



IASC

Inter-Agency
Standing Committee

STAIT

SENIOR TRANSFORMATIVE AGENDA
IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

Practical Steps to Stop Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

Webinar Summary
11 and 13 May 2016

Panellists

Ambassador William Lacy Swing

IASC Champion on PSEA & Director General,
International Organization for Migration
(IOM)

Mr. Mohamed Fall

Humanitarian Country Team Focal Point for
PSEA & UNICEF Representative, the Central
African Republic

Facilitator

Mr. Panos Moutziz

Director, Senior Transformative Agenda
Implementation Team (STAIT)

Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) of affected people by humanitarian workers are one of the most basic failures of accountability to the people whom the humanitarian system is supposed to protect. As the Secretary General of the UN has clearly said: “the trust that people put in us should never be broke by despicable acts of sexual exploitation and abuse. It is our responsibility to protect all those who we serve.”

The 2015 IASC statement on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) calls for “reinforcing the responsibilities on PSEA for the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) role to ensure that PSEA has a clear place within the humanitarian architecture”. Besides preventing SEA by humanitarian workers, the aid community also has the responsibility of holding perpetrators to account legally.

In this webinar, panellists uses examples from their own experiences to discuss what mechanisms exist to ensure prevention of SEA, as well as protection of survivors, and what still remains to be done.

Key steps to prevent and address Sexual Exploitation and Abuse at a country level

1. Define roles and lines of accountability at the most senior level (Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), Humanitarian Coordinators (HCs), and Humanitarian Country Teams), and ensure that PSEA is discussed regularly by the HCT.
2. Establish a PSEA Task Force with dedicated leadership that reports directly to the Humanitarian Coordinator.
3. Develop a common reporting platform to facilitate alignment of Code of Conducts, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), data collection, and incident tracking methods among humanitarian actors.
4. Ensure institutionalisation of actions to protect and support survivors, as well as to ensure awareness among affected people.
5. Ensure consistent and frequent awareness raising of humanitarian actors, including the signing of a Code of Conduct and follow-up with prevention and mitigating efforts.
6. Ensure transparent engagement with media on prevention of and response to SEA by both humanitarian actors and peacekeeping personnel.

William Lacy Swing PSEA Champion & IOM

“Sexual Exploitation and Abuse is an insufferable sign of our collective failure to protect those very persons who have been entrusted to our care.”

Leadership by Humanitarian Coordinators are crucial in preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse in the field. It is during operations that this problem occurs and it is there that the responsibility to act is the greatest.

Steps for addressing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

- ◆ Establish a prevention of SEA working group with designated focal points from each HCT member organisation and agency.
- ◆ Identify:
 - Survivor assistance service providers
 - Feedback and complaint mechanisms
 - Agencies’ SEA reporting procedures
- ◆ Set up a coordinated mechanism for assistance to survivors, including inter-agency case management diagram and referral mechanisms for survivors.
- ◆ Advocate for a common reporting platform, templates and SoPs for tracing trends and responding to SEA allegations.

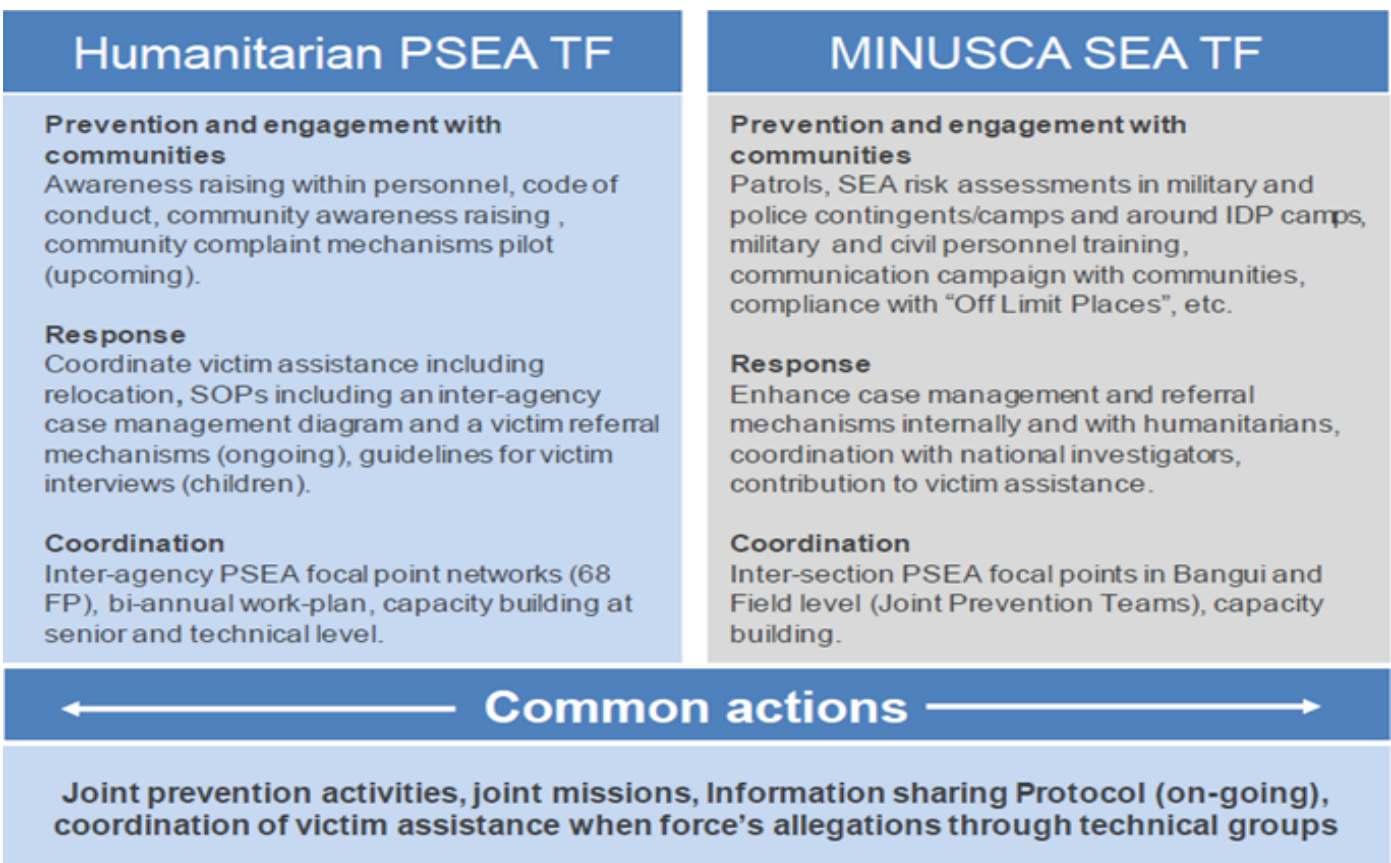
Challenges to preventing and addressing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

