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Annual Report on Corporate Policy, Processes and Measures on the Prevention of Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

Executive summary

This document provides an update on the corporate policies, processes and measures on the prevention of sexual harassment and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. It presents the current status of actions and next steps related to the areas of governance and policy, prevention and outreach, reporting channels, investigations, and accountability.

Suggested action by the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees and the Council

The Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees and the Council are invited to take note of the updated information and the actions undertaken by the Organization in its continued actions to ensure the prevention of harassment, sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse as set out in the Annual Report, and to provide guidance as deemed appropriate.

Queries on the substantive content of this document may be addressed to:

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I. Context

1. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) remains committed to an organizational culture that holds zero tolerance regarding any form of harassment, discrimination and sexual misconduct by any of its personnel against another personnel, an FAO partner or a recipient of assistance.
2. In April 2023, at the 172nd Session of the FAO Council, the Director-General presented his [Manifesto](#) for a new mandate and confirmed his priority, with the support of Senior Management and personnel, to continue building an organizational culture that prevents and responds to harassment, discrimination and sexual misconduct.
3. The work of the Organization in this area is coordinated by the Committee on Workplace Conduct and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), established by the Director-General in 2022, which continued to meet regularly over the period since the last report.
4. Following the outcomes of the second Employee Satisfaction Survey (E2S) reported in last year's report ([CL 171/INF/7](#)), a high level *E2S Action Plan on Workplace Conduct & PSEA* has been developed and shared with FAO personnel, which also draws upon the Racism Pulse Survey that was undertaken, the Ethics Survey, the Annual Reports of the Office of the Inspector General and the Ethics Office, the 2023 Annual PSEA Action Plan, and inputs from the members, advisors and observers to the Committee.
5. This action plan, covering a period into 2024, prioritizes the focus of work to be carried out, from the formulation and/or revision of existing policies to the development of training and awareness raising. It is also in line with the 2022 Annual Report of the Oversight Advisory Committee (OAC) in which it suggested that “*the importance of this work continued to be proactively conveyed through outreach and communication activities focusing on promoting FAO’s work on ethical behaviour, integrity and respect*”¹.
6. The 2022 annual reports of the Ethics Office (ETH)² and of the Inspector General (OIG)³ showed that there was a general increase in the number of complaints or requests for advice on workplace and sexual misconduct compared to the previous year. The Ethics Office and the Office of the Inspector General consider that the overall increase in complaints is largely due to FAO's continuous outreach activities and leadership commitment to combating these forms of misconduct and an increased awareness of rights and accountability mechanisms. The upward trend further indicates an enhanced trust in FAO's ability and willingness to tackle these issues. In addition, the launch of the FAO Hotline⁴ has introduced to complainants a new and enhanced confidential channel for reporting.
7. Experience and year on year comparisons of data extrapolated from the above-mentioned reports clearly indicate that progress is being made, but that a concerted effort is needed to ensure that FAO continues to pursue a *proactive* and *not reactive* approach in addressing harassment, discrimination, sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse. At the forefront of this effort is the demonstrated commitment and leadership of the Director-General and Senior Management in setting an example and encouraging all FAO personnel to play their respective roles in the shared responsibility for tackling these issues, and in doing so, safeguard a working environment that is trusted, respectful and inclusive, and which promotes the rights and protection of communities served by FAO's work.
8. This report reflects actions between September 2022 and September 2023.

¹ [FC 195/12](#) - FAO Oversight Advisory Committee - 2022 Annual Report.

² [FC 195/14](#) - 2022 Annual Report of the Ethics Office.

³ [FC 195/13.1](#) - 2022 Annual Report of the Inspector General.

⁴ Refer to paragraph 43 for further information on FAO Hotline.

II. Progress in alignment with UN system-wide initiatives

9. FAO continues to fully support and participate in several UN initiatives such as the [Task Force on addressing racism and promoting dignity for all in the United Nations](#), the [CEB Working Group on Diversity Equity and Inclusion](#), the [UN Disability Inclusion Strategy](#) and [UN system-wide Action Plan](#) (UN-SWAP).

