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## United Nations Children's Fund

Executive Board

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### **Update on metrics and indicators used to measure progress on tackling sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment and inform strategies, policies and procedures**

#### *Summary*

The present report is submitted pursuant to Executive Board decision 2022/6, which “requests an update from UNICEF on metrics used to measure progress on tackling sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment and how integrated results and resources framework indicators on sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment have aligned with relevant indicators of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system and those of other United Nations development system agencies and ensure that data obtained, including on allegations, using these metrics and indicators and subsequent analysis, systematically inform strategies, policies and procedures”.

The report provides an update on the work of UNICEF to develop metrics and indicators used to measure progress on tackling sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment and inform strategies, policies and procedures.

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\* [E/ICEF/2023/1](#).



## I. Overview

1. The present report provides an update on the metrics that UNICEF currently uses to measure progress on addressing sexual misconduct (sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment).<sup>1</sup> With respect to the metrics in the Integrated Results and Resources Framework (IRRF) of the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2022–2025, the report describes:

(a) Elements of the UNICEF Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment;

(b) Alignment of the Strategy to the metrics;

(c) Alignment of the metrics with those in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (QCPR), and the associated United Nations monitoring framework;

(d) Similarities between UNICEF metrics and those employed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women);

(e) How UNICEF metrics and allegations inform strategies, policies and procedures pertaining to sexual misconduct, including action plans.

2. The present report complements the information provided by UNICEF in its 2021 QCPR narrative, “Report on the implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system” (UNICEF/2022/EB/9) and the “Integrated Results and Resources Framework of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025” (IRRF) (E/ICEF/2021/25/Add.1). The present document includes information on metrics that are reported on to the Board through other existing, separate reports, including on implementation of the UNICEF Strategic Plan (IRRF), on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and organizational culture efforts, on ethics, and on internal audit and investigations. In particular, substantive information about the work of UNICEF and progress on the metrics, the organization’s headquarters-level action plan on preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse, and progress on sexual harassment more broadly, will be provided at the annual session of 2023.<sup>2</sup>

3. Throughout the present report, references are included to areas where other United Nations system entities have similar indicators to those of UNICEF, in an effort to highlight areas of alignment and coherence.

4. Overall, UNICEF has a range of metrics in place to track progress on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse at global, regional and country levels, using different means of verification, tools and mechanisms. In line with United Nations inter-agency efforts, UNICEF is increasingly using country-level data more systematically to inform action, and particularly in terms of programmatic interventions around accountability to affected populations, community-based mechanisms and protection assistance. With respect to sexual harassment, metrics are also in place, however, there is room to further systematize and coordinate data collection, analysis and use within the organization. The work of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment within the organizations of the United Nations system, particularly on the annual questionnaire on improved reporting of sexual harassment in the United Nations system, has been useful

<sup>1</sup> Pursuant to Executive Board decision 2022/6, para. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Pursuant to Executive Board decision 2022/6, paras. 6, 7, 12.

in benchmarking UNICEF against other United Nations entities and in indicating areas for further progress to be made.

## II. Goals of the UNICEF Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (2019)

5. The Strategy was adopted in 2019 to help fulfil recommendations of UNICEF independent reviews concerning sexual misconduct. It is built around the following five elements, each measured by distinct but mutually reinforcing indicators:

- (a) An organizational culture of zero tolerance built through accountability, prevention and gender equality;
- (b) A quality response that is survivor-centred;
- (c) Reporting mechanisms that are safe and trusted;
- (d) Swift and credible investigations and sanctions;
- (e) Engaging partners in the fight against sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment.

