



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

IASC Inter-Agency
Standing Committee

IASC Championship on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment

Championship Updates

June 2024

The IASC Championship on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (PSEAH) is an excellent opportunity for WFP to lead and bolster collective efforts to create a humanitarian system free of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), and to strengthen our commitment to people affected by crises.



WFP Executive Director Cindy H. McCain assumed the IASC Championship at a critical moment for the humanitarian sector. Conflict and insecurity, the accelerating impacts of climate change, and economic shocks are driving hunger and humanitarian needs around the world.

Hunger and displacement put more people – particularly women and children – at risk of sexual exploitation and abuse, so is more critical than ever that we ensure that people we serve receive assistance without risk of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Executive Director McCain has been a leading voice in the international community, placing a spotlight on crises around the world which require strong attention and assistance. Her persistent advocacy for the increased capacity to safely deliver vital assistance attests to the importance of strong leadership across the sector.

As the current IASC Champion, WFP is leading on PSEAH efforts across the sector. Executive Director McCain is engaging with stakeholders at all levels and acting as an advocate of PSEAH and ensuring it remains high on the agenda across the humanitarian sector.

Through her role and engagements, including missions to some of WFP's largest and most complex operations, she is amplifying the voices of high-risk communities, and increasing awareness and the need for collective and concrete actions to address the ongoing challenges of implementing PSEAH across the sector.

This mid-year update provides the latest information on the Executive Director's actions and WFP's progress toward fulfilling the three key Championship priorities:

- 1 Operationalizing a Victim-Survivor Centered Approach
- 2 Promoting Organizational Culture Change
- 3 Supporting Continued Capacity Strengthening Across the Sector



News and Events

January through June 2024



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TAKES ON IASC PSEAH CHAMPIONSHIP

Upon taking on the Championship on 31 January, WFP issued a [press release](#) outlining WFP's priorities and amplified this across the Executive Director's and corporate social media accounts.

WFP SHARES CHAMPIONSHIP PROGRESS WITH EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

The WFP Championship was launched to the public through an online campaign which included a [video](#) and posts on the IASC website. In addition, the WFP Ethics Office conducted various sessions with interagency groups on WFP's Championship priorities. This included the IASC PSEAH Technical Advisory Group, the UN Working Group on SEA, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee PSEAH Reference Group and multiple in-country PSEA Networks. Briefings were also conducted for the WFP Executive Board and to the IASC Member States.

MEETING OF INVESTIGATORY BODIES ON PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL EXPLOITATION, ABUSE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT (SEAH)

WFP participated in the third meeting of the investigatory bodies on protection from SEAH in order to strengthen discussion around applying victim-centered approaches in line with the work of the IASC Expert Panel on SEAH Investigations, which is co-chaired by the WFP Director of the Office of Inspections and Investigations. The Executive Director provided remarks during the opening session to demonstrate leadership commitment to harmonized and complementary approaches to investigations into SEAH. This meeting was organized jointly by the IASC and the UN Executive Group on Addressing Sexual Harassment as part of their commitment to enhancing accountability, including through trauma-informed investigations.



UN HIGH-LEVEL STEERING GROUP ON PSEA

During the Meeting and Retreat of the UN High-Level Steering Group on PSEA, which was convened by Under-Secretary-General (USG) Christian Saunders, Special Coordinator on Improving the United Nations (UN) Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (OSCSEA), WFP Deputy Executive Director Carl Skau reiterated WFP's commitment to achieve a system free from sexual misconduct and how WFP is using the IASC Championship to build on the extensive work done to date. He also emphasized the importance of strong leadership at all levels to effectively implement PSEAH.

EMPOWERED AID WEBINAR SERIES

WFP joined a panel as part of a webinar series hosted by Empowered Aid. The panel featured organizations discussing their efforts toward working to reduce power disparities among refugee women and girls in the humanitarian context.

HUMANITARIAN NETWORKS AND PARTNERSHIPS WEEK

As the PSEAH Champion, WFP chaired a panel which included experts from UN agencies, IASC and Empowered Aid and focused on how to work together for more effective protections against SEA across the humanitarian sector.

IASC PSEAH GLOBAL WORKSHOP

The Executive Director made a special address at the second annual IASC PSEAH Global Workshop in Brindisi, Italy, which was attended by PSEA Coordinators representing 30 countries, IASC experts, the Special Coordinator on Improving the UN Response to SEA, representatives of the UN Office of the Victims' Rights Advocate and funding partners. The WFP Senior Advisor on PSEA also participated in a panel session focused on PSEA and partnerships.

