Taking stock

Sexual exploitation & abuse (SEA) of the communities we serve is a grave violation of WHO's commitment to serve and protect the vulnerable. Sexual harassment (SH) of our workforce is a serious failure of our duty of care. This is the sentiment of WHO's leadership, staff and her Member States. But we all know and acknowledge that more could and should be done. And done quickly.

The risks of SEA have increased significantly in recent years. WHO is increasingly operational, being called on to operate to save lives and minimize death, disease and suffering in our health programmes and emergency response operations.

We now work in countries of fragility, conflict and vulnerability where the risk of exploitation is high. We work with UN agencies and NGOs to address these risks jointly, and aim to meet the standards set by WHO's own policies and Code of Conduct as well as meet the requirements and expectations set by the UN system and IASC partners.

On July 1, 2021, WHO’s Director-General established a new function of Director for the Prevention & Response to SEAH (PRSEAH). Reporting to the DG, and working with the Chef de Cabinet and a high level Organization-wide Task Team, the Secretariat completed key start-up activities in the first month to bring better coordination, coherence and impact of WHO’s efforts in this area. This monthly update aims to strengthen communication & transparency of WHO's PRSEAH work.
AUGUST PLAN

- Complete policy review
- Design end-to-end HR processes
- Submit UN workplan
- Support Independent Oversight Advisory Committee (IOAC) - Sub-committee on PRSEAH
- Launch agency- specific training framework
- Launch a website
- Staff Town Hall
- Launch internal technical consultation
- Launch call for pool of experts
- Donor WG on PSEA

Capacitating a network of WHO PRSEAH focal points

WHE has established a global PRSEAH network in May 2021. To date, 40 in-country focal points (FPs) from 25 countries across 4 regions have been identified. The network aims to reinforce focal points’ capacity development and provide them standardized tools and appropriate resources to support countries to better prevent and respond to SEA.

These focal points were joined by Regional Office and HQ PSEA personnel on 23rd July at a planning workshop that built on a survey of the FPs to identify their needs and expectations. The graphic depiction of their needs and expectations is below.

A workplan was developed to support focal points in countries, while the policy review and other corporate activities are underway in parallel.

Asked what one thing would most impact positively their work in the short term, the FPs identified:
1. Creating a strong network of FPs who can learn from and support each other
2. Clear action plan for country level work, and how WHO can work within the country PSEA network
3. Dedicated technical expertise for Gender Based violence and related areas
4. Training, training and IEC material

Participants identified a prioritized plan of action for 30, 60 and 90 days.

FPs identified challenges to engaging communities for raising awareness on SEA, and the limited capacity for setting up effective community-based complaints mechanisms. They also discussed the limited services available for survivors, and the lack of trust in national and UN complaints systems as major challenges.

EXPECTATIONS AND NEEDS - SUMMARY

Roles and responsibilities
- Clear Terms of reference
- Roles of FP within national PSEA Inter-Agency network
- Senior management involvement

Trainings and tools
- PSEA FP capacity building
- WHO standardized training materials
- (all staff, senior leadership, community,...)
- Awareness tool (hotline, posters,...)

Peer Learning
- Awareness on PSEA
- Exchange platform
- Community of practice: lessons learned and experience sharing

Global opportunities
- Access to trainings delivered by other organizations (IOM and online trainings)
- Joint funding proposals
- Link with international networks IASC and UN

PSEA mechanism
- PSEA policies, Code of conduct
- PSEA reporting mechanism, community-based complaint mechanism
- Engagement with communities specially in insecurity context