10. In reference to the need to create a diverse and inclusive environment for personnel from all backgrounds, funds have been allocated to recruit an expert to strengthen practices around workplace diversity and inclusion. In addition, an Action Plan on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) is also being finalized based on the recommendations included in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on “[Measures and mechanisms for preventing and addressing racism and racial discrimination in the institutions of the United Nations system](#)”, published in March 2023. The Action Plan will be part of organizational initiatives to promote the importance of a diverse workforce and a respectful workplace where everyone feels included, valued, and respected regardless of their background, experience, gender, nationality, race, ethnic origins, religion, language, marital status, sexual orientation, age, disability or socioeconomic status.

Prevention of sexual harassment

11. The Deputy Director-General and the Director of Human Resources (CSH) are members of, and continued to actively engage in, various UN system-wide fora, in particular the work of the [United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination \(CEB\) High Level Committee Management \(HLCM\) Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment within the organizations of the UN system](#).

12. In this regard, the Organization fully supported the establishment of the *UN Executive Group to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Harassment* (Executive Group), approved by the HLCM in April 2023 which will succeed, in 2024, the time bound CEB Task Force on the same topic. Terms of Reference of the Executive Group have been developed and the priority objectives will be: (i) development of a coordinated system-wide approach to sexual harassment prevention and response, (ii) regular monitoring of progress and evaluation of impact initiatives and (iii) capacity building, and communication and engagement with relevant stakeholders.

13. The Organization also participated in the launch of the [UN System-wide Knowledge Hub on Addressing Sexual Harassment in the UN System](#) developed by UN Women. This tool is the first of its kind to bring together UN system-wide resources on addressing sexual harassment. It will serve as a long-term solution to improve knowledge sharing on the UN’s efforts to eliminate sexual harassment, by bringing together resources, support services and best practices from the UN system and beyond.

14. FAO participates in the annual survey of CEB entities on reporting of sexual harassment organized by the CEB Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment within the organizations of the UN system. The purpose of the survey is to collate data on policies and practices for preventing and addressing sexual harassment.

15. In reference to the survey conducted in June 2023, while results show an increase in the overall number of formal reports received by UN organizations, the total number of personnel has also increased, thus making the data remain relatively stable compared to previous years. The data confirms that sexual harassment is a gender issue and one related to power differentials: the affected individual in 95 percent of cases was female and the alleged offender in 97 percent of cases was male. In the majority of cases, the alleged offender was more senior than the affected individual (57 percent) and in 20 percent of reports received, the affected individual was an external person. Finally, just under two thirds of the entities reported the office environment as one of the most frequent situations where sexual harassment took place (64 percent) with most incidents (79 percent) occurring in the field (missions, country offices and sub-offices). The results of this survey reflect data provided by FAO for cases of sexual harassment.

Investigations

16. OIG is a member of the United Nations Representatives of Investigative Services (UNRIS) established for the purpose of strengthening investigation practices and professionalism in the UN system by, among other activities, developing and adopting common principles to guide the investigative process on matters of specific and common interest for the UN investigative functions. OIG participated in three virtual meetings and one in-person meeting of the UNRIS. In addition, OIG participated in benchmarking surveys on case management systems and abusive behaviour allegations.

Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA)

17. The Director-General participated in Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Principal level strategic discussions on PSEA, contributing to setting the vision and agenda of the UN and humanitarian sector's partners to PSEA. The Deputy Director-General and the Director of the Office of Emergencies and Resilience (OER), as the respective FAO Senior PSEA Champion and Senior PSEA Focal Point, also attend senior level meetings under the IASC Deputies Group, which hosts discussions on critical humanitarian issues requiring inter-agency policy, attention and response.

18. In May 2023, the Director-General met with the UN's Special Coordinator on improving the United Nations response to sexual exploitation and abuse, Mr Christian F. Saunders. The meeting was an opportunity to, at the highest level, re-emphasize FAO's commitment to zero tolerance for SEA, highlight ongoing efforts to prevent, mitigate and respond to SEA, discuss challenges, and ensure continued strong collective action and collaboration, as part of the UN system-wide approach to PSEA.