LEADERSHIP ENGAGEMENT

Since taking on the IASC Championship, the Executive Director has engaged with leadership across the IASC to lead and bolster collective efforts to create a humanitarian system free from SEA and sexual harassment and strengthen our commitment. To mark the beginning of the Championship, the Executive Director wrote to IASC Principals to outline the priorities for the Championship and reiterate that leaders share an absolute commitment to protecting the vulnerable people we serve. The Executive Director has met with UN leadership, including USG Christian Saunders and the (then) Victim Rights Advocate Jane Connors, to discuss her objectives for the Championship and ways to continue strengthening cooperation and ensure a collective accountability and strengthened leadership across the sector. She regularly engages with peers on the importance of this issue and the need for strong leadership across the UN system.

HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR RETREAT

At the Executive Director's initiative, a PSEA agenda item was added to the Humanitarian Coordinators (HC) Retreat in Istanbul, Türkiye. WFP Deputy Executive Director Carl Skau led the session and was joined by USG Christian Saunders. The Deputy Executive Director highlighted the importance of strong leadership from HCs in order to fulfil our obligations to the people we serve, retain the support of our donors and partners, and to sustain the reputation of the UN as a force for good in the world. HCs shared their own experiences and of their role, and shared strategic recommendations for strengthening our collective work on PSEA.





Championship Priorities

Updates and progress

1 Operationalizing a Victim-Survivor Centered Approach

A key initiative under Priority 1 is strengthening information sharing with communities on their rights and PSEA through the “PSEA at the Frontline Phase 2” initiative.

UPDATES

- Comprehensive desk research was conducted, and pilot tools and methodology were developed using a human-centered design approach to ensure that the PSEA communication tools respond to users’ needs.
- Consultations with field staff from East Africa and Latin America were held to ensure the tools are inclusive.
- Communication tools were pre-tested in selected field locations, including South Sudan and the Latin America region.

COMING SOON

- Testing of methodology and tools in selected field locations, integrating human-centered design techniques.
- Consolidation of a package to communicate PSEA with target communities.
- Translations and launch/roll-out of tools.



Another key initiative under Priority 1 is the creation of a global advisory group consisting of women-led NGOs and civil society located in high-risk countries prioritized by the IASC. The advisory group will ensure that all aspects of Championship outputs apply a victim-centered approach relevant to local contexts.

UPDATES

- Consultations were held with the IASC PSEA Technical Advisory Group, Empowered Aid, UN OVRA and OSCSEA.
- The Terms of Reference for the Women’s Advisory Group were drafted and endorsed by the IASC PSEA Technical Advisory Group.
- The Executive Director shared a call for nominations for Advisory Group Members.

COMING SOON

- The Advisory Group members will be selected.
- The Advisory Group will convene for its first consultation through a virtual meeting in Q3 2024.
- An in-person workshop for the Advisory Group will be organized for Q4 2024.



The last key initiative under Priority 1 is strengthening interagency standards on PSEAH by promoting the adoption of tools and resources developed in connection with the UN Executive Group to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Harassment, an initiative to support the practical implementation of a victim-centered approach.

UPDATES

- In conjunction with the Secretariat of the UN Executive Group to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Harassment (EG), WFP has selected the “Results Framework” as the main tool and resource to be further promoted among IASC members. The Results Framework was developed under WFP’s lead and was endorsed by the EG entities in January 2024. The Framework is a set of forward-thinking indicators of good practices for preventing and responding to sexual harassment.
- The Framework is intended to support entities in achieving (i) implementation of the victim-centered approach; (ii) policy progress; (iii) system-wide consistency on sexual harassment through greater collaboration and knowledge sharing; and (iv) enhanced data collection to enable regular and sustainable monitoring of efforts across the system.
- WFP presented the Results Framework at the IASC and UN Executive Group Meeting of Investigatory Bodies on PSEAH in Geneva.

COMING SOON

- WFP will formally submit the Results Framework to IASC members for their review and endorsement to drive tangible improvements in how the sector approaches prevention and response to sexual harassment.



2 Promoting Organizational Culture Change

A key initiative under Priority 2 is updating, re-signing, and disseminating the IASC Principals' Statements on PSEA and Sexual Harassment to reaffirm current IASC leaders' strong commitment to taking action against all forms of sexual misconduct. The Statement also underscores the critical role of humanitarian coordinators and humanitarian country offices in implementing PSEA measures in all response operations.

UPDATES

- Consultations were held with the IASC Technical Advisory Group to define the Statement priorities.
- The respective IASC Principals' Statements on PSEA and Sexual Harassment were updated and combined into one statement on PSEAH.
- The Statement was endorsed by IASC Principals.

COMING SOON

- The Statement will be launched through an IASC video and online campaign, to be conducted in Q3 2024.



Another key initiative under Priority 2 is building and expanding the work of the Implementing Partner Protocol Working Group.

UPDATES

- Consultations with the UN Implementing Partner Protocol Working Group and Adult Learning Specialists were held to inform about the gaps, challenges and priorities regarding the implementation of the joint UN Harmonized Implementation Tool.
- An e-learning course to support the learning of NGOs, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and UN partners on the operationalization of the UN Implementing Partner Protocol Working Group and the use of the PSEA module in the UN Partner Portal is currently being designed.

