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Annual Report on Corporate Policy, Processes and Measures on the Prevention of Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

Executive summary

This document provides an update on the corporate policy, processes and measures on the prevention of sexual harassment and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. It presents the current status of actions and next steps related to the areas of governance and policy, prevention and outreach, reporting channels, investigations, and accountability.

Suggested action by the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees, and the Council

The Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees and the Council are invited to take note of the updated information and the actions undertaken by the Organization in its continued actions to ensure the prevention of harassment, sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse as set out in the Annual Report, and to provide guidance as deemed appropriate.

Queries on the substantive content of this document may be addressed to:

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I. Context

1. It is the vision of FAO to cultivate an organizational culture of care that promotes a safe, trusted, respectful and inclusive environment, in which there is zero tolerance for inaction on harassment, sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse, where everyone is empowered to speak up, where processes are fair and victim/survivor-centred, and where perpetrators are held to account.
2. FAO does not tolerate any form of harassment and sexual misconduct by its personnel, whether perpetrated against a recipient of assistance, an FAO employee or an FAO partner. Sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse violate human rights and are a betrayal of the core values of the Organization and its Members.
3. A second FAO Employee Satisfaction Survey (E2S) was launched on 21 March 2022, providing a benchmark for progress from the E2S conducted in 2019. The results show significant improvement compared with the 2019 results, in particular in the areas of communication, leadership and direction, ethical behaviour and misconduct, and growth and development. The Survey had specific questions on unethical behaviour and misconduct, including sexual harassment in the workplace.
4. The results highlighted an overall improvement regarding increased awareness (+15 percent) and confidence (+14 percent) in FAO's internal justice mechanisms. In addition, compared with the 2019 survey, there was a decrease in the number of employees who subjected (-7 percent) or witnessed (-10 percent) harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination or abuse of authority in the workplace.
5. Nevertheless, the results still show that the majority of incidents of harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination, and abuse of authority are not reported. Thinking that nothing would be done anyway (57 percent) and fear of retaliation (48 percent) are the two main reasons why employees are not reporting sexual harassment. In light of this, the Organization will continue to focus on awareness raising activities, championing the safe reporting of concerns, protection against retaliation and promotion of accountability¹.
6. The *2021 Annual Report of the Inspector General* also showed a decrease in the number of cases opened involving allegations of harassment and abuse of authority compared with the previous year, while the number of cases involving allegations of sexual harassment remained statistically the same in both years. By contrast, there was an increase in cases involving allegations of sexual exploitation or abuse as compared with the previous year². The increase in cases involving allegations of sexual exploitation or abuse is comparable with the increase seen in 2020 over the number of cases in 2019, and may indicate that FAO's outreach activities have continued to increase trust in the system which has, in turn, created an atmosphere better enabling such concerns to be reported.
7. Regarding the decrease in cases involving allegations of harassment, many factors could have led to the reduction in the number of cases over the previous years. This could be a possible result of targeted training programmes designed to prevent such behaviour and changes in working modalities necessitated by the pandemic, among others. The Organization is taking into consideration these factors and continues its work to raise awareness about workplace harassment and the means of addressing such situations, through both formal and informal channels.
8. While noting that progress is being made, FAO recognizes that continued effort is required to effectively prevent and respond to harassment and sexual misconduct. Strong leadership is essential to achieve zero tolerance and the tone from the top is instrumental for fostering a more ethical

¹ See paragraphs 28-33 of this Report for more details on prevention and outreach activities.

² [FC 191/9.1](#) - 2021 Annual Report of the Inspector General, page 17 para 40 states that: "During the reporting period, OIG opened six cases under the policy on the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. Of these, one was closed as unfounded, another was outside of OIG's mandate and referred to another United Nations entity, while two were closed shortly after the reporting period (February 2022) as unsubstantiated. Two cases remain open."

workplace. The Director-General and Senior Management lead the Organization's work in these areas, requesting the support of all employees given the shared responsibility that exists in actively tackling harassment, sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse.

9. Addressing the systemic issues that provide opportunities for harassment and sexual misconduct to be perpetrated by FAO personnel and transforming the Organization's culture require long-term and sustained action. The Organization will carry on investing in tools for prevention and engage in continuous awareness raising aimed at embedding Organization-wide accountability for the promotion a respectful workplace. The Organization will also continue to incorporate a victim- and survivor-centred perspective, in alignment with UN initiatives and best practice, when addressing complaints of harassment and sexual misconduct.

10. This report reflects actions between September 2021 and September 2022.

II. Progress in alignment with UN system-wide initiatives

11. The Organization recognizes that managers have a responsibility to ensure a safe and respectful workplace for personnel and that harassment, sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse are interconnected with issues such as racism and discrimination, such behaviours in effect hampering mandate delivery. FAO continues to fully support and participate in several UN initiatives such as the Task Force on [addressing racism and promoting dignity for all in the United Nations](#), the Working Group on Diversity Equity and Inclusion³, [UN- Globe](#), the [UN Disability Inclusion Strategy](#) and [UN system-wide Action Plan \(UN-SWAP\)](#).

