

# PROGRESS UPDATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UN VICTIM ASSISTANCE PROTOCOL

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*To support the HCs/HCTs and RCs/UNCTs to implement the UN Protocol on the Provision of Assistance to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, UNICEF led the development and rollout of the technical note that provides guidance on achieving scale and coherent, system-wide approach to victim assistance. This update highlights the results and progress achieved to date to roll-out the Protocol and the technical note. It also outlines number of next steps and areas critical for accelerated Protocol rollout that will require sustained support from the IASC community to deliver on the IASC PSEAH Strategy and scale up quality victim-centred assistance.*

## IASC COMMITMENT TO VICTIM ASSISTANCE

The IASC is committed to ensuring quality support and assistance for victims/survivors of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) which is firmly embedded in the [IASC Strategy and Vision on the PSEA and Sexual Harassment \(PSEAH\) 2022–2026](#) under commitment 1.2, including through the accelerated rollout of the [United Nations Protocol on the Provision of Assistance to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse](#) (“the Protocol”). The IASC commits itself to support all HRP contexts (approximately 33 countries) to implement the Protocol.

UNICEF is a key contributor to the [IASC Acceleration Plan](#) and the [IASC PSEAH Strategy](#) and is providing leadership for

the Protocol rollout on behalf of the UN system and the IASC since its endorsement by the UN High Level Steering Group in December 2019. This update summarizes the progress on the Protocol rollout system-wide and highlights number of successful initiatives led by UNICEF that contributed critical technical support for the HCTs/UNCTs and inter-agency PSEA coordinators and networks to help accelerate the Protocol implementation across IASC priority countries.

## PROGRESS ON THE UN VICTIM ASSISTANCE PROTOCOL IMPLEMENTATION TO DATE

### TECHNICAL NOTE AND TRAINING PACKAGE ROLLOUT

To support the rollout of the Protocol, under UNICEF leadership, a technical reference group that included O/VRA, CDS/DMSPC, UNHCR, UNFPA, IOM and the IASC, developed the **technical note**, which helps deliver on **IASC commitments to scale up quality victim-centered assistance**, as outlined in the [IASC PSEAH Strategy](#) and the [Acceleration Plan](#). The **technical note** provides guidance to support the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinators, the UNCTs/ HCTs, PSEA coordinators and networks, GBV and child protection sub-cluster coordinators and specialists, and practitioners from other sectors in the area of victim assistance for women and children, and is applicable in all contexts, including in humanitarian, development and UN peace operations.

The Office of the Special Coordinator (OSCSEA) circulated the technical note to all UN Heads of agencies and entities, in November 2021, as a key resource on the implementation of the Protocol.

In addition, the note was shared with the IASC and is widely accessible to field practitioners on the [global IASC PSEA website](#) in 6 languages (EN, FR, SP, AR, POR, UKR). The note has been used by practitioners globally, with more than 4,900 views and downloads of the note since its release in October 2021. The note is helping to fill a critical gap in global technical guidance and resources on PSEA, serving as one of the key references for SEA victim assistance.

UNICEF started rolling out the Protocol and note alongside a training package in June 2021 and continues to provide technical training support for the HCTs/UNCTs and the inter-agency PSEA coordinators and networks, upon their request. The training package is available in 5 languages (EN, FR, SP, AR, POR), and has been delivered both online and face to face.

### TECHNICAL SUPPORT FOR HCTS/UNCTS AND INTERAGENCY PSEA NETWORKS ON THE PROTOCOL ROLL-OUT

To support the Protocol rollout, UNICEF promoted and circulated the Protocol and the technical note to stakeholders across the UN system, the UN SEA Working Group, the IASC and Field Support Team, GBV AoR and humanitarian agencies and practitioners through various means including webinars, trainings and presentations. To date, UNICEF reached over 1,800 PSEA, GBV, and CP practitioners with either a briefing or a full training on the Protocol and technical note. UNICEF also conducted a Training of Trainers to establish an internal pool of PSEA trainers in key languages to support the training rollout in countries across regions.

