

Document:	<u>EB 2021/132/R.12/Add.1</u>
Agenda:	<u>10(a)</u>
Date:	<u>15 April 2021</u>
Distribution:	<u>Public</u>
Original:	<u>English</u>

E



Update on IFAD's Approach to Address the United Nations Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Harassment, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

Addendum

Management's Response to Member States' Comments

Executive Board — 132nd Session
Rome, 19-21 April 2021

For: Information

Comments from United Kingdom	Management response
<p>Member States Interactive Platform (MSIP) – good to see that some information is now provided on the platform. Are there plans to add to this section on the platform? Does this link in any way with the SG’s online SEA reporting mechanism that IFAD is using?</p>	<p>The prompt reporting on the Sexual Harassment, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SH/SEA) page on the Member States Interactive Platform is exclusive to IFAD and was developed further to a request from the Executive Board. In addition to providing information on each credible SH and SEA allegation concerning the IFAD workforce as well as personnel of external parties implementing IFAD-funded operations and activities, timely anonymized information is provided on the status and outcome of the cases.</p> <p>IFAD also participates in the United Nations Secretary-General’s reporting tracker exclusively dedicated to SEA reports.</p>
<p>DAC Recommendation – it is positive to note that IFAD participated in the DAC meeting. Is IFAD considering adhering to the DAC recommendation on Ending SEAH?</p>	<p>IFAD is committed to aligning its SH/SEA prevention and response efforts to best practices. To this end, the Fund collaborates actively with SH/SEA working groups in the United Nations System, the Rome-based agencies and the international financial institution (IFI) network. It draws also from other sources such as the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (DAC) and other relevant resources to enhance its prevention and response to SEA.</p>
<p>Workplace culture and staff engagement survey 2019 – the paper mentions that IFAD will develop an action plan to address areas of concern and/or need for improvement. Will this be a separate action plan? Will it be shared with member states for information?</p>	<p>Management is committed to regularly updating the Executive Board on its actions with regard to improving the workplace culture and has taken steps to address staff concerns reported in the 2019 survey. As several of the issues identified in the 2019 survey were consistent with those already identified in the 2018 Global Staff Survey (2018 GSS), staff are being requested to identify and prioritize the next set of concrete and time-bound actions to respond to both new emerging and unaddressed concerns. For example, responding to a request from staff for further empowerment in performing their duties, a large number of delegations of authority to staff have been recently implemented as part of the efforts to strengthen IFAD Country Offices, support an enhanced decentralized business model and empower staff at all levels. In addition to promoting staff empowerment, the revised delegation of authority framework enhances accountability in the daily implementation of staff duties in order to achieve IFAD’s mandate.</p>
<p>Reporting and complaint mechanisms – the action plan states that IFAD is reviewing and further strengthening reporting and complaint mechanisms to align with best practices, and that this is ongoing. It would be helpful to have more information on the specifics around this and how it is progressing.</p>	<p>Paramount to IFAD’s efforts to fight SH/SEA is to ensure visible and accessible reporting and complaint mechanisms for victims and other affected persons. IFAD compares with other institutions in providing helplines and confidential e-mail addresses. In addition, the 20 SEA focal points in various duty stations are trained to receive reports and to promptly forward those to the Ethics Office (ETH). Recently, ETH added a WhatsApp enabled mobile number as an additional reporting mechanism. Through its participation in the United Nations and IFI networks, IFAD is keeping abreast of other institutions’ experience with regard to complaint mechanisms. In particular, discussions are ongoing in the United Nations System on streamlining and harmonizing the collection of intake data on allegations of SEA.</p>
<p>SEA focal points – could we confirm that, where there is a PSEA [Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse] Network/Taskforce (i.e. PSEA UN coordination mechanisms in country), IFAD focal points are members?</p>	<p>SEA focal points have the responsibility to liaise, collaborate and contribute to the United Nations Country Teams on SEA matters.</p>