- ◆ Lack of senior management leadership who are committed to this issue.
- ◆ Ad hoc measures in responses to exploitation and abuse cases. Until December 2015, PSEA was not institutionalised within the humanitarian community. This resulted in impunity and inconsistent handling of prevention of and response to SEA.
- ◆ Sensitivity and cultural differences challenging the prevention of and

Mohamed Fall HCT PSEA Focal Point & UNICEF Representative in the Central African Republic

“Roles and lines of accountabilities for the Humanitarian Coordinator and Humanitarian Country Team members must be defined.”

The handling of PSEA must be coordinated across the humanitarian community and not just within the HCT. The humanitarian leadership in CAR have recently strengthened measures to prevent and respond to accusations of SEA by reaffirming the zero-tolerance policy, raising awareness amongst humanitarian staff, and holding perpetrators to account.



Practical steps taken in the Central African Republic to stop Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

◆ Strengthened the HC and HCT leadership

- a) Roles and lines of accountabilities for the HC and HCT members were defined
- b) (P)SEA was included as a fixed item on the HCT agenda and highlighted as an area of priority in the annual plan
- c) A PSEA advisor for the HC/HCT (PSEA Task Force Coordinator) was identified

◆ Strengthened coordination mechanism for PSEA

- a) A PSEA Task Force(s) (1 focal point per humanitarian organisation) was established to ensure technical coordination

◆ Guidance material made available to the HC, HCT members and humanitarian workers

- b) Code of Conduct was signed by all humanitarian workers
- c) SoPs, including mapping of assistance and a system of alert, were established
- d) Information sharing protocols were drafted to facilitate information sharing between the humanitarian and the peacekeeping mission

◆ Actions taken by leadership

- a) Support programmes that protect survivors and ensure awareness among affected people
- b) Ensure that the Code of Conduct is signed by humanitarian staff
- c) Make resources (human and technical) available for the implementation and monitoring of the HCT PSEA action plan
- e) Ensure that media engagement is done in a transparent way

Tips on actions to protect and support survivors in Central African Republic

- ◆ **Medical:** Ensure access to initial medical screening and medical follow up for survivors
- ◆ **Psychosocial:** Provide counselling sessions to survivors. While some impact of SEA are immediately visible physically, the most devastating consequences concern the mental and social aspect of the crime
- ◆ **Reintegration:** Support the integration of survivors into their communities. SEA may lead to social exclusion. Survivors may be stigmatised and rejected by their communities
- ◆ **Support during interviews and investigation process:** Ensure support and assistance to survivors during the investigation, as they often come from vulnerable backgrounds and are susceptible to intimidation
- ◆ **Protection/relocation:** When needed for safety reasons, offer the option of relocation for the survivors, especially those who bear witness in legal cases. Remember that stigmatisation and over-exposure of a case of SEA in media may lead to risk of further marginalisation for survivors
- ◆ **Legal:** Ensure support to the legal processes (besides holding perpetrators to account) to survivors as required. For example, SEA sometimes results in pregnancies, which often is an added burden to the survivor

This summary is a combination of presentations from the webinar and broader learnings from the STAIT team. To listen to the full webinar, and to access recordings of past webinars, visit the STAIT website <http://www.deliveraidbetter.org/>

