most senior United Nations official in country as of 1st July 2023*, 8 June 2023.

²⁴ The PSEA Coordinator will share with the PSEA Network focal points an Excel sheet *Incident reporting on SEA* to compile SEA allegations reported.



and the most senior UN official in-country, usually the resident and humanitarian coordinator (RC/HC), in anonymous information.

The PSEA Network Coordination team and the PSEA FP will ensure that all data is safe and secure and will implement appropriate procedures to maintain the confidentiality of the data. Organizations will submit an Excel sheet *Incident reporting on SEA* and will employ password protection. The password for these submitted files will be agreed upon by PSEA Network members and shared with the PSEA Coordinator/co-chairs in a separated email.

Entities must follow their internal Data Protection Protocols and implement appropriate procedures to maintain the confidentiality, security and safety of all data gathered in relation to a complaint of SEA.

For more information, visit the Yemen PSEA Network page:

<https://psea.interagencystandingcommittee.org/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/yemen>

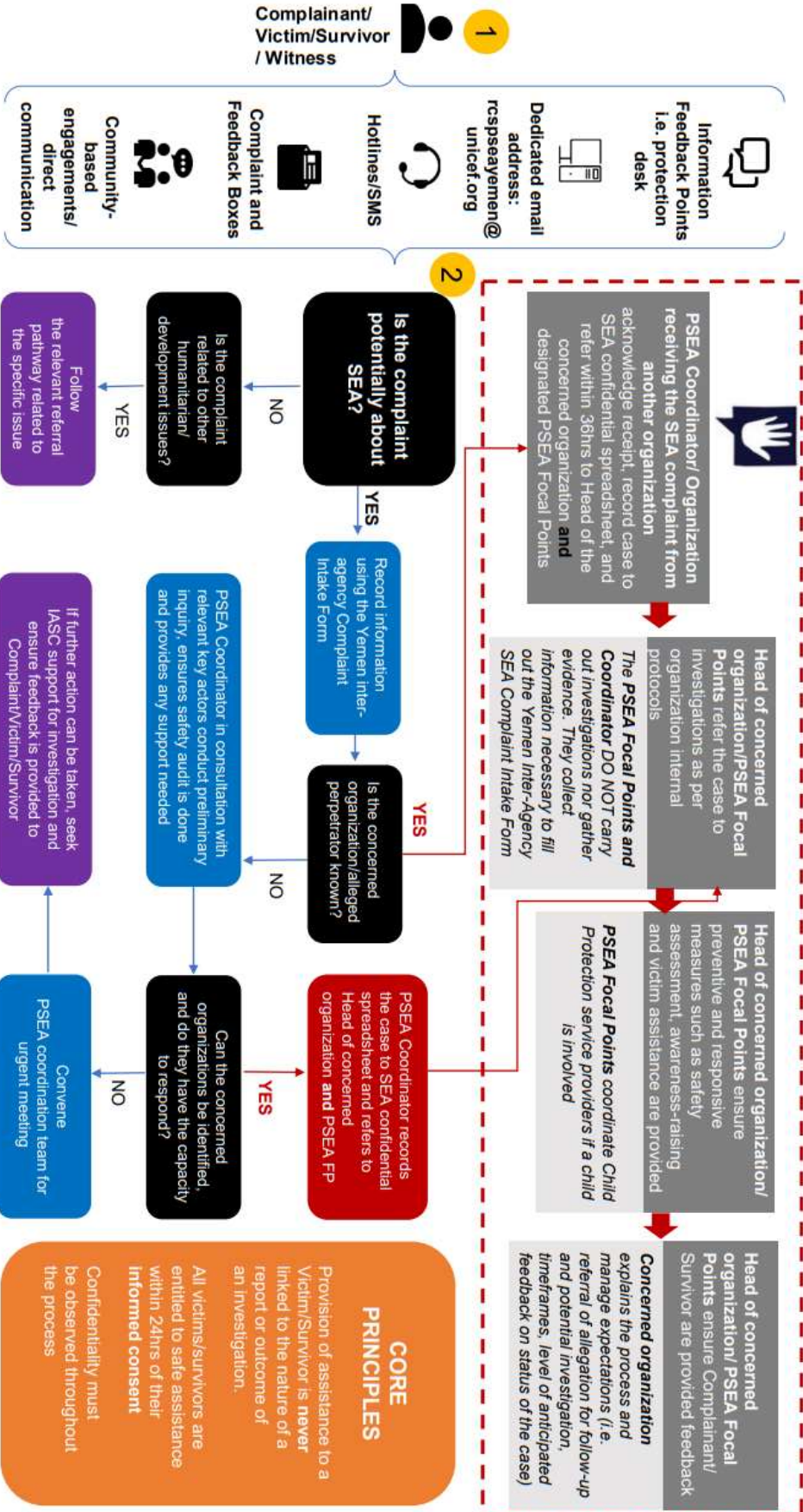


INTER-AGENCY COMPLAINTS INTAKE FORM (SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE)			
Information in this form is CONFIDENTIAL. All Forms must be PASSWORD PROTECTED. Submit this form to the Yemen PSEA Network Confidential email: rjspseyemen@unicef.org			
Name of Complainant:		Nationality:	
Address (district/street/city, or hosting site, block & shelter no.):		Contact details (phone/email):	
Age:		Gender:	
How does complainant prefer to be contacted (<i>Give details. If a phone, include any person (i.e. spouse) who may have access to it</i>):		Preferred time of day for contact (day/night)	Preferred language
Name of victim/survivor (and nickname)*: <i>(if not the complainant)</i>		Nationality:	
Address:		Contact details:	
Age:	If under 18: <input type="checkbox"/> With family <input type="checkbox"/> Unaccompanied <input type="checkbox"/> Separated	Gender:	
Name(s) and address of parent/guardian, if under 18:			
How does complainant prefer to be contacted (Check relevant box(s) and give details): <input type="checkbox"/> Phone <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Via family <input type="checkbox"/> Other			
Has the victim/survivor given consent to the completion of this form and referral? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know			
Any urgent needs identified for the victim/survivor/complainant including safety concerns? Please explain.			
Date of incident(s):	Time of incident(s):	Location of incident(s):	
Description of incident(s) in the words of the victim/survivor/complainant:			
Name (and nickname) of alleged perpetrator (person):			
Name of the humanitarian/development entity the alleged perpetrator belongs to:			
Position/Job title of perpetrator:			
Type of the entity (please select): Choose an item.		Other:	
Address or location of the entity:			
Has the victim/survivor been referred to an organization for assistance (give details on organization and services provided):			
Any other information/details:			
