AGENDA ITEM 11: Actions taken by UN-Habitat to strengthen protection against sexual exploitation and abuse and against sexual harassment (PSEA/SH) in the workplace
Objective: Sustainable urbanization is advanced as a driver of development and peace, to improve living conditions for all in line with SDGs

Mission: UN-Habitat promotes transformative change in cities and human settlements through knowledge, policy advice, technical assistance and collaborative action to leave no one and no place behind

Vision: A better quality of life for all in an urbanizing world

**OUTCOMES** (WHAT)

**DOMAINS OF CHANGE**

**Drivers of Change** (How)

1. Policy & Legislation
2. Urban Planning and Design
3. Governance
4. Financing Mechanisms

1. Org. performance enablers
2. Innovation
3. Advocacy, communication and outreach
4. Partnerships
5. Capacity building
6. Systems and processes

Reduced spatial inequality and poverty in communities across the urban - rural continuum

Enhanced shared prosperity of cities and regions

Strengthened climate action and improved urban environment

Effective urban crisis prevention and response

Increased and equal access to basic services, sustainable mobility and public space

Improved spatial connectivity and productivity

Reduced greenhouse gas emissions and improved air quality

Enhanced social integration and inclusive communities

Increased and secure access to land and adequate and affordable housing

Increased and equitably distributed locally generated revenues

Improved resource efficiency and protection of ecological assets

Improved living standards and inclusion of migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons

Effective settlements growth and regeneration

Expanded deployment of frontier technologies and innovations

Effective adaptation of communities and infrastructure to climate change

Enhanced resilience of the built environment and infrastructure

Social inclusion issues: (1) Human rights; (2) Gender; (3) Children, youth and Older Persons; (4) Disability

Crosscutting thematic areas: (1) Resilience; (2) Safety
AGENDA ITEM 11: Actions by UN-Habitat to Strengthen PSEA/SH in the Workplace

ZERO TOLERANCE FOR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

Stop, prevent, protect

Saying NO to sexual misconduct

Perpetrators will be punished
BACKGROUND

Recalling and reaffirming the **UN-wide Statement of Commitment** on Eliminating Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN and Non-UN Personnel; the **Minimum Operating Standards** (MOS) on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) by our own Personnel; the **UN Protocol on Allegations of SEA** involving Implementing Partners; the **IASC Vision and Strategy** on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment 2022-2026; and the **IASC Definition and Principles of a Victim/Survivor Centred Approach**; UN-Habitat has taken effective actions to **strengthen protection against sexual exploitation and abuse and against sexual harassment (PSEA/SHE)** in the workplace.

This presentation is made pursuant to **paragraph 4 (e), decision 2019/4** of the **Executive Board of UN-Habitat** that decided to consider, at its **first session each year**, an **annual report** on **actions taken by UN-Habitat** to **strengthen protection against sexual exploitation and abuse and against sexual harassment** in the **workplace**, as well as **any other kind of exploitation or abuse**.
Since January 2018, the Secretary-General has requested members of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination to **certify annually** to their governing bodies, through a **management letter**, that they have:

(a) **Fully and accurately reported ALL credible allegations** of sexual exploitation and abuse related to **United Nations staff** and **affiliated personnel** serving in their organization; and

(b) Provided **training** on the **prevention** of **sexual exploitation and abuse** available to their staff and affiliated personnel.

(c) The Secretary-General has also **requested** that **heads of entities** provide **information** on how their organization ensures that its **implementing partners** have **minimum standards** in place to **prevent** and **respond** to sexual exploitation and abuse.
The management letter from the Executive Director of UN-Habitat covering the period from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023 in the Annex to the present report was submitted to the Secretary-General in December 2023 in which it certified as follows:

(a) UN-Habitat has acted on and fully and accurately reported all allegations it's received of sexual exploitation and abuse related to UN-Habitat staff and affiliated personnel serving in the organization;

(b) made training on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse available to UN-Habitat staff and affiliated personnel and took all necessary actions aimed at strengthening protection from and reporting of allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse.
Actions by UN-Habitat – More specifically we have taken the following actions:

❖ **Proactive Follow-up Mechanisms** – ensuring that every victim/survivor has received – with their consent – assistance and support, in a manner consistent with the *United Nations Comprehensive Strategy on Assistance and Support to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations Staff and Related Personnel*.

❖ **Accountability** – through prompt reporting, timely and victim-centred assessment, and investigation of all allegations that it has received, as part of its commitment to ending impunity. Where an allegation has been substantiated, UN-Habitat has ensured that the matter has been addressed consistently and in accordance with the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations and Administrative Issuances.

