

**Statement of Commitment on
Eliminating Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN and Non-UN Personnel**

We, UN and non-UN entities¹, re-affirm our determination to prevent future acts of sexual exploitation and abuse by our personnel².

We note the issuance of this Statement at the High-level Conference on Eliminating Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN and NGO Personnel on 4 December 2006 in New York, USA and welcome future endorsement of this Statement by others.

We recall the six core principles³ relating to sexual exploitation and abuse adopted by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Working Group in July 2002⁴. We note that these principles have been incorporated into organization-specific codes of conduct, rules and regulations and are thereby binding on personnel. In particular, they are binding on United Nations staff and related personnel and outlined in the Secretary-General's Bulletin *Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse* (ST/SGB/2003/13).

We recall that these standards were promulgated to further protect the most vulnerable populations, especially women, girls and boys, and recognize that in countries where we operate, conditions such as poverty, weak rule of law and displacement and the destruction of community structures due to conflict, increase the vulnerability of communities to sexual exploitation and abuse, including human trafficking, by our personnel and others.

We further recall that creating and maintaining a living and working environment that prevents sexual exploitation and abuse is both an individual and organizational responsibility. We note that the management culture of an organization, the equal representation of women and men at all levels of the organization and the adequacy of the living and working environment all contribute to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.

We underline the importance of preventing sexual exploitation and abuse and stress the need for swift, decisive action when such acts do occur. We note the specific duties of managers and commanders in this regard, outlined for the United Nations in section 4 of the Bulletin.

¹ See "Appendix 1: List of Endorsing Entities" for a full listing of entities that endorse the Statement of Commitment on Eliminating Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN and Non-UN Personnel

² "Our personnel" includes: United Nations staff and related personnel such as United Nations Volunteers, personnel or employees of non-United Nations entities or individuals who have entered into a cooperative arrangement with the United Nations (including interns, international and local consultants as well as individual and corporate contractors), experts on mission including United Nations police officers, members of national formed police units, corrections officers and military observers, as well as military members of national contingents serving in United Nations peacekeeping missions); personnel as defined by international organizations and their membership bodies; and personnel of non-governmental organizations.

³ See "Appendix 2: Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse"

⁴ The 2002 Report and Plan of Action of the IASC Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Crises established six core principles relating to sexual exploitation and abuse, to be incorporated into the codes of conduct and staff rules and regulations of member organizations.

We recognize that significant progress has been made to-date to eliminate sexual exploitation and abuse by our personnel, and note that we are at different stages of implementing the IASC six core principles on sexual exploitation and abuse.

We re-affirm our goal of achieving full implementation of these principles as a matter of urgency and commit to:

1. Develop organization-specific strategies to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse. These would include time-bound, measurable indicators of progress to enable our organizations and others to monitor our performance.

2. Incorporate our standards on sexual exploitation and abuse in induction materials and training courses for our personnel.

3. Prevent perpetrators of sexual exploitation and abuse from being (re-)hired or (re-)deployed. This could include use of background and criminal reference checks.

4. Ensure that complaint mechanisms for reporting sexual exploitation and abuse are accessible and that focal points for receiving complaints understand how to discharge their duties.

5. Take appropriate action to the best of our abilities to protect persons from retaliation where allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse are reported involving our personnel.

6. Investigate allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse in a timely and professional manner. This includes the use of appropriate interviewing practice with complainants and witnesses, particularly with children.

7. Take swift and appropriate action against our personnel who commit sexual exploitation and abuse. This may include administrative or disciplinary action, and/or referral to the relevant authorities for appropriate action, including criminal prosecution.

8. Provide basic emergency assistance to complainants of sexual exploitation and abuse.

9. Regularly inform our personnel and communities on measures taken to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse. Such information should be developed and disseminated in-country in cooperation with other relevant agencies and should include details on complaints mechanisms, the status and outcome of investigations in general terms, feedback on actions taken against perpetrators and follow-up measures taken as well as assistance available to complainants and victims.

10. Engage the support of communities and governments to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse by our personnel.

