



Office of the Special Coordinator on improving the UN response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

NEWSLETTER

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide an informal update of key initiatives underway led by relevant entities system-wide under the umbrella of the Office of the Special Coordinator on improving the UN response to sexual exploitation and abuse.



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This is a global issue. It is not confined to any one region, mission or nation. I am determined that the United Nations must lead by example. Sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations personnel demands nothing less than decisive and bold action."

-Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon 10 March 2016

In February 2016, the Secretary-General appointed Jane Holl Lute as Special Coordinator on Improving the United Nations Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse for a time-bound period. She assumed her position on 1 March 2016, with the mandate to measurably strengthen the ability of the United Nations to prevent and respond to incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations personnel and non-United Nations forces operating under a Security Council mandate. On behalf of the Secretary-General, and reporting through the Chef de Cabinet, the Special Coordinator is focusing efforts system-wide to align, strengthen, build on and track measures that are under way in the areas of prevention, enforcement and remedial measures.

The Special Coordinator serves as Chair of the system-wide working-level group comprised of representatives from the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Public Information, the Department of Field Support, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Management, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Office of Internal Oversight Services, the Office of Legal Affairs, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, the United Nations Development Programme, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Children’s Fund, and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).

Through the working group, the Special Coordinator integrates and coordinates the workflow that is currently under way, reinforcing the existing roles and responsibilities of actors in the Secretariat and across the United Nations system with regard to sexual exploitation and abuse. While focal points have been identified, all entities in the working group contribute to the development of the workstreams and initial responsibilities. The participants of the working group are currently carrying out a gap analysis with regard to sexual exploitation and abuse, developing a shared glossary of the existing terminology on sexual exploitation and abuse, finalizing a protocol on victim assistance, a protocol on handling allegations, information-sharing and victims protection, a comprehensive manual/handbook for practitioners and creating a repository for information on the military legal frameworks of Troop- and Police-Contributing Countries deployed.

FOCUS ON THE GLOSSARY

LEAD: SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT, DEPARTMENT OF FIELD SUPPORT (CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE UNIT), OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT, AND OFFICE OF INTERNAL OVERSIGHT

The compilation of a glossary of existing terminology and nomenclature related to sexual exploitation and abuse is being finalized. The aim is to provide conceptual clarity of key terms used by different United Nations entities in the discourse on sexual exploitation and abuse and to serve as a tool to ensure a common understanding in the context of communications on the matter.

FOCUS ON THE SYSTEM-WIDE MAPPING EXERCISE

LEAD: OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEPARTMENT OF FIELD SUPPORT (CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE UNIT)

The system-wide mapping exercise involves two main initiatives: (a) creating an electronic repository to centrally house all relevant United Nations policies, procedures and other documents relating to sexual exploitation and abuse; and (b) conducting a survey exercise of all system-wide stakeholders to collect data and information that identify gaps and best practices.

FOCUS ON THE REPOSITORY OF THE LEGAL FRAMEWORKS OF TROOP- AND POLICE- CONTRIBUTING COUNTRIES

LEAD: DEPARTMENT OF PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS (OFFICE OF MILITARY AFFAIRS), AND OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL COORDINATOR

In an effort to promote transparency, and given that Member States have exclusive criminal jurisdiction over their military contingents, it has been decided to create a database compiling all domestic policies, rules and regulations related to sexual exploitation and abuse to better understand how such cases, if substantiated, will be managed by a each troop-contributing country. For this purpose, on 20 April 2016, the Special Coordinator sent a Note verbale to all permanent missions to the United Nations, in which they were requested to share their manuals on military law and rules and regulations governing their armed forces. To date, only 28 have responded, a few of which have submitted copies of their military manuals and laws. The Office of the Special Coordinator intends to follow up with the relevant permanent missions on the status of this request and provide any necessary clarification.

FOCUS ON VICTIM ASSISTANCE PROTOCOL

LEAD: UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND AND DEPARTMENT OF FIELD SUPPORT (CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE UNIT)

The Secretariat, jointly with the United Nations Children's Fund, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Office of Internal Oversight Services and the United Nations Population Fund, is drafting a protocol on assistance to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse, aimed at strengthening a coordinated, system-wide approach to the provision of assistance and support to victims of such abuse committed by United Nations staff and related personnel, as well as by non-United Nations forces. The protocol is rooted in a victim-centred approach to ensure that the appropriate assistance and support is provided in a timely manner. It is expected to be issued in the third quarter of 2016.