



# Background

Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

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# Child refugee sex scandal

Tuesday, 26 February, 2002, 22:33 GMT

“The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has sent a team of investigators into refugee camps in west Africa following the revelation that large numbers of children have been sexually exploited by aid workers there.

The scale of the problem - revealed in an overview of a report by the UNHCR in conjunction with the British-based charity Save the Children - has surprised relief personnel...”

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# Milestones in addressing SEA

- **2001/2**
  - West Africa SEA scandal
- **March 2002**
  - Formation of IASC Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Crises
- **October 2003**
  - SG's Bulletin on Protection from SEA (ST.SGB/2003/13)
- **March 2004**
  - IASC Model Complaints and Investigations Procedures
- **2005**
  - The ECHA/ECPS NGO Task Force on PSEA replaced IASC Task Force
  - UN declared a zero-tolerance policy
  - Building Safer Organizations guide



## The U.N. Sex Scandal

*From the January 3 / January 10, 2005 issue:  
Exploitation, abuse, and other humanitarian efforts.*

LAST MONTH A CLASSIFIED UNITED Nations report prompted Secretary General Kofi Annan to admit that U.N. peacekeepers and staff have sexually abused or exploited war refugees in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The worst of the 150 or so allegations of misconduct--some of them captured on videotape--include pedophilia, rape, and prostitution. While a U.N. investigation into the scandal continues, the organization has just suspended two more peacekeepers in neighboring Burundi over similar charges. The revelations come three years after another U.N. report found "widespread" evidence of sexual abuse of West African refugees.

# Milestones in addressing SEA

(cont'd)

- **2005**
  - Prince Zeid report:
  - DPKO Conduct & Discipline Units Deployed
- **2006**
  - **InterAction, SEA sub-working group launched**
  - Statement of Commitment Eliminating SEA by UN & non-UN personnel
  - High-level conference on eliminating SEA by UN and NGO personnel
- **2007**
  - UN film “To Serve with Pride”
  - Victim Assistance Strategy
- **2008**
  - Technical PSEA Meeting – development of the Four Pillars Framework
- **2010**
  - PSEA Global Review [IASC mandated]
  - Website on PSEA: [www.un.org/pseataskforce/](http://www.un.org/pseataskforce/) ;now, [www.pseataskforce.org](http://www.pseataskforce.org)
  - Formation of IASC PSEA Taskforce – (NGO co-chair)
- **2012**
  - IOM Director, Amb.Bill Swing leads senior managers outreach

Key Milestone:

# UN Secretary-General's Bulletin (2003)

# UN Secretary-General's Bulletin (SGB)

- Applies to all staff, partners, contractors, peacekeepers
- Applies 24/7 and in all places
- Defines **Sexual Exploitation** and **Sexual Abuse**



# Sexual exploitation

“...means any **actual or attempted** abuse of a position of **vulnerability, differential power, or trust**, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.”

# Sexual abuse

“...the **actual or threatened** physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether **by force or under unequal or coercive** conditions.”

# IASC's Six Core Principles

1. Sexual exploitation and sexual abuse constitute acts of **serious misconduct** and are therefore grounds for **disciplinary measures, including summary dismissal**.
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 in the age of a child is not a defence**.

## Six Core Principles (cont'd)

- 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 any exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries of assistance.
- 4. Sexual relationships between United Nations staff and beneficiaries of assistance, since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics are strongly discouraged.**

## Six Core Principles (cont'd)

5. Where a [United Nations] staff member develops **concerns or suspicions** regarding sexual exploitation or sexual abuse by a fellow worker, whether **in the same agency or not** and whether or not within the United Nations system, he or she **must report such concerns via established reporting mechanisms.**
  
6. [United Nations] staff are **obliged to create and maintain an environment that prevents sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.** Managers at all levels have a **particular responsibility** to support and develop systems that maintain this environment .

# Exercise

## Review your organization's Code of Conduct:

- Are all 6 core principles included?
- Is yours stronger or weaker than the SGB?
- What do you think of your Code of Conduct in comparison to the SGB?

# Risks and Vulnerabilities to SEA

# Exercise

In small groups, list the potential SEA risks associated with one of these situations:

- Refugees
- Internally Displaced People (IDPs)
- Regular development programming
- Conflict-affected people
- People affected by a natural disaster



# Exercise

In small groups, identify whether there are specific SEA risks for one of the following groups:

- Boys and girls
- People with disabilities (PWD)
- People living with HIV (PLHIV)
- Elderly people
- Minority communities
- Young people

# Special Focus: Children

“Displaced children are tragically vulnerable to [SEA] not only in the **crisis situations they have fled**, but in **their flight to safety**, and in **the camps where they seek refuge and protection...**”

InterAction (2002)

# Children's vulnerabilities

- Early responsibility for other family members
- Emotional and physical trauma
- Breakdown of social fabric and protective environment
- Lack of privacy, security in a camp
- Dependence on others
- Lack of food and other supplies

# West Africa SEA scandal

UNHCR found:

“despite a high level of awareness that children are a ‘policy priority,’ in practice, children and children’s concerns are **consistently addressed and often regarded as something ‘extra’** to core protection and assistance work...”

(2002)

## *SO... a reminder to all participants*

*Throughout this workshop: for all aspects of developing a CBCM, **ensure** that children's voices are heard and that measures are put in place that allow not just for children's **participation**, but also their **protection**.*