### A. Organizational culture of zero tolerance

6. The Strategy identifies three kinds of accountability:

(a) *Organizational accountability.* On sexual exploitation and abuse, UNICEF measures organizational accountability through UNICEF headquarters and country-level action plans on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. At the headquarters level, UNICEF uses the template provided by the United Nations Office of the Special Coordinator on improving the United Nations response to sexual exploitation and abuse, which embodies a survivor-centred approach. The template and UNICEF include policy and entity oversight as an outcome. These action plans contribute to the United Nations monitoring framework indicator 3.6.11.<sup>3</sup>

- i. With respect to accountability for addressing sexual harassment, the office of the UNICEF Deputy Executive Director, Management, is the overall accountable office for coordination of sexual harassment efforts. The 2022 CEB questionnaire on improved reporting of sexual harassment in the United Nations system is a key tool for ongoing monitoring in this area. The UNICEF Gender Action Plan, 2022–2025 includes indicators related to gender parity in staffing, which can have a positive impact on encouraging reporting of sexual harassment as well as preventive actions. UNICEF will continue to report to the Executive Board on actions taken to address sexual harassment, as requested by it, in furtherance of the United Nations monitoring framework indicator 3.6.14.

(b) *Leadership accountability.* UNICEF measures leadership accountability for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse through country action plans (an element of IRRF indicator E.3.5), based on common United Nations templates. The templates cover each area of the Strategy, as executed at the local level. UNICEF understands that UNDP, UNOPS, UNFPA and UN-Women all employ a similar indicator. Similar plans at a country level will contribute to United Nations country

<sup>3</sup> “Percentage of entities that have a Prevention of SEA action plan using a victim-centered approach at entity level”: [QCPR Monitoring Framework \(2021-24\)](#). Other indicators in the IRRF also support organizational accountability, such as the number of internal and external audit opinions outstanding for more than 18 months (E.3.2 and E.3.3).

team protection from sexual exploitation and abuse action plans, measured by the United Nations monitoring framework indicator 3.6.10. UNICEF will monitor leadership addressing sexual harassment as part of its Action Plan 2022–2024 to respond to the most recent certification of Economic Dividends for Gender Equality (EDGE), in furtherance of the United Nations monitoring framework indicator 3.6.14.

(c) *Individual accountability.* UNICEF measures perceptions of individual accountability through the number of offices that meet benchmarks for psychological safety and trust (IRRF indicator E.4.4). Psychological safety is a fundamental requirement for a speak-up culture, and one where reporting possible misconduct is practiced by all employees without fear of retaliation. The headquarters-level action plan template used by UNICEF for preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse, measured by the United Nations monitoring framework indicator 3.6.14, also requires staff to be assessed on safeguarding as part of performance management.

7. *Prevention* efforts in the UNICEF Strategy feature safeguarding risk registration and management at every office (measured by IRRF indicator E.3.4), training, and internal and external communications. UNOPS and UNDP have similar indicators. For both sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, UNICEF measures leadership training on gender equality (an element of IRRF indicator E.3.5), and initiatives at the office-level to align staff behaviours with UNICEF core values (IRRF indicator E.5.2).<sup>4</sup> The UNICEF 2022–2024 EDGE Action Plan calls for employment of social and behavioural change strategies addressing sexual harassment. UNOPS and UNDP have related awareness-raising indicators.

8. With respect to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, partner capacity is vital; the *proportion* of civil society partners assessed at full or medium capacity is an element of IRRF indicator E.3.5. UNOPS has a related indicator pertaining to assessment of partner capacity.

9. Gender equality, including gender balance in staffing, is considered protective against sexual misconduct. UNICEF will monitor the percentage of its female staff at each level (IRRF indicator E.4.1 and a contributor to the UNICEF Gender Action Plan indicator H5.2). This indicator corresponds to indicators 3.6.6–3.6.9 of the United Nations QCPR monitoring framework.

## **B. A quality response that is survivor-centred**

10. With respect to sexual exploitation and abuse, UNICEF establishes response procedures in accordance with the United Nations Victims Assistance Protocol. UNICEF IRRF indicator E.3.5 includes an element that measures the extent to which country offices have established and implemented procedures in accordance with the Protocol. UNDP and UNOPS have similar indicators. The existence of victim assistance mechanisms is part of the United Nations template action plan used by UNICEF, and captured by United Nations monitoring framework indicator 3.6.11.