Appendix 1: List of Endorsing Entities

United Nations Entities

1. Department for Disarmament Affairs (DDA), Mr. Nobuaki Tanaka, Under-Secretary-General.
2. Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), Mr. José Antonio Ocampo, Under-Secretary-General.
3. Department of Political Affairs (DPA), Mr. Ibrahim Agboola Gambari, Under-Secretary-General.
4. Department of Public Information (DPI), Mr. Shashi Tharoor, Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information.
5. Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.
6. Department of Safety and Security (DSS), Mr. David Veness, Under-Secretary-General.
7. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Mr. Jacques Diouf, Director-General.
8. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Mr. Jan Egeland, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.
9. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Ms. Louise Arbour, High Commissioner for Human Rights.
10. Office of Legal Affairs (OLA), Mr. Nicolas Michel, Under-Secretary-General / The Legal Counsel.
11. Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA), Mr. Joseph Legwaila Legwaila, Under-Secretary-General.
12. Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (OSRSG/CAAC), Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy, Under-Secretary-General / Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict.
13. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Mr. Kemal Dervis, Administrator.
14. United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), Ms. Anna Tibaijuka, Executive Director.
15. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Mr. Antonio Manuel De Oliveira Guterres, High Commissioner for Refugees.
16. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Ms. Ann Veneman, Executive Director.
17. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Mr. Antonio Maria Costa, Director General.
18. United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG), Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, Director-General.
19. United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), Mr. Jan Mattsson, Executive Director.
20. United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Ms. Karen Koning Abu Zayd, Commissioner-General.
21. World Health Organization (WHO), Dr. Anders Nordström, Acting Director-General.

22. World Food Programme (WFP), Mr. James T. Morris, Executive Director.

Non-United Nations Entities

1. Action By Churches Together (ACT), Mr. John Nduna, Director.
2. Africa and Middle East Refugee Assistance (AMERA UK), Ms. Barbara E. Harrell-Bond, OBE, Executive Director for Overseas Operations.
3. American Refugee Committee International (ARC), Mr. Hugh Parmer, President.
4. Association of Voluntary Agencies for Rural Development (AVARD), Mr. P.M. Tripathi, President.
5. Care International, Mr. Denis Caillaux, Secretary-General.
6. Caritas Internationalis, Mr. Duncan MacLaren, Secretary-General.
7. Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Mr. Ken Hackett, President.
8. Christian Children's Fund (CCF), Mr. Bill Leahey, Acting Chief Executive Officer.
9. Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC-US), Mr Andrew Ryskamp, Director.
10. Concern Worldwide, Mr. Tom Arnold, Chief Executive.
11. End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes (ECPAT International), Ms. Carmen M. Madriñán, Executive Director.
12. HelpAge International (HAI), Mr. Richard Blewitt, Chief Executive.
13. International Medical Corps, Ms. Nancy Aossey, President and Chief Executive Officer.
14. International Rescue Committee (IRC), Mr. George Rupp, President and Chief Executive Officer.
15. Mercy Corps, Ms. Nancy Lindborg, President.
16. Médecins du Monde (MDM France), Dr. Pierre Micheletti, Chairman.
17. Refugees International (RI), Mr. Kenneth H. Bacon, President.
18. Operation USA, Mr. Richard M. Walden, President and Chief Executive Officer.
19. Pact, Inc., Ms. Sarah Newhall, President and Chief Executive Officer.
20. Plan International, Mr. Tom Miller, Chief Executive Officer.
21. Population Action International (PAI), Ms. Amy Cohen, Chief Executive Officer and President.
22. Save the Children UK (SC UK), Ms. Jasmine Whitbread, Chief Executive.
23. Winrock International Institute for Agricultural Development (Winrock International), Mr. Frank Tugwell, President and Chief Executive Officer.
24. Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, Ms. Carolyn Makinson, Executive Director.

Status as of 1 December 2006

Appendix 2: Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse⁵

1. “Sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian workers constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment.
2. Sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief regarding the age of a child is not a defence.
3. Exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour is prohibited. This includes exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries.
4. Sexual relationships between humanitarian workers and beneficiaries are strongly discouraged since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of humanitarian aid work.
5. Where a humanitarian worker develops concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or exploitation by a fellow worker, whether in the same agency or not, he or she must report such concerns via established agency reporting mechanisms.
6. Humanitarian workers are obliged to create and maintain an environment which prevents sexual exploitation and abuse and promotes the implementation of their code of conduct. Managers at all levels have particular responsibilities to support and develop systems which maintain this environment.”

⁵ See Report of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Crises of 13 June 2002, Plan of Action, Section I.A.