19. FAO actively participates in the IASC Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on PSEA, chaired by the IASC Senior PSEA Coordinator, which meets on monthly basis. In addition, FAO takes part in the monthly meetings of the UN PSEA Working Group, organized under the auspices of the Office of the UN Special Coordinator for Strengthening the UN's Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (OSCSEA). Participation in these fora ensures FAO's comprehensive approach to PSEA is aligned with system-wide best practices, core principles and inter-agency efforts to strengthen PSEA across the UN and its partners.

20. As part of the UN system-wide approach to PSEA, FAO developed an Annual Action plan on PSEA in November 2022, covering key activities and deliverables on PSEA in 2023 across the Organization. In line with requirements, the Action Plan was submitted to the OSCSEA.

21. Since 2018, the UN Secretary-General has requested all UN Senior Leaders to certify through a Management Letter to their Governing Bodies key actions taken to prevent and respond to SEA. In that regard, the End-of-Year Management Letter on PSEA from the FAO Director-General to the UN Secretary-General was submitted on 26 January 2023.

22. In July 2023, the FAO Senior PSEA Champion shared the annual UN system-wide "pulse" survey to gather information on perceptions of UN personnel regarding SEA with all FAO Representatives globally. As part of the dissemination, FAO's "zero tolerance" policy to SEA was emphasized, highlighting the importance of the UN system-wide survey on PSEA and requesting support from FAO Representatives to ensure FAO personnel complete the survey.

23. In April 2023, FAO became a participant to the [United Nations Partner Portal](#) (UNPP) and is currently working to incorporate it in its processes. The tool is an online UN co-shared portal which aims to simplify and harmonize UN processes for partnering with non-governmental organizations (NGOs/CSOs/CBOs). Current UNPP members are the UN Secretariat, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UN WOMEN, and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Crisis Bureau. UNPP focuses on selection and verification of non-governmental partners, provides a central database for new and existing civil society organization (CSO) partner registration and for due diligence and management of calls for expression of interest. UNPP allows UN agencies to share information about partners, including performance

issues and risk flags. It houses a tool for the UN Implementing Partner PSEA Capacity Assessment, which will facilitate the undertaking of, and exchanging with participating UN Organizations, the required PSEA capacity assessments and strengthening requirements of prospective CSO partners, in line with the [United Nations Protocol On Allegations Of Sexual Exploitation And Abuse Involving Implementing Partners](#) (UN IP Protocol) issued in 2018, and the [IASC United Nations Implementing Partner PSEA Capacity Assessment](#) tool (2020).

III. Progress in FAO

A. Governance and Policy

Governance

24. The Committee on Workplace Conduct and PSEA has continued to meet regularly and allowed for fruitful exchanges among the key stakeholders in the areas of workplace conduct and PSEA, to ensure a collaborative and cohesive approach in this crucial area. The committee is assisted by two informal working groups, the Integrity Network covering workplace conduct (headed by the Director, CSH) and another group specifically covering protection from sexual exploitation and abuse matters (headed by the Director, OER).

25. In this regard, with effect from 1 September 2023, pending the appointment of a new Deputy Director-General and to ensure continuity of work of the Committee, the Director-General has designated Ms Maria Helena Semedo, Deputy Director-General, as interim Chair of the Committee on Workplace Conduct and PSEA.

26. During 2023, the Organization has expanded the reach into the field of the Ombuds Office with the development of the Respectful Workplace Facilitator network, with volunteers in many of the Decentralized Offices providing a local first point of contact for Ombuds-related issues. Feedback from the Ombuds Respectful Workplace Facilitators will help inform the Ombuds Office on the level of support needed in the field and highlight areas of concern.