–

<p>SEA collaboration – it would be helpful to have further information on the action to “explore the possibility of including specific SEA collaboration in agreements and contracts entered into by IFAD and hosting agencies and partners in field duty stations”</p>	<p>IFAD is exploring the possibility of including SEA collaboration clauses in service agreements and service contracts entered into by IFAD and hosting agencies and partners. Through this initiative field offices could share knowledge with the host partner on SEA prevention and response locally and encourage joint initiatives at all levels in various duty stations.</p>
<p>SEA Pilot training in project start-up workshops – we are glad to note that the pilot in WCA has been concluded and would welcome sharing of information on lessons learned.</p>	<p>Providing training to implementing partners is part of an effective strategy to strengthen prevention and response efforts to SH/SEA in IFAD-funded operations. IFAD has initiated a pilot in the West and Central Africa (WCA) region and included SH/SEA training in start-up and other workshops for project staff. The experience has demonstrated that IFAD’s partners share a keen interest in better understanding their role and responsibilities in combatting SH/SEA in IFAD-funded operations. Other regional divisions in the Programme Management Department have included the SH/SEA training. In the Report of the Consultation on the Twelfth Replenishment of IFAD’s Resources (IFAD12 Report), IFAD committed to have 50 per cent of all project management unit staff complete the SH/SEA training for new projects. In order to promote IFAD’s no tolerance stance, IFAD recently published a guide for borrowers and recipients of IFAD funding on preventing and responding to sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse. The guide complements the tools already deployed across the organization to raise awareness about IFAD’s policy regarding SH/SEA among project staff, including presentations during start-up workshops, project procurement training, the operations academy, and other events. The guide is publicly disclosed on the corporate website and is made available to IFAD’s implementing partners.</p>

2

<p>Comments from Sweden</p>	<p>Management response</p>
<p>We are pleased to note that the SH/SEA Action Plan 2020-2021 is regularly updated and revised with relevant amendments, such as the SEA training for start-up workshops during 2021. As this is the second Action Plan since the SH/SEA policy was adopted in April 2018, does IFAD foresee the development of an Action Plan for 2022-2023?</p>	<p>Management is committed to developing biennial SH/SEA action plans. As per past practice, the IFAD 2022-2023 SH/SEA Action Plan will be shared with the Executive Board.</p>
<p>We furthermore welcome the initiative of a separate Action Plan to tackle the issues identified in the workplace culture survey from December 2019, such as the need for decentralizing authority and enhancing work–life balance. We would, however, like to better understand what actions that are envisioned as well as how the results will be monitored and evaluated. Will there, for instance, be a follow-up workplace culture survey?</p>	<p>Management is committed to regularly updating the Executive Board on its actions with regard to improving the workplace culture and has taken steps to address staff concerns reported in the 2019 survey. As several of the issues identified in the 2019 survey were consistent with those already identified in the 2018 GSS, staff are being requested to identify and prioritize the next set of concrete and time-bound actions to respond to both the new emerging and unaddressed concerns. For example, responding to a request from staff for further empowerment in performing their duties, a large number of delegations of authority to staff have been recently implemented as part of the efforts to strengthen IFAD Country Offices, support an enhanced decentralized business model and empower staff at all levels. In addition to promoting staff empowerment, the revised delegation of authority framework enhances accountability in the daily implementation of staff duties in order to achieve IFAD’s mandate.</p>

