

## **Information Sharing Protocol on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse**

### **Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Task Force**

#### **South Sudan**

**July 2020**

#### **1. Introduction**

Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) inflicts harm on those whom humanitarian workers and personnel are serving to protect. In South Sudan, a dedicated task force was created in 2017 as a UN based platform. The Prevention from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Task Force (the Task Force) expanded its membership from all UN entities to include NGO representatives in 2018, and most recently included ICRC as an observer.

The Task Force is co-chaired by two entities on a rotational basis and consists of PSEA Focal Points of member entities. The Task Force functions under the auspices of the Deputy SRSG/Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator (DSRSG/RC/HC). The Task Force reports through the UN Country Team (UNCT) and the Humanitarian Team (HCT) and the DSRSG/RC/HC to the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General in South Sudan.

The Task Force is guided by a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)<sup>1</sup>, signed by all members of the UN Country Team (UNCT) in 2017 and a Terms of Reference (ToR) endorsed by senior leadership in 2018. Taking into account Task Force members' agency specific rules, the SOP and TOR define the joint roles and responsibilities of PSEA stakeholders and common principles for handling complaints, incident reporting, responses to SEA cases, including referrals for victim assistance and investigations.

#### **2. Purpose**

Adherence to the SOP rests with the Heads of each Task Force member entity.

The Information Sharing Protocol (ISP) does not impose any new requirements but reinforces and clarifies the provisions of the SOP for reporting and referring SEA allegations and sharing related information by receiving entities with Task Force Co-Chairs and the Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO). The ISP is meant to facilitate good practices in sharing essential information throughout the reporting, referral and response process. The aim is to ensure good collaboration and collective responsibility with regards to handling, referral, feedback and timely reporting of sexual exploitation and abuse. In addition, the ISP spells out the minimum standards that must be adhered to by all UNCT

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<sup>1</sup> The Information Sharing Protocol (ISP) is meant to complement the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Task Force Standard Operation Procedure (SOP) signed by all UNCT members in June 2017. Whenever there may be any discrepancy between the ISP and the SOP, the ISP will be applied as the more recent document developed by the Task Force and endorsed by UNCT.

members, Task Force members, Co-Chairs and RCO personnel handling and using PSEA information received.

The ISP is a South Sudan specific complementary document to the SOP and system-wide guidelines that apply. The ISP will be updated to reflect any future changes in the SOP, system-wide guidance or contextual realities.

### 3. **Receiving, reporting and referring SEA allegations**

Allegations forms used are the Information Reporting Form (IRF) (Annex 2) for all UN entities<sup>2</sup> and the Intake Form (Annex 3) for non-UN entities and Community Based Complaint Mechanism (CBCM).

SEA allegations are likely to be received through a variety of channels, including through Community Based Complaints Mechanisms (CBCMs), PSEA focal points (at field and national level), via the Task Force email or hotline numbers. Allegations may also be received by different bodies (such as clusters, police, local authorities, women and children friendly spaces, etc.) and referred to a PSEA Focal Point.

PSEA Focal Points and CBCMs are required to report all SEA complaints to the Task Force Co-Chairs and PSEA Coordinator as soon as possible and within 48 hours of receiving the complaint.

SEA allegations reported to the Task Force Co-Chairs and PSEA Coordinator will be referred to relevant entities involved by the Co-Chairs as soon as possible and within 48 hours of receiving the complaint.

All entities responsible for follow-up on allegations as per the SOP will share the following information on specific SEA allegations with the Task Force Co-Chairs and PSEA Coordinator after the initial report:

- A monthly update on SEA allegations and their follow-up.
- After the investigation has been completed the entity's focal point must report to the Co-Chairs and the coordinator on the outcome of the investigation and the action taken within 90 days as per the SOP.

The Case Log (Annex 1) with all the information received will be consolidated by the PSEA Coordinator and will serve as tool to ensure the follow-up of each case within the 90-day deadline as per the SOP. Follow up information will include the status of the investigation, the outcome of the investigation, action taken, support and services provided to the victim. This information will also be shared with the SVRO for statistical purposes.

#### a. **Entities' internal allegations**

Every PSEA Focal Point must report to the Task Force Co-Chairs and coordinator any internal allegation received to ensure the Co-Chairs accountability on the 90-days follow-up as per the SOP. This information is confidential and does not include Personal Identifiable Information (PII) or otherwise sensitive information and will be used to ensure follow up as well as for statistical and trend analysis

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<sup>2</sup> The use of IRF is mandatory for all UN entities as it is mandatory from the Office of the Victims Right Advocate (OVRA). However, IOM is not considering the IRF as binding and will continue to use the Intake form.

and for regular Task Force reporting. Such analysis or reporting will not contain information that could cause any further harm to parties involved.

**b. Inter-entity allegations**

All entities must convey all relevant information received about allegations involving other entities to the Task Force Co-Chairs, who will in turn refer to the entities that are subject of these allegations without delay. The Task Force Co-Chairs are responsible for referring specific cases to the entity with an email to the Head of the entity (ex. Representative, Executive Director) with a copy to the designated PSEA Focal Point in the concerned entity. The recipient Focal Point will share with the Co-Chairs relevant information, but not the PII. The Co-Chairs will share the information received with the alleged entity, which will contact the recipient Focal Point for all necessary information, including PII.

**c. In-the-air allegations**

All Task Force member entities must convey all relevant information, including PII, to the Task Force Co-Chairs about any allegations where it is not certain or where it is unknown, which entity may be responsible for the alleged violation.

**4. Victim's assistance**

Assistance is provided to victims on the basis of the victim-centred approach, with the victim's consent, as soon as information about an individual being a victim of sexual exploitation or abuse is received in any way or form irrespective of the confirmation of a credible allegation of sexual exploitation or abuse or the outcome of the investigation. The PSEA Focal Point receiving the allegation and the PSEA Focal Point of the involved entity, if different, ensures the victim's referral to the appropriate service provider and a victim support notice is issued to the SVRO.

The involved Task Force entity is to undertake all measures possible to provide assistance to the victim. In cases where the referral pathway is weak and services are not readily available, the recipient of the allegation, will contact and share relevant information, including PII when required, with the SVRO whom will support in the provision of assistance to the victim.

**5. Data security and access**

The DSRSG/RC/HC through the Task Force Co-Chairs, the PSEA Coordinator and the Task Force members will ensure that all data is safe and secure and will implement appropriate procedures to maintain confidentiality of the data.

When required according to the SOP and this ISP, entities will submit the allegation forms (IRF and Intake Form) to the Task Force email<sup>3</sup> where the document will be protected by a password, which will be shared in a separate email with the Task Force Co-Chairs and the PSEA Coordinator.

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<sup>3</sup> The PSEA task force email is accessible only by the PSEA task force Co-Chairs and the PSEA coordinator.

The PSEA Coordinator will create a specific case number for every SEA allegation received that will be used as reference for subsequent communication to share relevant information for referral.

7. **Annexes**

Annex1: Case Log

Annex2: Incident Reporting Form (IRF) (for UN use only)

Annex3: Intake form (for NGOs/CBCM use only)