



Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) by OCHA staff

The purpose of this tool is to provide guidance to OCHA staff on what they must do to prevent and respond to the prevention of sexual abuse and exploitation (PSEA).

All OCHA staff must be aware of their specific obligations as UN personnel to act with the highest standards of integrity and conduct, both in performance of their official duties and their private lives. Sexual exploitation and sexual abuse are acts of unacceptable behavior and prohibited conduct for all UN staff. All OCHA staff at all levels are accountable for the implementation of the Policy Instruction on Gender Equality where under the Seven Minimum Gender Commitments it is stated that OCHA staff will “Put in place necessary actions to protect women, girls, boys and men from all forms of

sexual exploitation and abuse by OCHA staff, in line with the Secretary-General’s bulletin on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13).” The SGB on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (2003) calls on the UN system to protect affected populations from sexual exploitation and abuse by personnel of the UN and its partners. The IASC’s Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, 2002, calls on the humanitarian community to do the same. Many humanitarian entities have also signed onto the Statement of Commitment on Eliminating Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN and Non-UN Personnel (2006). Sexual exploitation and abuse is a concern in all contexts in which the UN works.

Definition:

Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) are forms of gender-based violence that have been reported in humanitarian contexts, specifically relating to humanitarian workers. The IASC adopted six core principles relating to sexual exploitation and abuse in 2002, which are included in the UN Secretary General’s Bulletin. These principles together constitute Sexual Exploitation and Abuse programming (PSEA). They are binding on humanitarian staff.

The IASC’s Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse ¹:

- “Sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian workers constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment.
- 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 defense.
- Exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favors or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative

¹ See Report of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Crises of 13 June 2002, Plan of Action, Section I.A.



PSEA and OCHA

behavior is prohibited. This includes exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries.

- Sexual relationships between humanitarian workers and beneficiaries are strongly discouraged since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of humanitarian aid work.
- 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 mechanisms.
- 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.”

Commitment

Managers and supervisors must ensure that all OCHA staff understand and comply with this instruction. To aid in implementing this instruction and in educating OCHA staff, OCHA’s managers and supervisors commit to:

- 1 Management and coordination: Effective policy development and implementation; Cooperative arrangements; Dedicated department /focal point committed to PSEA.
- 2 Engagement with and support of local community population: Effective and comprehensive communication from HQ to the field on (a) what to do regarding raising beneficiary awareness on PSEA and (b) how to establish effective community-based complaints mechanisms.
- 3 Prevention: Effective and comprehensive mechanisms to ensure awareness-raising on SEA amongst personnel; effective recruitment and performance management.
- 4 Response: Internal complaints and investigation procedures are in place.

Actions – who is responsible for what in OCHA HQ and field offices?

Personnel:

- Personnel are to review OCHA-managed contract conditions and ensure that ST/SGB codes are included.
- Personnel will ensure the distribution of PSEA flow-charts and an acknowledgement letter confirming receipts of the SGB for all OCHA staff.
- Personnel are responsible for conveying the PSEA standards of conduct to current staff and senior management (at HQ and field level).
- ST/SGB codes will be shared in the agreements with partners along the review of the ERF Guidelines in 2013.

All sections HQ and Field:

- The director of CPD is fully engaged and leading OCHA’s work on PSEA.
- PSEA Focal Points at senior level are identified and functioning with the overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the PSEA Instruction and activities and in regular contact with PSEA networks on the ground.
- The HQ has communicated in detail the expectations regarding beneficiary awareness raising efforts on PSEA (including information on the organization’s standards of conduct and reporting mechanism).

Community Based Complaints Mechanism:

- The HQ urges its field offices to participate in community based complaint mechanisms that are jointly developed and implemented by the aid community, adapted to the specific locations.
- There is guidance provided to the field on how to design the CBCM to ensure it is adapted to the cultural context with focus on community participation.
- There is a mechanism for monitoring and review of the complaint mechanism. OCHA will participate under leader



Monitoring and compliance

Compliance will be monitored through OCHA's mid-year and end-of year cycle reviews. Elements of this instruction will also be monitored through the UN performance appraisal system in line with UN system wide action plan on gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment.

Resources

- PSEA Website: <http://www.pseataaskforce.org/>
- "To Serve With Pride" film on PSEA <http://vimeo.com/7989995>
- The Community Based Complaints Mechanism (CBCM) Compendium



To find out more about gender equality work in OCHA and additional gender tools, go to:

<http://ochanet.unocha.org/TI/Gender/>
<http://gender.humanitarianresponse.info>