Report completed by:			
Date:			

* Consent must be obtained before collecting any identifying information for the victim/survivor



PSEA Yemen Process Flow







INTER-AGENCY REFERRAL FORM

Priority	
<input type="checkbox"/> Emergency (within 24 hours)	<input type="checkbox"/> Urgent (within 72 hours) <input type="checkbox"/> Normal (within 2 weeks)
Bio-Data/General Information	
Name (or Case Code if confidential):	Date of birth:
Gender:	Disability (if applicable):
National ID:	UNHCR ID (if refugee):
Address 1 (Street/Neighborhood):	
Address 2 (Sub-Dist/Dist/Govt):	
Phone:	Household Size:
If client is a minor (under 18 years)	
Name of primary caregiver:	Relationship to child:
Contact info for caregiver:	Is child separated or unaccompanied? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Caregiver is informed of referral. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (if no, explain):	
Special Note/Specific Need:	
Reasons for Referral (explain reasons for referring the case with any supporting notes if available. Use additional pages if necessary)	
Services Requested	
<input type="checkbox"/> Psychosocial Support and Mental Health	<input type="checkbox"/> Core Relief (Non-Food) Items
<input type="checkbox"/> Child Support / Care Arrangement	<input type="checkbox"/> Cash Assistance
<input type="checkbox"/> Family Tracing / Reunification	<input type="checkbox"/> Health / Medical / Nutrition
<input type="checkbox"/> Women protection Services (as per service mapping)	<input type="checkbox"/> Food Security
<input type="checkbox"/> Persons with Disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/> Shelter
<input type="checkbox"/> Legal Assistance	<input type="checkbox"/> Livelihoods / Education
<input type="checkbox"/> Physical Safety & Security, e.g., Safe Shelter	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
<input type="checkbox"/> Multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA)	
Please explain any requested services and any already provided:	
Consent to Release Information (read with client/caregiver and answer any questions before s/he signs below)	
I, _____ (concerned individual initials), understand that the purpose of the referral and of disclosing this information to _____ (receiving agency) is to ensure the safety and continuity of care among service providers seeking to serve the client. The service provider, _____ (referring agency), has clearly explained the procedure of the referral to me and has listed the exact information that is to be disclosed. By signing this form, I authorize this exchange of information.	
Signature (or caregiver if a minor): _____ (In cases where consent is obtained through a phone call, the referring agency should put the initials of the person providing consent in the place of signature)	Date: _____
Referred By:	Referred To:
Name:	Name:
Position / Agency:	Position / Agency:
Contact Info:	Contact Info:
Date of Referral:	Delivered via: <input type="checkbox"/> Phone (emergency only) <input type="checkbox"/> E-mail (encrypted) <input type="checkbox"/> In Person (sealed envelope)
Any contact or referral restrictions?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (specify any or all): _____