COMING SOON

- The e-learning course is expected to be finalized by Q3 2024.
- A global IASC "Training of Trainers" work-shop will be organized in Q3 2024. The work-shop will bring together IASC PSEA Coordinators from selected countries and representatives from NGOs and CSOs engaged in the implementation of the UN Implementing Partner PSEA Capacity Assessment tool.

3 Supporting Continued Capacity Strengthening Across the Sector

The key initiatives under Priority 3 are identifying and promoting good practices across the cluster system and the Development of guidelines and resources to contribute to reducing SEA risks in humanitarian assistance, including cash transfers. This is being achieved by working across the cluster system with cooperating partners and financial service providers to enhance and accelerate the integration of PSEA principles and approaches into humanitarian systems.

UPDATES

- The WFP Ethics Office PSEA Team and the IASC PSEAH teams conducted consultations with all cluster leads and their respective PSEA technical leads. This consultation facilitated discussion around supporting capacity strengthening and co-designing deliverables this year to address the challenges facing clusters when implementing PSEA across their respective organizations.
- Consultations were held with IASC members and Empowered Aid to support strengthened programmatic responses and PSEA risk analysis.
- A summary report of key priorities and agreed upon actions for the clusters was prepared and provided to all participating cluster leads and PSEA technical leads.
- The WFP Cash Based Transfer team and WFP Ethics Office PSEA Team developed a non-mandatory assessment to support WFP country offices in evaluating capacities of Financial Service Providers to comply with institutional PSEA standards. This tool was piloted by the WFP Afghanistan country offices.

COMING SOON

- A mapping of available cluster guidance will be conducted and issued to provide an overview of how PSEA is represented across different forms of guidance, policies and handbooks.
- Instructions on how to operationalize PSEA across the cluster system will be developed.
- Good practices and challenges will be collected and shared to build upon the strengths of different clusters and further enhance global work on PSEA.
- WFP will explore opportunities with the IASC to adapt the non-mandatory assessment tool for evaluating capacities of Financial Service Providers into an interagency tool.



Happening within WFP

For the Championship to be successful, collective commitment, full engagement and support has been provided across the organization, showing that PSEAH is a collective responsibility and an institution-wide commitment. The following are some highlights of internal initiatives:

To kick off the Championship internally, the Executive Director sent an email to all employees with a [video](#) outlining the priorities and calling on everyone to play their part. This was further amplified by other visibility initiatives, including a WFPGo article, [social media](#) and visibility around WFP HQ, Regional and Country Offices.

The Executive Director has included PSEAH across her engagements with WFP teams – from Regional Management Team meetings, meetings with senior leadership, all team meetings in Country Office and any opportunity that presents itself.

Regional Directors, Deputy Regional Directors, Country Directors, and Deputy Country Directors were briefed on the Championship, the outlined priorities and provided with tailored guidance and messaging.

In collaboration with the Regional Bureaus, the WFP Ethics Office organized regional PSEA Focal Point workshops in the WFP Regional Bureaus for Panama and Nairobi, bringing together technical PSEA focal points from the respective regional country offices. The workshops were organized to reinforce and continue the operationalization of WFP's commitments on PSEA.

Country Directors participating in the Regional Management Team meetings in the Regional Bureaus in Dakar, Nairobi, and Panama received PSEA senior leader training to support them with information to prevent incidents of SEA in the field, and to foster a culture of zero tolerance for inaction on SEA. Additional sessions for other Regional Bureaus are anticipated.

Newly appointed Country Directors and Deputy Country Directors are continuing to receive PSEA sessions through the induction training programme.

A PSEA training session was integrated into the “Safe and Secure Approaches to Field Environments” (SSAFE) training hosted by the Security Division in Brindisi. The training highlights SEA as a serious breach of trust which can have a negative impact on safety and security in the field.



The Executive Director's Global Outreach

During her global outreach, the Executive Director is leveraging her extensive experience and influence to drive change through the PSEAH Championship. She is dedicated to cultivating a safer and more respectful environment across the humanitarian sector by enhancing protection for victims/survivors and at-risk communities.

The Executive Director has prioritized PSEAH during her recent travels, using the opportunity to do a deep-dive into the issue and what WFP and the humanitarian system is doing. In all of her engagements in the field, the Executive Director emphasized the critical importance of collective efforts to eradicate forms of SEA and sexual harassment from the humanitarian system, and reiterated the important role that every has to play.



“We represent hope.
We give dignity.
We have respect.
And if we don't have respect for one another, how can we have respect for those we serve? In all your dealings with each other and the communities we serve, you represent the finest humanitarian organization there is. So, represent it with pride and make your behaviors and interactions an example.”

Executive Director McCain



The Executive Director's Global Outreach

Some recent examples field missions include:

South Sudan
Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)
Philippines

Zambia
Jordan
Antigua and Barbuda

