

INTER-OFFICE MEMO

To: All UN staff members in Ethiopia

Date: 1 June 2020

From: Vera Songwe
Executive Secretary and Designated Official

Catherine Sozi
UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator

Subject: Zero Tolerance for Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN personnel in Ethiopia

In March 2017, the Secretary-General outlined a comprehensive four-pronged strategy to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse across the United Nations system. The elements of the strategy are to: (a) prioritize the rights and dignity of victims; (b) end impunity through strengthened reporting and investigations, including clarifying limitations on the United Nations to achieve criminal accountability; (c) engage with civil society and external partners; and (d) improve strategic communication for education and transparency. In the implementation of this strategy, the Secretary-General focused on putting the United Nations “own house in order”—putting in place mechanisms under his authority.

Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) must not be tolerated; they are an unacceptable breach of the fundamental rights of the people we serve and of those with whom we work as well as a deep betrayal of our core values.

Therefore, we are urging all UN personnel, including paid staff, volunteers, contractors, incentive workers, and anyone performing a task on behalf of the United Nations in Ethiopia to:

- ✓ VERIFY that you have signed a Code of Conduct clearly stating implications relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.
- ✓ READ through the 6 Core Principles relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee annexed to this memo. You are expected to understand and respect those Principles.
- ✓ WATCH this 6-minute video on PSEA: [‘No Excuse for Abuse’](#) (also available in [Amharic](#), [Oromiffa](#), [Somali](#), [Tigrinya](#)).
- ✓ CONTACT immediately your Agency/Organisation PSEA Focal Point or your manager/supervisor if you need clarification.

Thank you.



Dr. Vera Songwe
UNECA Executive Secretary and Designated
Official



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UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator

ANNEX: IASC Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, 2019

1. “Sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian workers constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment.
2. Sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief regarding the age of a child is not a defence.
3. Exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour is prohibited. This includes exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries.
4. Any sexual relationship between those providing humanitarian assistance and protection and a person benefitting from such humanitarian assistance and protection that involves improper use of rank or position is prohibited. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of humanitarian aid work.
5. Where a humanitarian worker develops concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or exploitation by a fellow worker, whether in the same agency or not, he or she must report such concerns via established agency reporting mechanisms¹.
6. Humanitarian workers are obliged to create and maintain an environment which prevents sexual exploitation and abuse and promotes the implementation of their code of conduct. Managers at all levels have particular responsibilities to support and develop systems which maintain this environment.”

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