❖ **Focal points** – Appointed focal points at UN-Habitat headquarters and conducted awareness-raising activities, on a proactive basis, for its staff members and related personnel. At the time of drafting the present report, 82 per cent of UN-Habitat staff members and related personnel had completed induction or refresher training on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and had been reminded of their obligation to report any such incidents.
Actions by UN-Habitat

Advocacy – Communicated and advocated actively and continuously on issues relating to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, engaged in outreach efforts to raise awareness of measures of protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, and implemented effective ways of reporting allegations of such acts.

Implementing Partners – UN-Habitat in its various legal instruments is requiring its civil society organization partners and other implementing partners to implement minimum standards and adopt policies to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as assessing them on their capacity to do so.

Reaffirmed that all its cooperation agreements with its implementing partners incorporate conditions relating to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, thereby obligating implementing partners to take all appropriate measures relating to sexual exploitation and abuse committed by any of its employees or any other persons who may be engaged by the implementing partner to perform services under the respective cooperation agreements between UN-Habitat and the implementing partner.
Action by UN-Habitat

- **Annual Action Plan** – Completed the annual action plan to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse and conducted appropriate risk assessments for each of its operations and programmes; acted on the results of those risk assessments; and continued to review those results on an ongoing basis.

- **Zero tolerance policy** – Committed itself to implementing its zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse, in particular by treating every allegation seriously and pursuing appropriate action. UN-Habitat has continuously sensitized its personnel on matters relating to sexual exploitation and abuse through internal broadcasts and reporting of cases through a secure online tracker.

- **Internal broadcast** – shared the United Nations guidance document entitled “Your Rights” as a reminder to staff members and related personnel of the rights of victims and survivors of sexual exploitation and abuse committed by United Nations staff members, including UN-Habitat staff and related personnel.
2024 UN-Habitat Action Plans

- **Inter-Agency Standing Committee** – Enhance participation, through UN-Habitat focal points, in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. UN-Habitat actively participates in the activities of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee.

- Played a key role in the preparation and finalization of the Statement by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment.

- Participated in the recently concluded Organization-wide Inter-Agency Standing Committee workshop held in Brindisi, Italy, from 23 – 25 April 2024 and will participate annually hereafter.

- Further committed to actively preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment by humanitarian workers, and the role of Humanitarian Coordinators and Humanitarian Country Teams to implement PSEA commitments in all response operations.
2024 UN-Habitat Action Plans

- **Conduct surveys** regularly and increase the participation of personnel, in particular those in field offices, in the annual survey on sexual exploitation and abuse.

- **Appoint focal points** on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse in each regional office and in field offices.

- **Continue to inform** UN-Habitat staff and related personnel of the policy on protection against retaliation to enable and empower them to report incidents of prohibited conduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse.
2024 UN-Habitat Action Plans

- **Increase awareness raising** – through the use of banners and other promotional materials, such as those displayed at the last session of 2023 of the Executive Board. UN-Habitat plans to use and disseminate these materials in field offices and during flagship events, such as the World Urban Forum, World Cities Day and World Habitat Day.

- **Training** – Provide additional training on protection against sexual exploitation and abuse, including through specific training packages, in particular for UN-Habitat staff and related personnel in field offices.
Number of Reports on allegations and investigations

- **Reports** – In 2023, there was one *formally* reported *allegation of sexual exploitation and abuse* involving a *former UN-Habitat staff member*. The *allegation was forwarded to the Office of Internal Oversight Services for appropriate action*. The case is still under consideration.
CONCLUDING MESSAGES: Recommendations and Proposed Outcomes
Subject to the availability of funds, there are plans to devote more staff and resources to the handling of cases relating to allegations of sexual exploitation abuse and sexual harassment, retaliation, and other forms of unsatisfactory conduct.

Proposed and recommended to have a staff member at the P-4 level to serve as a focal point for conduct and disciplinary matters, including the prevention of and response to sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual harassment and issues of unethical conduct subject to availability of funds.

More training to be undertaken on raising awareness of the zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse and reporting of cases. We planned to have a roadmap for the training sessions for the year 2024 to 2024.
Recommendations and Proposed Outcomes

- More outreach activities to be conducted in field offices particularly in those where there is high risk. Roadmap for missions are being planned.

- Need to engage partners and other stakeholders on the need to ensure the protection of sexual exploitation and the organization’s zero-tolerance policy on it. Inclusion of PSEA measures and safeguarding in all project documents and other UN-Habitat agreements and instruments.

- Ensuring consistency and symmetry in the handling of sexual exploitation and abuse across the organisation and cooperating with UN sister agencies partners.
Thank you!