27. From the end of May 2023, FAO has strengthened its PSEA capacity through the recruitment of a Technical Officer – PSEA to provide technical support on PSEA across the Organization. The position is hosted by OER as the organizational entity responsible for coordinating PSEA efforts. Work on PSEA is further supported by a PSEA Specialist consultancy at headquarters as FAO continues to step up measures and support to country operations in this critical area. Further resources and capacity will be required going forward to continue to provide substantive technical support and guidance, especially in high-risk emergency contexts.

28. Over the past year, FAO has hosted regular meetings with Regional and Subregional PSEA Focal Points and Alternates. These meetings facilitate information-sharing on PSEA requirements and on developments at the global level covering both FAO and inter-agency initiatives by the UN and IASC, with Focal Points across FAO to ensure they are up-to-date with recent developments and best practices. It also allows for sharing of information on regional and country level PSEA efforts and challenges, and for more in-depth technical level presentations and discussions.

29. From September 2023, regular meetings will also be held with country level PSEA Focal Points, and an online community of practice will be activated and moderated by headquarters technical PSEA experts to support capacity building, information sharing and learning from best practices and ongoing efforts across operations.

Policy

30. The Organization is in the process of revising both the PSEA and Prevention of Sexual Harassment policies.

31. The new Policy on Prevention of Sexual Harassment will internalize and operationalize the victim-centred approach and incorporate other forms of workplace misconduct, such as harassment, discrimination and abuse of authority, which share the same channels for prevention, response and reporting mechanisms, in line with the approach of other UN Organizations.

32. With reference to the PSEA Policy, FAO is in the final phase of its revision. The work is being coordinated by the FAO PSEA Working Group, overseen by the Director of OER as Chair of the Working Group, reporting to the Committee on Workplace Conduct and PSEA.

33. The policy revision will update existing Policies – Administrative Circular (AC) 2013/27 and AC 2018/02 – to ensure recent developments and best practices adopted by the IASC and the UN on PSEA are strongly integrated in FAO's policy framework to effectively prevent, mitigate and respond to risks and acts of SEA. In particular, the updated policy will focus on ensuring the adoption of a strong victim/survivor-centred approach, integrating PSEA capacity and compliance of FAO implementing partners and service providers, strengthening SEA reporting procedures, and clarifying key roles and responsibilities for PSEA across the Organization as part of a comprehensive, "whole of organization" approach.

34. The process of revising the policy experienced a delay due to a temporary gap in technical PSEA expertise, which has since been addressed. The revised Policy will be complemented by technical guidance and capacity building to support implementation, especially focusing on FAO operations in high-risk emergency contexts.

B. Prevention and outreach

35. Regarding awareness raising activities conducted in 2022 and 2023, the Organization organized several webinars in order to increase knowledge in areas that directly and indirectly help to prevent sexual harassment, which include the following:

- i. two webinars on Understanding harassment, abuse of authority and interpersonal conflicts;
- ii. webinars on Addressing Racism and Creating Inclusive Workplace Practices;
- iii. on occasion of the International Women's Day, 8 March, one webinar on "Embracing diversity, equity and inclusion in Security and Investigations";
- iv. coaching training courses for managers to teach the know-how of impactful coaching conversations to managers and leaders who are playing an important role in facilitating the development of individuals;
- v. reflective Leadership Dialogues on several topics to foster psychological safety, open and inclusive environments;
- vi. one webinar on active bystander intervention; and
- vii. in all Ethics Office briefings on ethical conduct, it emphasizes its role in fostering an ethical workplace culture at FAO, with references to the standards of conduct and the importance of creating a safe environment for everyone.

36. The Ethics Office also provided training on prevention of sexual harassment in the context of the Security Services-led Women Security Awareness Training (WSAT). The Office has also carried out a number of bilateral briefings with various Country Offices and Divisions.

37. Outreach material has been developed to raise awareness about FAO's firm stance against sexual harassment and SEA, reporting and dispute resolution mechanisms, and whistleblower protection. Materials include posters (also available in Spanish and French), videos, guidance documents and Intranet articles.