Since June 2021, UNICEF provided expert-level technical support and trainings for HCTs/UNCTs and PSEA coordinators and networks in 16 countries/contexts including 13 IASC priority countries with HRP or similar (Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Libya, Moldova, Mozambique, Palestine, Philippines, Syria, Ukraine, Tanzania and the Regional Response for Venezuela) to help implement the Protocol. Fifteen of these countries have already established PSEA Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that meet the criteria on victim assistance outlined in the Protocol and five (Afghanistan, CAR, DRC, Ukraine, Burkina Faso) have fully rolled out the Protocol. The country-level trainings were provided upon request by the Resident Coordinator's Office or the inter-agency PSEA coordinator and were closely coordinated with them and the PSEA network co-chairs.

## TECHNICAL NOTE TRAINING CONTENT

### MODULE 1: TECHNICAL NOTE BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

**Learning outcome:** An introduction to the UN Victims' Assistance Protocol and technical note to understand the purpose, scope and application of these instruments to harmonize and strengthen provision of victim assistance at country level.

### MODULE 2: OVERVIEW OF VICTIM ASSISTANCE

**Learning outcome:** To understand victim assistance, how to apply the principles of the victim-centred approach, and the staffs' role on provision of assistance, including how to safely and confidentially refer victims for assistance to GBV/ CP service providers, in line with the Protocol.

### MODULE 3: SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR CHILD VICTIMS

**Learning outcome:** To strengthen knowledge of special considerations for child victims, for example in relation to accountability processes, and how to apply the 'best interest of the child' to ensure child victims' safety, rights and dignity.

### MODULE 4: GAPS IN SERVICES

**Learning outcome:** To become familiar with some of the strategies and best practices for support and assistance in contexts where there are critical gaps in specialized GBV/CP services.

### MODULE 5: EFFECTIVE COORDINATION AND INTEGRATION OF VICTIM ASSISTANCE INTO COUNTRY FRAMEWORKS

**Learning outcome:** Understand roles and responsibilities on victim assistance within the country-level PSEA coordination structure; identify best practice for PSEA Network SOPs, including ways to integrate GBV/CP referral pathways, and funding mechanisms.

## QUOTES FROM TRAINING PARTICIPANTS

**"The information offered and covered in the training is clear, concise and supportive for providing quality services in the field of victim's assistance."**

—Participant from Somalia

**"It was well structured and organized content wise and well facilitated, as well."**

—NGO participant from Ethiopia

**"The training was very clear. Thank you."**

—Participant from Burkina Faso

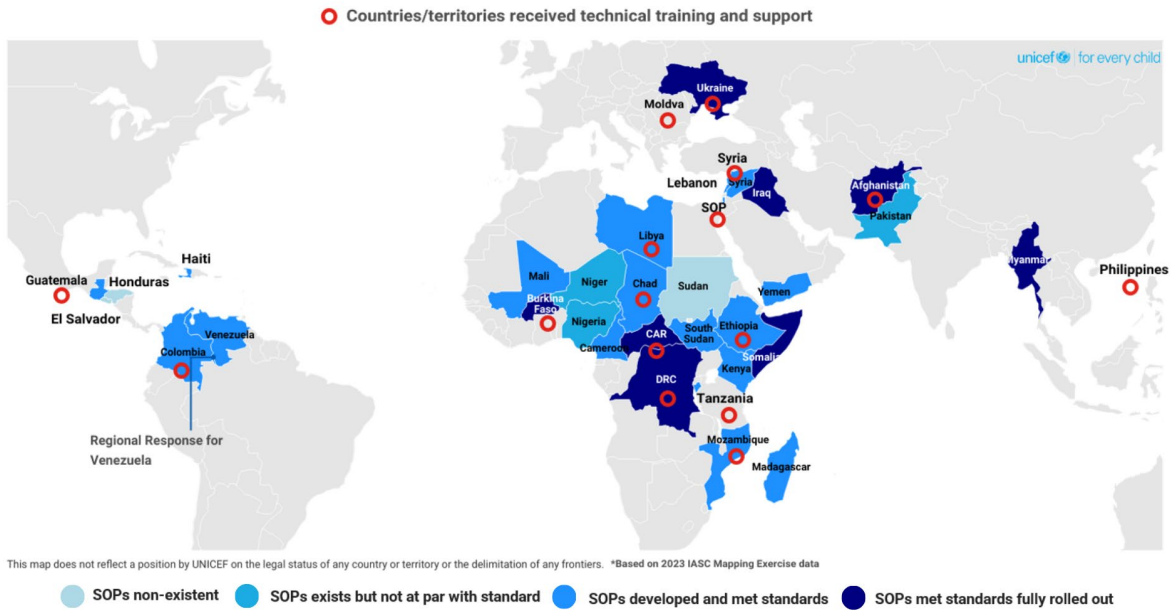
**"For me it was all clear and It's a well organized training. The material was very interesting and the discussions were truly inspiring, the content easily understandable."**

