



UNICEF Executive Boards First Regular Session 2023. Item 7. Protection Against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment.

8 February 2023

Intervention delivered by Alison Gow, Assistant Director, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

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Thank you Chair.

Australia aligns with the statement delivered by the Netherlands and would like to make the following remarks in its national capacity.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the important issue of the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, which is central to uphold the reputation of the United Nations as a trusted global partner. Australia appreciates the update on metrics and indicators used to measure progress in this regard.

We note that the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network recently provided a summary of PSEAH policy application by six organisations, including UNICEF. We would like to support its recommendations, which include: a more systemic UN-wide approach, an



improved common understanding of a Victim/Survivor Centred Approach; and more consistent due diligence and risk management frameworks.

We are concerned that the differences in reporting on Sexual Harassment and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse risk creating gaps. A more holistic response by the UN would build organisational understanding and awareness of the inter-related nature across the spectrum of PSEAH.

We would also like to echo others in emphasising the importance of sharing data and experiences, as well as combining efforts on PSEAH across the UN System. We encourage the UN System to consider the WHO's significant plan of work on this issue.

On terminology, Australia strongly believes that the term 'sexual misconduct' does not convey the gravity or seriousness of some forms of SEAH and may let some perpetrators off lightly.

We would appreciate any further clarification from UNICEF about the use of this term, and we look forward to following-up with the UN agencies more broadly on this matter.

We would like to express our gratitude to UNICEF for its progress around PSEAH and its ongoing efforts. Australia will remain an engaged partner in this work.



Australian Mission to the United Nations
New York



I thank you very much.