Comments from Sweden	Management response
As discussed during the 131st Executive Board session, we would also appreciate an update regarding the development of a system to promptly report credible SH/SEA allegations to Member States	Management has informed representatives about the prompt reporting system for credible SH/SEA allegations launched in December 2020. To this end, a SH/SEA page has been created on the Member States Interactive Platform on which timely anonymized information on each credible SH/SEA allegation is reported. Subject to the protection of privacy and the integrity of internal processes, Management is also committed to providing information on the status and outcome of cases.
Comments from Netherlands	Management response
Training on Sexual Harassment (SH) issues is hardly mentioned in the update. What is IFAD's policy on this?	IFAD has a clear policy of no tolerance towards acts of SH or SEA. SH is specifically addressed in the IFAD Policy to Preventing and Responding to SH, SEA released in April 2018. In addition, IFAD has robust investigation procedures and disciplinary and sanction processes to address such allegations. Prevention is an essential part of IFAD's strategy in combatting SH. Mandatory online training on SH is provided as part of the anti-harassment training programme and also as part of the SH/SEA online training. These mandatory training modules must be completed by all new staff and non-staff personnel within two months of entry in duty. All staff and any individuals hired on a non-staff contract are required to re-certify each training after a three-year period. In addition, IFAD's annual performance evaluation system (PES) contains a requirement that all mandatory training be completed and kept up to date. All IFAD personnel are also reminded of IFAD's no tolerance policy on SH and how to report such allegations through targeted awareness-raising campaigns and messaging on the intranet. IFAD also provides SH/SEA training to implementing partners at project workshop events.
With regard to the SH/workplace culture survey from 2019, is IFAD going to repeat this and what is the follow-up?	Several of the issues identified in the 2019 survey were consistent with those already identified in the 2018 Global Staff Survey. Management is conducting a survey for staff to decide on the next set of concrete and time-bound actions to respond to both the new emerging and unaddressed concerns. In the meanwhile, Management is revisiting the delegation of authority framework to further delegate and decentralize decision-making authority, as one of the issues identified in the 2019 survey was a clear call for greater empowerment across the organization. The IFAD Staff Association will be consulted and all colleagues will have the opportunity to prioritize the actions they would like to see carried forward.
IFAD has trained 380 of its staff on SEA since the last 3-4 months, what number of employees will be trained in the near future? And how many on SH?	All IFAD new recruited staff members and non-staff personnel must complete within two months of entry in duty mandatory ethics training. This includes the mandatory anti-harassment training programme, which encompasses sexual harassment, as well as the SH/SEA online training. ETH also monitors compliance of the refresher programme where all staff and non-staff personnel are requested to re-certify after a period of three years. In addition, IFAD's annual PES contains a requirement that all said mandatory ethics training be completed and kept up to date.
We encourage the use of ClearCheck, could IFAD elaborate on how it is being used?	IFAD is actively contributing to the ClearCheck database initiative. Every shortlisted candidate is systematically cleared against the ClearCheck database for sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment and the United Nations Security Council Sanctions List, prior to the selection discussion by the Appointment and Promotion Board. According to the established United Nations protocol, IFAD also contributes to the ClearCheck database by

Comments from Netherlands	Management response
	offering full availability to respond to queries received from other organizations on possible candidates applying to their positions and referred to in the database.
On part C, could IFAD elaborate a bit on its collaboration with the CEB Taskforce, what the ambitions are and what concrete actions are foreseen?	IFAD participates in the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment. The Task Force was established in 2017 by the Secretary-General to develop a common United Nations System approach towards sexual harassment. Since its establishment, the Task Force has made substantial recommendations to the CEB in the areas of policy, accountability, support and outreach. The CEB recommendations are included in IFAD's SH/SEA action plan and are either already implemented or on track. Examples of implementation of CEB recommendations include IFAD's decision to join the ClearCheck database in 2019 and the release of Guidelines to Prevent Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Discrimination at IFAD Events (consistent with the CEB proposal). More recently, IFAD also released a guide for managers and supervisors for preventing and responding to harassment, including sexual harassment to help managers and supervisors detect, address and promptly resolve cases of workplace harassment, including SH. The CEB Task Force workplan for 2020-2021 includes: (i) a review of measures in the United Nations System in relation to a victim-centred approach and proposals to support United Nations organizations in strengthening their own policies and procedures in that regard, and (ii) the development of an effective and proactive communications strategy for a harassment-free United Nations.