—Participant from Libya

**"The PowerPoint slides were very informative"**

—Participant from Ukraine

Progress on the UN Victims Assistance Protocol Roll-out and Support to UNCT/HCT



Out of the 35 trainings conducted to date, **UNICEF deployed support to provide 6 face-to-face country-level trainings (in DRC, CAR, Burkina Faso, Libya, Syria, Tanzania)**. During the country deployments, UNICEF provided additional technical support and workshops for the PSEA coordinators and networks on developing or revising the PSEA SOPs to integrate the standards outlined in the Protocol. Following the trainings, some PSEA networks further updated their annual Action Plans to include activities for the rollout of the Protocol at country level.

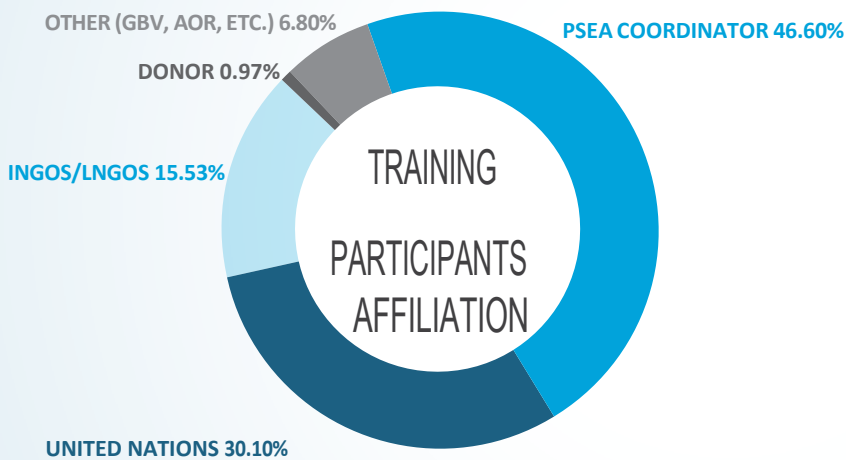
In addition to the support provided to HCTs/UNCTs and PSEA coordinators and networks, UNICEF has **carried out a regional training for the East and South Africa Region PSEA Working Group and six global level trainings**, including for the IASC PSEA agency focal points, all inter-agency PSEA coordinators on the NORCAP roster, and in collaboration with IOM for the global PSEA coordinator trainings that took place in June 2021 and July 2022. To support the NGOs to implement the technical note, UNICEF, in collaboration with the RSH hub and Digna, the Canadian Centre of Expertise on PSEA, **held a global webinar, in June 2022, that drew interest of over 700 NGO members.**

The participants' profiles included PSEA coordinators (47%), UN agencies (30%), and NGOs (16%), both international and national. Other participants included, for example, members of the GBV and CP Areas of Responsibility and one donor. Trainings were initially conducted online due to covid-related measures and travel restrictions which were still in effect when UNICEF started to roll-out the trainings in 2021. In some cases, the PSEA networks preferred an in-person training, but faced budgetary restrictions which would require further resource mobilization.