11. With respect to victim assistance related to sexual harassment, UNICEF has supported them with one or a combination of the available support tools, including interim work arrangements, change of reporting lines, flexible work arrangements or remote work, provision of staff counselling service, referral recommendations to seek medical support by personal or United Nations medical practitioners, or putting alleged perpetrators on administrative leave pending investigations. Where needed, a review of the security situation applies for potential repeat or post-reporting risks. Support is provided either as continuous measures or as needed at any or all stages of

<sup>4</sup> The headquarters-level action plan template used by UNICEF for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, measured by the United Nations monitoring framework indicator 3.6.14, also requires risk management and staff training.

the process. Further, a key measure is that victims are provided clear explanations and full information on the process and involved steps themselves; and UNICEF applies sensitive and trauma-informed interviewing techniques. However, more efforts are needed to determine how best to ensure a safe, enabling environment and better victim support during and after investigative processes on sexual harassment.

### **C. Reporting mechanisms that are safe and trusted**

12. With respect to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, external (community) reporting channels are important. IRRF indicator 3.1.8 measures the number of children and adults, within each country where UNICEF has a country office, who have access to a safe and accessible channel to report sexual exploitation and abuse. For internal reporting of misconduct, IRRF indicator E.3.5 includes an element for establishment of internal and partner reporting mechanisms, and training on associated reporting procedures. UNOPS and UNDP have similar incident-reporting indicators. The existence of internal and external incident reporting mechanisms, with whistle-blower protection, is also part of the United Nations template action plan captured by United Nations monitoring framework indicator 3.6.11, and contributes to the United Nations country team reporting mechanism indicator 3.6.13.

13. Internal incident reporting mechanisms for sexual harassment, as well as other forms of interpersonal misconduct, have been established. Trust in the mechanisms for reporting misconduct is measured by organizational benchmarks related to psychological safety and security in IRRF indicator E.4.4. Over the past several years, allegations of potential misconduct made to the UNICEF Office of Internal Audit and Investigations have increased significantly, potentially indicating growing awareness of, and trust in, reporting mechanisms by UNICEF employees and partners.

### **D Swift and credible investigations and sanctions**

14. Investigative prioritization, disciplinary time targets and reasoned, recorded outcomes are prescribed for all sexual misconduct cases. They are part of the United Nations template action plan for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, used by UNICEF, and contribute to the United Nations monitoring framework indicator 3.6.11. UNOPS currently has an indicator addressing accountability response.

### **E Engaging partners in the fight against sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment**

15. With respect to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, UNICEF measures the proportion of civil society partners assessed at full or medium capacity (an element of IRRF indicator E.3.5). UNOPS has a related indicator pertaining to assessment of partner capacity.

16. UNICEF partners engaged in addressing sexual harassment are generally inter-agency partners, whose metrics are measured through the United Nations monitoring framework.

## **III. How prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment indicators inform strategies, policies and procedures**

17. As noted above, the UNICEF Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment has several indicators associated with

its implementation, allowing the organization to monitor progress towards the Strategy's goals on a regular basis.

18. Time-bound action plans operationalize most aspects of the UNICEF Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment. The creation and reporting of action plans (often annually) present an opportunity to assess the status of implementation of the Strategy. The country-level action plans are informed by data collected or activities at country level and adjusted accordingly. Similarly, global-level action plans are developed based on aggregation of key data points, targets, and approaches from country-level action plans. In this way, there is an effort towards vertical coherence in the sexual exploitation and abuse work across different levels of the organization. The process is depicted in annex II.

19. To exercise oversight, UNICEF executive management and global leads have access to the means of verification of the indicators. They also have access to reported incident data to monitor possible impact. At country level, country management teams are expected to periodically review data on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, and identify and implement any necessary changes to programmatic interventions, outreach efforts, and victim assistance activities.

20. With respect to sexual harassment data, the UNICEF Office of Internal Audit and Investigations reports on reported allegations of sexual harassment as part of its overall annual report to the Executive Board. At the inter-agency level, the annual CEB questionnaire on improved reporting of sexual harassment in the United Nations system serves as an opportunity to share UNICEF data on sexual harassment reporting with other United Nations system entities, learn how UNICEF compares to other United Nations funds and programmes, and jointly discuss further harmonization efforts with respect to sexual harassment prevention and response. Through the EDGE certification process in 2022, and other efforts related to ongoing implementation of the recommendations of the 2019 report of the Independent Task Force on Workplace Gender-Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Harassment and Abuse of Authority, UNICEF has identified the need to make greater efforts to use sexual harassment metrics more systematically to inform actions around sexual harassment prevention and response.