12. On the specific topic of racism, a pulse survey was undertaken in FAO in late 2021 to collect feedback about employees' experience of racism in the course of professional duties, in line with the UN approach. The results showed some positive aspects, but also highlighted areas where more can be done. While 83 percent of respondents said they had not experienced racism or race discrimination, 17 percent indicated they had and 64 percent of those who had such an experience did not take any action. Only 59 percent of respondents indicated they knew how to raise a complaint of racial discrimination in the Organization. These findings highlighted the need for greater awareness regarding the steps colleagues should take when they experience or witness racism or discrimination.

13. As part of the Organization's ongoing efforts to build a more respectful workplace, the data collected from this pulse survey will be used to guide future activities, such as targeted sensitization and awareness raising sessions and webinars, some of which have already begun. This will ensure all personnel is cognizant that such behaviour is not tolerated in the Organization, as well as clarify how to raise a complaint. Additional initiatives on this topic will also be undertaken based upon the outcome of the work of the Joint Inspection Unit on "Measures and mechanisms for preventing and addressing racism and racial discrimination in the institutions of the United Nations system", which is currently ongoing, once the final report is published.

14. More detailed information on FAO's engagement in UN system-wide initiatives related to sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse is provided in the following paragraphs.

Prevention of sexual harassment

15. FAO continues to engage actively in various UN system-wide fora, in particular the work of the [Chief Executive Board \(CEB\)/High Level Committee for Management \(HLCM\) Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment within the organizations of the UN system](#) in which UN system leaders work together to change culture and behaviours in order to create an environment conducive to eradicating sexual harassment.

16. In April 2022, the CEB Task Force updated the HLCM on accomplishments of the second phase of work of the Task Force and presented the strategic direction for its third phase of work, which was approved. The main deliverables from the second phase of work were:

³ Terms of reference of the Working Group will be approved during the next session of the HLCM.

- a) Publication of the document “[Advancing a victim-centred approach to sexual harassment](#)” with principles for a common understanding of a victim-centred approach to sexual harassment in the UN system. Efforts are already underway in FAO to operationalize the principles in different contexts. In this regard, the CEB Task Force is also working on a survey to collect victims’ feedback to better inform organizations on how to improve their prevention and response efforts.
- b) On learning and communication, a behavioural change study with an analysis of gaps in approaches to address sexual harassment will be released soon by the Task Force and FAO will make use of this to develop new tools as part of the efforts to continue to raise awareness of the UN system approach to addressing sexual harassment.
- c) In the area of outreach and knowledge sharing, progress with the [ClearCheck database](#)⁴ was emphasized. The database currently includes already more than 550 subjects for sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse combined. Regarding further outreach efforts, six peer to peer dialogues were organized by the CEB Task Force in 2021 and 2022 which treated a specific aspect of sexual harassment and saw participation from UN Member States, UN executive leadership, field colleagues, international organizations, civil society, private sector and academia.
- d) In the area of leadership and culture change, the CEB Task Force launched the [UN Culture Change Innovation Challenge](#), which identified ideas to foster a safe and inclusive work environment. FAO participated in the initiative where the Ethics Officer was nominated FAO focal point.

17. The third phase of work of the CEB Task Force will focus on operationalizing and measuring the impact of the norms and tools produced by the Task Force and will have four areas of work: (i) Prevention and Behavioural Science; (ii) Victim/Survivor Engagement and Support; (iii) Data and Results; and (iv) Enhanced Cooperation.

Investigations

18. The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) is a member of the United Nations Representatives of Investigative Services (UNRIS) established for the purpose of strengthening investigation practices and professionalism in the UN system by, among other activities, developing and adopting common principles to guide the investigative process on matters of specific and common interest for the UN investigative functions. The UNRIS drafted the [Investigators’ Manual](#) for Investigations of Sexual Harassment Complaints and is currently working on best practice and benchmarking of sexual harassment investigations. The Manual was approved by the CEB in 2021 and OIG has adopted the guidelines provided in the Manual.

Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA)

19. The Organization actively aligns with the system-wide initiatives by sharing technical inputs and good practices through the participation in several networks, including the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), the UN SEA Working Group and the Rome-based Agencies consultations. FAO also participated in the identification of the IASC PSEA Champion’s priorities and in the development of the IASC Work Plan to implement the IASC Vision and Strategy regarding Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment 2022–2026.

20. In line with the report of the Secretary-General on “[Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse](#)”, the Organization will submit its annual action plan to the UN Secretariat to prevent and respond to SEA by the end of November 2022. It will address the outcomes of the annual UN PSEA survey to gather perceptions of all categories of personnel related to attitudes to PSEA and related standards of conduct as well as availability and access to victim-centred services in field locations. It is notable that, in 2021, FAO participation in the UN PSEA Survey had doubled compared with 2020, and increased tenfold in four years.