Overall, **99% of participants reported they were satisfied with the training** and 100% reported that the training contributed to developing or strengthening their skills in victim assistance. Some participants felt that the time for the training should be increased and that in-person training would be more effective given its technical nature. The PSEA coordinators also appreciated the trainings, and several reached out to UNICEF for follow up support after the training.

Participants also highlighted several challenges to implementing the Protocol, including lack of, or insufficient, specialized GBV services and the lack of common procedures for referring victims to assistance. **Following a successful Protocol training workshop in Burkina Faso, the Resident Coordinator committed to allocate 1% of all humanitarian funds managed by UNRC to scaling up PSEA.** This is a welcome and encouraging outcome of the training and a demonstration of the need for continued technical support to HCTs/UNCTs on strengthening provision of victim assistance.





100%

Participants evaluated the training contributed to developing/strengthening their knowledge and skills on victim assistance



99%

Participants evaluated were satisfied with the training overall

## NEXT STEPS

The IASC PSEAH Strategy identifies the rollout of the Protocol as one of its priorities, including through training and technical support for HRP countries to implement the protocol the technical note. The strategy also calls for a consensus on the application of the Protocol within the IASC, and a mechanism for monitoring application and gathering examples of contextual challenges to compliance.

To track progress on the rollout of the Protocol, UNICEF led the process on behalf of the IASC to integrate indicators in the IASC PSEA global dashboard, which inter-agency PSEA coordinators in humanitarian response contexts are reporting against, annually. Based on the 2023 Global Mapping preliminary results, **8 (25%) countries with humanitarian responses have fully rolled out the Protocol, while 26 (81%) have integrated GBV referral pathways into the PSEA network SOPs** (see graph). This represents significant progress, but further steps are needed to achieve full implementation of the Protocol.

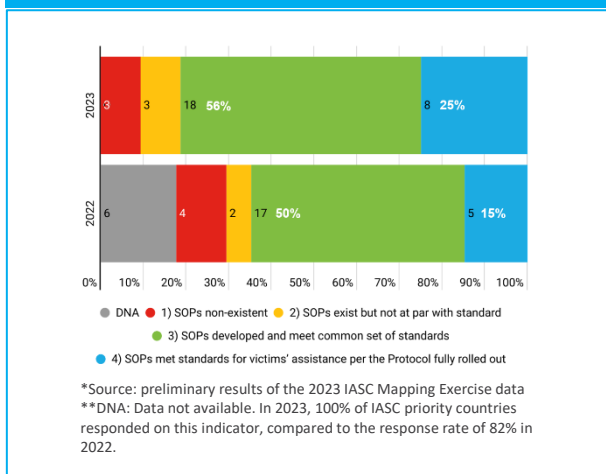
Countries have flagged that changing humanitarian situation poses a challenge to full implementation. As crises evolve or worsen, the availability of GBV and CP services is often impacted. When services become more limited or unavailable, the provision of comprehensive support to survivors is also affected and this further hinders the ability to fully implement the Protocol.

To accelerate the rollout of the Protocol across the remaining IASC priority countries and to further scale up assistance, will require additional support to:

- Provide ongoing technical support, including in-person trainings and systematic capacity strengthening for the RCs/HCs, the UNCTs/ HCTs, inter-agency PSEA coordinators, PSEA networks and humanitarian agencies on the Protocol and technical note.
- To facilitate the rollout of the Protocol system-wide across the IASC community, UNICEF will work closely with the NGO stakeholders to adapt the technical note for NGOs, as part of the Protocol’s implementation.

Based on progress to date, the full implementation of the Protocol will also require further technical support and training on the development and implementation of PSEA Network SOPs, including in relation to the Protocol’s requirements on victim assistance. UNICEF also recommends that the SOPs are further updated and standardized at global level.

UN Victim Assistance Protocol Roll-out Status 2022-2023



### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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