Yemen PSEA Network

Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) by aid workers violates core humanitarian principles and is prohibited conduct. SEA not only inflicts serious harm on those we are mandated to protect but jeopardizes the credibility of all humanitarian and development organizations. In 2016, the Yemen Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator established the inter-agency Yemen Protection from SEA Network to implement the 2003 Secretary-General's [Bulletin on Special Measures for PSEA](#) and promote accountability to affected people.

What is SEA?

Exploitation: Any actual or attempted abuse of position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including *inter alia* profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from beneficiaries and consensual sex in exchange for money.

Abuse: Actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

All sexual activity with a child (under age 18) regardless of consent or local age of majority. Mistaken belief as to age is never an excuse.

The Yemen PSEA Network

Co-Chaired by UNHCR and UNICEF designated staff. Membership includes a Coordinator and co-Coordinator, appointed Focal Points from each of UN Agencies, missions and I/NGOs in Yemen, including community-led organizations.

Serves as the inter-agency body for PSEA coordination and oversight, referral of complaints, establishment and review of policies/guidance, and implementation of the *PSEA Strategy and Action Plan for Yemen*, endorsed by the UNCT.

Organizes training and awareness raising to reduce risks and mitigate effects of violations.

The United Nations has a **Zero Tolerance** policy toward Sexual Exploitation & Abuse and impunity

It is **mandatory** for all humanitarian and development staff to formally report all SEA suspicions. Those who report are **protected from retaliation**

How to Submit a Complaint?

A complaint can be made by or on behalf of a victim/survivor via internal organization pathways, and/or:

- Designated **Complaint & Feedback Mechanisms** channels
- **PSEA Network dedicated confidential email:** rcspseyemen@unicef.org

Where possible, the *PSEA Yemen Inter-Agency Complaints Intake Form* should be used

Where does the complaint go?

- Within 36 hours; The PSEA Coordinator logs and refers a complaint to the Head of the concerned UN Agency/mission / designated PSEA focal point **and** most senior staff of the partner agency (if relevant).
- The concerned organization follows internal PSEA procedures to investigate and share feedback with the Network Coordinator.

(For more information, see *Yemen Inter-Agency PSEA Network SOP for handling SEA Complaints*)

Ensuring Confidentiality

Confidentiality is critical, including password protection of files and limited dissemination

- Prior to recording, inform a complainant of the mandatory reporting and confidentiality policy.
- Humanitarian/development actors **always** have a duty to report, even if a victim/survivor wishes to remain anonymous or does not wish to formally lodge a complaint.

Victim-Centred Approach

Victim/Survivor assistance is never linked to the nature of a report or outcome of an investigation. All victims/survivors are entitled to safe and confidential assistance and should be immediately referred to GBV and/or CP relevant service providers upon their informed consent.

For more info, contact PSEA Network Coordination Team:
Lidiuna Fomunvam lfomunyam@unicef.org
Manon Morgan morganma@unhcr.org



**SAYING NO TO
EXPLOITATION AND
ABUSE**



**LOGO of the
ORGANIZATION**

We work together to ensure that you are safe and treated with dignity

You have the right to free humanitarian assistance. All humanitarian workers are prohibited from asking you for money, goods or services, or to conduct any improper act.

You are pretty. If you give me your phone number, I will give you more assistance



If you suspect that you or any other beneficiary is mistreated by a humanitarian worker, report it. We will always listen to you and try to find a solution.

Stop Misconduct and report it through one of the following channels:

Complaint and Feedback Mechanisms channels available in your AoR:
e.g. Hotline, Official email address, Help Desk

All information is treated with high confidentiality. Reporting will not affect your right to humanitarian assistance.