

Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

The UK would like to express its gratitude to the Secretariat for the important progress it has made on preventing sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), which rightly remains one of the top priorities of the Secretary General, and of the UN as a whole.

SEA violates the principles and values of the UN. This is why we must have zero tolerance for this behaviour from UN personnel, its peacekeepers, and from its implementing partners. We must send a collective message that those who are sent to protect people, but instead abuse their power and cause harm, will not be tolerated.

The UK delegation notably welcomes progress made towards a zero-tolerance, victim-centred, system-wide, and accountable approach to SEA, which the work of the Special Coordinator in particular helps to deliver.

The Victims' Rights Advocate and the four Field Victims' Rights Advocates are all doing vital work to support victims from the start of the case to after it is closed, and advocate on their behalf. The UK welcomes the development of the Victim Assistance Protocol and a Statement of Victims' Rights.

The UK welcomes the progress made by the Secretariat on mandatory SEA training, and improving investigations. In particular, we would like to thank OIOS for the work they are doing to reduce the length of time taken to conclude SEA investigations, and deliver training courses for investigations officers. We encourage greater participation in SEA tools and initiatives that lead to greater transparency, such as the Clear Check Tool, and appeal to other Member States to join in the Voluntary Compact and the Circle of Leadership.

While COVID-19 will place a strain on much UN activity, we must ensure that SEA prevention and response continues to be prioritised as the system responds to this pandemic.

SEA will only be prevented if all of us work together to stop it, including by ensuring that victims are supported and perpetrators held accountable. The UK delegation hopes that we can achieve consensus on an SEA resolution this year and looks forward to working cooperatively with all delegations to that end.