38. OIG, Ethics Office, the Ombuds Office, CSH, Legal Office, OER and the Staff Counsellor collaborated closely in promoting ethics, staff integrity and protection from SEA in the Organization. This included regular meetings and joint activities on clarification of roles and responsibilities of the different integrity stakeholder offices and awareness building on workplace conduct, webinars on the prevention of harassment and abuse of authority, and provision of communication material and guidance. The Ethics Office, Ombuds Office and OIG have also carried out joint missions to the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) and the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP), which included a visit to the FAO Representation in Pakistan, to raise awareness about their mandates.

39. The Ethics Office is organizing Active Bystander Training of trainers to be held by the end of 2023, as evidence highlights the importance of bystander intervention to create a harmonious work environment and tackle micro-aggressions within the workplace.
40. Every quarter, the Director-General hosts a briefing to Senior Management to update them on the current situation of investigations and allegations in the working environment, answer specific practical questions and listen to proposals based on direct experience of managers.
41. Additional key awareness and outreach initiatives on PSEA have been conducted in several Regional and Country Offices and included:
- i. In June 2023 a PSEA information session was delivered by OER at the FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa (RNE). The session covered core PSEA principles and obligations and was attended by more than 120 participants. Dedicated PSEA awareness sessions have also been conducted with a number of country operations including Ethiopia, Haiti and Kosovo, as well as technical support for a training event organised for FAO implementing partners in Chad.
 - ii. The Regional Office for Africa (RAF) hosted two **events to raise awareness** on critical PSEA issues in the region: in December 2022, a webinar took place to share information on PSEA and experiences between countries in the region and in June 2023, a webinar was organized on “Reporting Sexual Exploitation and Abuse: Challenges, Lessons Learned, and Implications for Enhancing Reporting SEA Incidents”. Both webinars saw strong participation from the Regional Office, Subregional Offices and Country Offices in the region, including PSEA Focal Points.
 - iii. In the second half of 2022, in the Subregional Office for Eastern Africa (SFE), a consultant PSEA Expert provided **technical support to nine countries** in the region, including through online workshops and trainings in some contexts. In July 2023, SFE conducted a two and half day PSEA Action Planning workshop for over 20 PSEA Focal Points and Alternates in the subregion, with the support of the PSEA Expert consultant. The workshop also included participation and presentations from OER, OIG on the FAO Hotline and Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment (OCB) on grievance and redress mechanisms. Further technical support has been provided to the countries by the PSEA Expert consultant during August 2023 on the update or development of country level PSEA Standard Operating Procedures.
 - iv. In the Latin America and the Caribbean region, FAO Offices in Argentina, Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, and Venezuela have implemented initiatives over the past year to strengthen PSEA at the country level. Key activities in different contexts included PSEA awareness raising and outreach with FAO programme beneficiaries and affected communities, implementing partners, and FAO personnel; delivery of trainings and workshops for FAO personnel and partners; development of tailored PSEA guidance and resources; and active participation in inter-agency PSEA Networks. Within the Subregional Office for the Caribbean all personnel were sensitized on PSEA, and PSEA information materials have been distributed to personnel and are available for distribution to project beneficiaries and implementing partners.
 - v. **Ongoing, daily technical support to emergency focus countries on PSEA** – such as in the design of awareness raising material, the finalization of country office PSEA work plans, support to the establishment of grievance and redress mechanism and general staff awareness training.

C. Reporting channels and investigations

42. Harassment, abuse of authority, sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse all amount to serious forms of misconduct under FAO's internal rules and regulations, and as such can be reported directly to OIG for review and investigation. Complainants from inside or outside of the Organization can report allegations to OIG through a number of different confidential reporting channels. In addition to the traditional reporting channels, such as a dedicated confidential email

address, reporting allegations directly to OIG personnel whether in person or in writing, and submitting a letter to OIG through post, in 2022 OIG launched a new reporting mechanism called the FAO Hotline. The FAO Hotline is gradually becoming the principal channel to report allegations of misconduct to OIG.

