



Executive Board of the United Nations

Human Settlements Programme

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Item 10 of the provisional agenda*

Annual report on action by UN-Habitat to strengthen protection against sexual and any other type of exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment in the workplace

Action by UN-Habitat to strengthen protection against sexual and any other type of exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment in the workplace

Report of the Executive Director

Summary

1. As requested in paragraph 4 (e) of decision 2019/4, adopted by the Executive Board of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the Executive Board is to consider at its first session of 2021 a report on action by UN-Habitat to strengthen protection against sexual exploitation and abuse and against workplace sexual harassment, as requested by the General Assembly. Recognizing the importance of transparency and accountability in the United Nations system with respect to fighting sexual exploitation and abuse, since January 2018, the Secretary-General has requested members of the Chief Executive Board to certify annually to their governing bodies through a management letter that they have (a) fully and accurately reported all credible allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse related to United Nations staff and affiliated personnel; (b) made training to protect against sexual exploitation and abuse available to staff and affiliated personnel; and (c) are making affirmative efforts to ensure that their implementing partners have minimum standards in place to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse.
2. Accordingly, the attached management letter, for the period of 1 January 2020 through 31 December 2020, is hereby provided to the UN-Habitat Executive Board. There were no allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse or of sexual harassment involving UN-Habitat during the time frame covered by the management letter. There are likewise no ongoing investigations into such allegations as at the date of submission of the present update.
3. UN-Habitat further reaffirms its commitment to zero tolerance of any act of harassment, including sexual harassment, discrimination or abuse. UN-Habitat monitors and ensures that all staff and non-staff personnel undertake relevant training and are aware of relevant policies of the United Nations Secretariat, including the Secretary-General's bulletin on addressing discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, and abuse of authority (ST/SGB/2019/8), as well as actions to be taken in respect thereof.
4. Advancing the Secretary-General's policy of zero tolerance, a model code of conduct has been developed to combat harassment, including sexual harassment, at United Nations events. The model code of conduct is disseminated to all stakeholders in advance of all UN-Habitat events and featured prominently on associated websites and material, as appropriate.

* HSP/EB.2021/1.

5. UN-Habitat has also developed a mobile application called “Speak up” to raise awareness with respect to the prevention and prohibition of sexual harassment and abuse. The application provides information on rules, regulations and policies, explains how to report misconduct, including by means of the 24-hour hotline managed by United Nations Headquarters, and provides answers to frequently asked questions, interactive quizzes and other learning materials.

End-of-year management letter on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and the reporting of allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse

In accordance with section 4.6 of the Secretary-General's bulletin on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13), and consistent with paragraph 4 of decision 2020/4.1 adopted by the Executive Board of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), I, Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director of UN-Habitat, hereby certify that UN-Habitat has reported to the Secretary-General all allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse that have been brought to its attention and has taken all appropriate measures to address such allegations, in accordance with established rules and procedures for dealing with cases of staff misconduct.

UN-Habitat is working to ensure that all staff members and affiliated personnel have availed themselves of training focused on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. UN-Habitat is also working to raise the awareness of its staff members, affiliated personnel and beneficiaries of assistance, insofar as applicable, through appropriate means, regarding the prohibition of sexual exploitation and abuse and ways of reporting such acts. These efforts have been hampered by global events, including the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, and by a lack of dedicated human and financial resources.

UN-Habitat has an appointed Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) focal point. The PSEA focal point is developing an awareness campaign, in particular for staff and non-staff personnel in field-based locations. The PSEA focal point is further working to establish and improve its community-based complaint mechanisms and networks in all field-based locations in which the Programme is operating.

UN-Habitat wishes to report that no reports on allegations and, accordingly, no investigations had been reported as at 15 January 2021 on matters related to sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment in the workplace.

Consistent with the uniform protocol, the UN-Habitat Agreement with Implementing Partners includes language stipulating that the implementing partner shall take all appropriate measures to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse by it or any entity or person employed to perform any services by the implementing partner. UN-Habitat is further working towards ensuring better monitoring and oversight of implementing partners, including by use of the "Clear Check" electronic tool, to ensure that any cases or potential cases are reported and addressed appropriately. To the greatest extent possible, UN-Habitat is also working towards ensuring that implementing partners are required to undergo training on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Recognizing the importance of transparency and accountability in the United Nations system with respect to fighting sexual exploitation and abuse, this has been done in good faith.

Maimunah Mohd Sharif
Under-Secretary-General
and Executive Director

Member States of the UN-Habitat Assembly
