



director-general's bulletin

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PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE (PSEA)

With this Bulletin, I wish to officially announce the implementation by FAO of the United Nations Secretary-General's Bulletin on *Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse* (ST/SGB/2003/13) - [attached hereto](#). The SGB was promulgated in recognition of the special duty of care the UN holds vis à vis its beneficiaries, especially women and children. As enunciated in the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service "*It is therefore incumbent on international civil servants to adhere to the highest standards of conduct; for, ultimately, it is the international civil service that will enable the United Nations system to bring about a just and peaceful world*".

FAO will apply a zero-tolerance policy to established acts of SEA that are committed by its employees¹, or any other personnel associated with the work of FAO², against beneficiaries of assistance and any person related to such beneficiaries. Such acts are unacceptable and constitute serious misconduct, which is grounds for disciplinary action, including summary dismissal.

SEA is traditionally under-reported due to fear, cultural barriers, or lack of safe and accessible reporting mechanisms. An Administrative Circular will be issued shortly establishing a formal complaint mechanism as well as procedures for reporting and investigating SEA. In the meantime, Heads of Departments and Offices shall inform all employees under their responsibility of the contents of the above SGB and ascertain that each and every one receives a copy thereof.

In addition, prior to the issuance of formal reporting and complaint mechanisms, should any employee have reason to believe that SEA has been engaged in by another FAO employee or an employee of another agency, or any other personnel associated with the work of FAO, or should a specific complaint arise, the Ethics Officer, LEG should be contacted immediately for guidance. It is vital that any investigation into allegations be fair and impartial and that it comply with UN standards.

The Ethics Officer is the senior focal point at FAO Headquarters for receiving SEA reports. Employees may contact the Ethics Officer directly if necessary, or via one of a network of designated focal points to be established at the field level. It is foreseen that complaints of SEA will be duly investigated by the Office of the Inspector-General (OIG) in full respect of the confidentiality rights of persons involved.

Please note finally that PSEA is not to be confused with acts of harassment, including sexual harassment, within the FAO workplace and amongst FAO staff, which is governed by the Policy on the Prevention of Harassment (AC 2007/5).

José Graziano da Silva
Director-General

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¹ The term "employee" refers to all those holding an employment contract with FAO, including Consultants, Personal Service Agreement holders, National Project Personnel and non-remunerated services such as Volunteers.

² This includes acts committed by FAO contractors' employees or any other person engaged and controlled by the contractor to perform any services agreed upon with FAO.