43. Hosted by an independent service provider on behalf of FAO, the FAO Hotline has enhanced confidentiality features and can be directly accessed worldwide and free of charge in different ways, 24 hours a day, and 365 days a year. Allegations can be reported through phone, as the Hotline includes dedicated local phone numbers accessible in 168 countries with interpretation services in 162 languages, or through a tailor-made online reporting form for FAO personnel and external parties, available in all official UN languages. OIG is currently working on making the online reporting form even more accessible by adding translations in additional languages.

44. The FAO Hotline serves to enhance global accessibility to report allegations of possible misconduct to FAO. Specifically, it contributes to OIG's visibility and reachability to beneficiaries and vulnerable individuals providing them the ability to report allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse in a safe and discreet manner. Furthermore, the FAO Hotline, with its enhanced confidentiality features, provides FAO personnel with an even safer platform to bring forward allegations of harassment, abuse of authority and sexual harassment. Additionally, the FAO Hotline also facilitates confidential follow-up communication with individuals who choose to remain anonymous, allowing them to check the status of their report and provide any additional information that may be necessary. This feature has encouraged complainants who wish to remain anonymous to still reach out to OIG and receive and submit relevant information when reporting allegations of misconduct.

45. In 2022, OIG commenced an awareness-building campaign in collaboration with other Offices to promote the FAO Hotline internally within the Organization and externally among partners and beneficiaries. This information campaign is ongoing and includes visual materials, digital promotion tools, webinars, etc.

46. Specifically with regard to investigations, [FAO's Investigation Guidelines](#)⁵ ensure the effectiveness and independence of the investigation process, as well as fairness to all parties involved in that process. These incorporate principles and key aspects of the victim-centred approach, in line with the Investigators' Manual for Investigations of Sexual Harassment Complaints in the United Nations.

47. The Organization also participates in the iReport SEA Tracker, which the UN developed starting from 2018. The iReport SEA Tracker presents detailed information on allegations received, updated in real time on, inter alia, the date of incident and date of reporting, the type of victim (adult or child), the nature of the allegation, the support provided to the victim, the status of the investigation, the final action, and any referral to national authorities for criminal accountability.

48. All Country Offices in FAO are required to have PSEA focal points available to receive information regarding possible acts of SEA. Should such information be shared with the PSEA Focal Point, they are required to immediately report the information to OIG for assessment and investigations according to established mechanisms.

49. Relevant Offices of FAO headquarters are also working with Country Offices to strengthen country-level complaints and feedback mechanisms (also known as grievance and redress mechanisms) to ensure such mechanisms have adequate measures in place to safely and confidentially receive allegations of misconduct, including possible acts of SEA, and to ensure such allegations are promptly reported to OIG and victims/survivors receive appropriate protection, assistance and support. In addition, Country Offices are encouraged to take part in inter-agency community-based complaints and feedback mechanisms (CBCMs), where these are established through the local inter-agency PSEA Network, and with the oversight of the Humanitarian Country Team or UN Country Team.

⁵ Administrative Circular 2021/06, issued in April 2021

D. Accountability

50. The Administrative Circular on the Practice of the Organization in Disciplinary Matters (AC 2023/05) was issued on 21 March 2023 in all FAO languages. This Administrative Circular, which is issued on an annual basis, provides information on disciplinary action taken in respect of staff members, as well as administrative action taken against other personnel who are found to have engaged in misconduct during the previous year. It includes a specific section on harassment and sexual harassment. Whilst the identities of the individuals concerned are not disclosed, sufficient factual information is provided to allow the Administrative Circular to serve as an awareness-raising instrument and provide real examples of actions that constitute unsatisfactory conduct, as well as the consequences of such conduct.

51. FAO continues to use the UN “ClearCheck” Database, along with other 33 UN Entities. The Organization participates in ClearCheck by entering records of its personnel into the Database and by using it for screening candidates for recruitment, as provided for under FAO procedures for the use of ClearCheck screening Database (published in Administrative Circular 2021/04, March 2021). The Database is currently used for the screening of candidates for both staff member and other personnel positions. As of 1 May 2023, 724 individuals with established allegations related to sexual harassment and SEA were recorded in the Database.

