

PREVENTION OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE¹

➔ Zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse. All humanitarian aid is FREE!

What is sexual exploitation and sexual abuse?

- Sexual exploitation is exchanging money, shelter, food or other goods for sex or sexual favours from someone in a vulnerable position.
- Sexual abuse is threatening or forcing someone to have sex or provide sexual favours under unequal or forced conditions.

What kinds of sexual conduct are prohibited?

Any acts of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse by an international or national United Nations staff member and anyone working on behalf of the United Nations (implementing partner) is serious misconduct and may lead to disciplinary measures. Specifically:

- a) Sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18 is prohibited, regardless of consent.
- b) Purchasing sexual acts with money, employment, goods or services is prohibited.
- c) Exchanging humanitarian assistance (e.g. food rations, shelter supplies) for sexual acts is prohibited.
- d) Any forced, coercive or degrading sexual acts are prohibited.

In addition, sexual relationships between staff and beneficiaries of assistance are strongly discouraged, because of the difference in power and the potential for this to be abused

1. Agencies need to brief staff on their own Code of Conduct and the Red Cross Code of Conduct – staff need to be aware of the professional behaviour that is expected of them. **All staff must understand that there is ZERO TOLERANCE for sexual exploitation and abuse.**
2. Agencies need to work together to devise clear and accountable reporting and response procedures for beneficiaries facing exploitation or abuse by humanitarian workers.
3. Agencies should nominate two focal points (one at senior management level and one at field level) within their agency to deal with reports, and promote good humanitarian assistance given without conditionality.
4. Work with protection colleagues to provide support for victims of abuse and exploitation. If your agency has no protection expertise contact UNICEF, UNFPA or other protection focused agencies

¹ PSEA

All humanitarian workers must:

- Be aware of what is happening around you.
- Take responsibility for what you hear and see – it is everyone’s responsibility to take seriously and report exploitation and abuse by any humanitarian staff or military. Every humanitarian worker has a responsibility to report incidents of SEA that they become aware of. Not reporting is not an option.
- Know your code of conduct.
- Know your focal point within your agency to who you can report complaints.
- When delivering aid consider how it might increase people’s vulnerability to sexual exploitation and abuse (distributions – organization and distance to travel/ration sizes/vulnerability of family etc.) .
- When someone reports sexual abuse and exploitation to you, take them seriously, reassure and comfort them it is not their fault, report it immediately to your agency focal point and seek advice and guidance from protection colleagues. Ensure a link to health services so that the survivor can access health-related services.