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

Addendum

Management response to Member States' comments

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Technical questions:

Sylvie Martin
Director of Ethics
Ethics Office
s.martin@ifad.org

Ethics Office
ethicsoffice@ifad.org

Comments from Japan	Management response
<p>Fully recognizing and appreciating IFAD's alignment with international standards including the DAC Recommendations with respect to the SEAH, Japan continuously and cordially requests IFAD to explore the possibility to adhere to the DAC Recommendations on this matter, following other organizations such as UNICEF and UNHCR.</p>	<p>IFAD takes good note of Japan's comment and request. IFAD is pleased to inform Japan that the SH/SEA policy is in the process of being revised and will take into consideration, inter alia, the OECD DAC Recommendation on ending SEAH.</p>

Comments from United Kingdom	Management response
<p>The United Kingdom thanks IFAD for the regular updates to the Board on <i>IFAD's Approach to Address the United Nations Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Harassment, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse</i> and welcomes IFAD's continued focus and progress being made on safeguarding against SEAH. We support IFAD's plan to ensure its SEA/SH policy is aligned with international safeguarding standards – including the IASC Six Core Principles on PSEA, IASC Minimum Operating Standards on PSEA, and PSEA elements of the core humanitarian standard.</p>	<p>Management takes note with thanks of the comments and support expressed by the United Kingdom.</p>
<p>We encourage IFAD to engage in consultations later this year relating to a new Global Framework on <i>Protection Against SEAH</i> and also to consider how IFAD policies could align in future with this when updated.</p>	<p>IFAD welcomes any opportunity to further and better align its SH/SEA approach. IFAD looks forward to obtaining information on the Global Framework on Protection Against SEAH.</p>
<p>The UK also strongly welcomes IFAD exploring whether it could use the Misconduct Disclosure Scheme as a complementary background check system.</p>	<p>IFAD confirms its commitment to further enhance background checks in its recruitment processes. Adherence to the Misconduct Disclosure Scheme is under consideration and IFAD commits to inform the Executive Board of any developments in this regard.</p>
<p>It would also be helpful to see in future updates headline number of cases, and how these have been responded to (i.e. support provided and action taken) to strengthen Board oversight of work on protection against SEAH.</p>	<p>Information on the number and status of credible SH/SEA allegations received is promptly disclosed on a dedicated SH/SEA page on the Member States Interactive Platform.</p>
<p>We would also encourage IFAD to provide more focus on risks or challenges in its approach to safeguarding against SEAH in future Board reports, in addition to progress, in order to support the Board in its governance of SEAH risks.</p>	<p>This request is well noted and will be considered in future SH/SEA updates to the Executive Board.</p>
<p>The UK, together with a number of other member states, will shortly write to IFAD and other MFIs to</p>	<p>Management takes good note of the United Kingdom's intention to share donor-aligned language on SEAH in funding agreements. Upon receipt of the</p>

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<p>share donor aligned language on SEAH that we would like to use in future funding agreements. The aim of this language is to set out clear expectations on protection against SEAH and to save IFAD/MFIs time in negotiating language separately with each donor. The language will be very similar to that used in UN funding agreements with donors, which was agreed by OLA in 2022 and has been found to be beneficial and efficient by those using it.</p>	<p>United Kingdom’s communication, Management will share the suggested language with the Office of the General Counsel and other internal divisions responsible for such agreements.</p>
Comments from Canada	Management response
<p>Canada welcomes IFAD’s continued efforts to prevent and respond to SEA and SH, and the progress made so far. And we strongly appreciate the regular updates. Page 1 includes a reference to comic strips. It would be interesting to learn more about the context and look – whether it includes words or is simply illustration. Of note: at times, the attempt to eliminate the language barrier through simple illustration has had the opposite effect, due to subjective interpretation of the characters’ actions in the illustration.</p>	<p>Management thanks Canada for its comments on IFAD’s continued efforts to prevent and respond to SH/SEA.</p> <p>IFAD has developed various instruments including videos, online training and other visual materials to raise awareness and ensure that both IFAD’s workforce and implementing partners in all regions fully understand the Fund’s no-tolerance stance towards SH/SEA. Visual products were developed with a view to ensure diversity and inclusion and are aligned with similar products released by the United Nations.</p>
<p>We also welcome IFAD’s use of the UN’s ClearCheck secure database, which helps to ensure consistency among the UN system.</p> <p>The use of the WhatsApp enabled number for reporting channels demonstrates innovation. It would be interesting to learn more about the use of the number and how it is regarded in the field.</p>	<p>The WhatsApp-enabled confidential line managed by the Ethics Office (ETH) is advertised externally on IFAD’s website as well as internally. All awareness-raising materials distributed across IFAD and to implementing partners contain information on reporting mechanisms and on ETH’s confidential helplines, including the WhatsApp-enabled line, which is accessible by mobile phone.</p> <p>Given the widespread use of mobile phones worldwide, the WhatsApp-enabled confidential line is a well-received tool that facilitates reporting.</p>
<p>While we commend IFAD for the continued efforts in providing training to staff and non-staff, studies have</p>	<p>In addition to a robust prevention strategy comprising training of IFAD’s workforce and implementing partners, outreach and awareness-raising</p>

Comments from Canada	Management response
<p>shown that training is not enough, and that organizational change requires to impact the power dynamics that cause SEAH requires more than just training. Training can continue to be long-term and ongoing corporate commitment, but it needs to be closely aligned with other measures in the field, including the DAC recommendation on Ending SEAH in order to see sustainable change.</p>	<p>activities, IFAD's efforts to combat SH/SEA are also based on the following SH/SEA action plan pillars and concrete deliverables identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responding to SH/SEA. IFAD has strengthened its reporting and complaint mechanisms and collaborates with other United Nations entities through the SH/SEA focal points programme. - Mainstreaming IFAD no-tolerance towards SH/SEA in its operations and funded activities. IFAD has expanded its SH/SEA focal points programme and is engaging with its implementing partners in all regions to ensure that their responsibilities and obligations with respect to SH/SEA are well understood. - Coordination and cooperation. IFAD participates in working groups of the United Nations system and the network of international financial institutions to ensure continued knowledge-sharing and alignment with best practices and relevant international standards on tackling SH/SEA (including the DAC Recommendation on ending SEAH).