21. UNICEF policies and procedures are subject to periodic mandatory review. At the time of review, reported regulatory concerns and risks are reviewed, including progress on indicators. The 2020 policy on prohibited conduct (which includes sexual harassment, among other forms of misconduct) is scheduled for review in 2023.

22. Different indicators are used in different ways to inform decision-making. For example, gender parity in the workforce can be a facilitating factor for reporting on sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment. Gender parity is included in office dashboards as a key performance indicator, and is tracked globally for each level of staffing. Special measures are implemented as needed to increase gender parity, i.e., the representation of female staff.

23. Overall, UNICEF has a reasonable set of metrics to measure progress on sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, and these are reported to the Executive Board through different, existing reports in respective areas, such as prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, organizational culture, ethics, and internal audit and investigations. Additional efforts can be made to ensure further use of the data collected, to inform policies and programming, at all levels. Inter-agency efforts around data related to prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment have been useful to allow UNICEF to benchmark itself against other United Nations system entities, and align metrics where relevant. Efforts at further harmonization and alignment continue across agencies, at country and global levels.

## Annex I

### Metrics on sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment

<i>Indicator name</i>	<i>Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (QCPR) monitoring framework reference (if any)</i>	<i>Other United Nations entity reference/alignment (if any)</i>
Availability of UNICEF headquarters-level action plan on preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse (embodying survivor-centred approach)	3.6.11	Template of United Nations Headquarters-level action plan on preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse
UNICEF country-office protection from sexual exploitation and abuse action plans (part of the Integrated Results and Resources Framework of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025 (IRRF) indicator E.3.5)	3.6.10 (contribution to United Nations country team action plans)	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). Common United Nations template used
Multiple indicators related to reporting on sexual harassment, including related to gender, power differentials, accountability, case closure, timelines, etc.	3.6.14	All members of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination
Percentage of offices that meet organizational benchmarks related to psychological safety and trust (IRRF E.4.4)	None	None
Percentage of offices that meet organizational benchmarks for addressing safeguarding risks (IRRF E.3.4)	N/A	UNDP, UNOPS
Percentage of offices that roll out initiatives and campaigns to further align staff behaviours with UNICEF core values (IRRF E.5.2)	3.6.14 contributor	UNOPS, UNDP (personnel awareness-raising)
Percentage of female staff at each level (IRRF E.4.1, H.5.2)	3.6.6–3.6.9	
Establishment and implementation of response procedures in accordance with the United Nations Protocol on the Provision of Assistance to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (IRRF E.3.5; UNICEF headquarters-level action plan on preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse)	3.6.11	UNDP, UNOPS; template of United Nations Headquarters-level action plan on preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse
Number of community members in reach of safe and accessible channel to report sexual exploitation and abuse (IRRF 3.1.8)	3.6.11 and 3.6.13 contributors	UNOPS, UNDP
Establishment and training on internal and partner reporting mechanisms of sexual exploitation and abuse (IRRF E.3.5)	3.6.11 and 3.6.13 contributors	
Prioritization of sexual misconduct investigations; disciplinary time targets; and reasoned and recorded outcomes (from UNICEF headquarters-level action plan on preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse)	3.6.11 contributor	UNOPS; template of United Nations Headquarters-level action plan on preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse

<i>Indicator name</i>	<i>Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (QCPR) monitoring framework reference (if any)</i>	<i>Other United Nations entity reference/alignment (if any)</i>
Proportion of civil society partners assessed at full or medium capacity for addressing sexual exploitation and abuse (IRRF E.3.5; also in UNICEF headquarters-level action plan on preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse)	N/A	UNOPS; template of United Nations Headquarters-level action plan on preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse

## Annex II

### Strategies, action plans, policies, procedures and indicators addressing sexual misconduct