52. OIG maintains statistical data of SEA and sexual harassment related cases, as well as harassment and abuse of authority cases and advisory services. This data (summarized for 2022 in paragraphs 5 and 6) is reported each year as part of the Annual Report of the Inspector General presented to the Finance Committee.

53. Questions on PSEA were further strengthened in the Internal Control Questionnaire for 2023. This includes additional questions to gather information on the amount of time country-level PSEA Focal Points are able to dedicate to carrying out PSEA responsibilities to ensure the appointment of PSEA Focal Points is meaningful and gauge where further support may be required. A question was also included regarding participation in country-level inter-agency PSEA networks to ensure that, where relevant and possible, FAO country presences are benefitting from and aligned with inter-agency PSEA initiatives and resources.

54. Additional questions have also been included within the Country Annual Reporting requirements, which now comprehensively gathers information regarding 1) the country context, including questions to identify contexts where risks of SEA are likely to be increased; and 2) measures in place to prevent and respond to SEA, including access to safe and confidential reporting mechanisms and victim/survivor assistance and support.

IV. Next Steps: Action 2023-2024

55. FAO will continue to approach any form of harassment and sexual misconduct holistically by focusing on prevention at all levels, addressing culture change and promoting and strengthening reporting options. The Organization continues its commitment to transparency to allow FAO personnel, as well as colleagues in the UN system, to understand progress to date and future work in this area.

56. In recent years, FAO has focused its efforts on taking urgent action to better address complaints, provide training and raise awareness. There is now a need to locate these actions within a longer-term context that identifies the key drivers of discrimination, abuse of authority, harassment, including sexual harassment, and sexual exploitation and abuse, and our goals and objectives to address them. In this respect, the E2S action plan on Workplace Conduct and PSEA also provides a baseline to implement actions to strengthen its four focus areas, in close coordination with UN system-wide initiatives:

- a) **Governance and policy.** The Organization will finalize the revision of the policies on PSEA and Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Discrimination and Abuse of Authority, ensuring a victim-centred approach and clarity of roles and responsibilities.

- b) **Prevention and outreach.** FAO will continue to increase knowledge and awareness as an important component of primary prevention, starting with the development of an intranet page with joint actions and an overview to link to individual homepages and relevant UN system pages. Activities also include continuous outreach, awareness raising and dissemination efforts of the FAO Hotline among FAO personnel in headquarters and Decentralized Offices, FAO partners and beneficiaries and continuous support in training relevant stakeholders to identify, report and support victims in reporting allegations of sexual harassment, SEA and other abusive conduct, in accordance with the victim- and survivor--centred approach. Existing mandatory training courses will be reviewed based on the update of the relevant policies. Specifically in reference to PSEA, (i) a strategy to develop PSEA capacity across the Organization, focusing in particular on country, Subregional and Regional PSEA Focal Points, will be developed during the second half of 2023; ii) any operational guidance developed for FAO to implement the UN IP Protocol will be integrated in the FAO Project Cycle Guidance, and (iii) FAO will invest in building project management capacities, including managing SEA risks that have been identified through the application of the [FAO Framework for Environment and Social Management](#) (FESM) in the FAO Project Cycle.
- c) **Reporting channels and investigations.** Under the framework of FAO's revised PSEA Policy, additional guidance, technical resources and support will be provided to country operations to improve safe and confidential reporting on SEA. This includes strengthening country PSEA Focal Point capacity to respond to allegations of SEA in line with a victim/survivor-centred approach. FAO is also working to train the Respectful Workplace Facilitators Network in Decentralized Offices.
- d) **Accountability.** The Organization will strengthen risk management and internal controls. In detail the Organization will: (i) identify and map FAO operations in high-risk SEA contexts which includes analysing results from the annual UN PSEA Survey, results from the Internal Control Questionnaire and Country Annual Reports, as well as the IASC Mapping of high-risk SEA contexts; and (ii) following the official on-boarding of the UNPP in April 2023, the UNPP PSEA Module on assessing the PSEA capacity of implementing partners will be gradually rolled out.