⁴ FAO implemented the use of ClearCheck in 2019 and in 2021 finalized its “Procedures for the use of ClearCheck screening Database” (published in Administrative Circular 2021/04).

21. As part of continued efforts to ensure alignment with UN system-wide initiatives, and in line with the 2021 Report of the Joint Inspection Unit “[Review of the management of implementing partners in United Nations system organizations](#)”, FAO is planning to join the [United Nations Partner Portal](#) (UNPP), an online UN co-shared platform which aims at simplifying and harmonizing UN processes for partnering with civil society organizations (CSOs). Specifically, UNPP houses a tool for the UN Implementing Partner PSEA Capacity Assessment, which will allow PSEA assessments of prospective CSO partners, following the [United Nations Protocol on Allegations of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Involving Implementing Partners](#) issued in 2018. Currently, the portal’s participating agencies are the UN Secretariat, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and UN Women, with operational support from the United Nations International Computing Centre (UNICC). The portal is actively used by organizations at country level to support due diligence in the selection of CSO partners.

III. Progress in FAO

A. Governance and policy

Governance

22. In line with the recommendation of the Oversight Advisory Committee in its 2020 Annual Report, presented to the 185th Session of the Finance Committee⁵, the Director-General decided to formalize the role of the internal taskforce on sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse through the establishment of a committee on workplace conduct and PSEA. The committee is chaired at Deputy Director-General level (DDG Laurent Thomas) and brings together the principal officials and offices working more directly in the areas of workplace conduct and PSEA to assess the effectiveness of existing policies and procedures and advise the Director-General on actions required to prevent and address misconduct. The committee is assisted by two informal working groups, the integrity network covering workplace conduct (headed by the Director of Human Resources Division [CSH]) and another group specifically covering sexual exploitation and abuse matters (headed by the Director of Office of Emergencies and Resilience [OER]).

23. The committee meets quarterly and is composed of four members: the Director of CSH, the Legal Counsel (LEG), the Director of OER and the Director of Project Support Division (PSS). The Ethics Officer and Ombudsperson act as advisers to the committee and the Inspector General has observer status. CSH acts as secretariat of the committee and serves as the organizational focal point on matters related to workplace conduct (harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination and abuse of authority), while OER serves as the corporate focal point on PSEA matters, coordinating this work across the Organization with focus on ensuring coherence and synergies both internally and with external partners.

Policy

24. The Organization is in the process of revising both PSEA and prevention of sexual harassment policies.

25. In November 2020, the Finance Committee ‘*stressed the need for a flexible approach to the implementation of the HR Strategic Action Plan, in particular in the context of the COVID-19 crisis, and the need to build HR capacity*’⁶. As a result, the Human Resources Strategic Plan (2020-2021) was extended and several activities, among which the revision of the Policy on Prevention of Sexual Harassment, have been rescheduled and re-prioritized while capacity within CSH is being strengthened.

⁵ [FC 185/12](#) – 185th Session of the Finance Committee, FAO Oversight Advisory Committee – 2020 Annual Report

⁶ [CL 165/11](#) – Report of the 183rd Session of the Finance Committee (9-13 November 2020)

26. Extensive work is already taking place to revise the Policy on Prevention of Sexual Harassment which is foreseen to incorporate other forms of workplace misconduct, such as harassment, discrimination and abuse of authority, which share the same channels for prevention, response and reporting mechanisms, in line with the approach of other UN Organizations. Through the revised policy FAO intends to provide a diligent, appropriate and sensitive response to all forms of workplace misconduct, placing victims at the centre of the Organization's action.

27. With reference to the PSEA Policy, the revision process is also ongoing and moving towards finalization. The updated PSEA Policy incorporates a key focus upon prevention, the promotion of a victim-centred approach and inclusion of core IASC principles and the articulation of roles and responsibilities across the Organization.

B. Prevention and outreach

28. Regarding awareness raising activities conducted in 2021 and 2022, the Organization organized a specific briefing session on prevention of sexual harassment in the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (RLC), which had been identified as the most affected region following the 2018 UN Survey on Sexual Harassment. The interactive and mandatory session targeted all staff members at grade D1 and above and FAO Representatives (FAORs) in the region, and supported the implementation of the "*Guide for Managers: Prevention of, and Response to, Sexual Harassment in the Workplace*" that was issued in 2018.

29. In early April 2022, within the framework of the FAOR Briefing Programme (a programme providing a holistic overview of FAO, with a curriculum built around the FAOR's strategic role and key functions), a special module on a respectful and healthy workplace was organized with the purpose of providing senior managers with practical advice on how to promote a respectful, harmonious and healthy working environment. The session was addressed to all FAORs and staff members at grade D1 and above and was attended by the Inspector General, the Ethics Officer, the Ombudsperson, Health and Security Services.

30. FAO has three mandatory training courses related to the topics covered by this Report: "*Prevention of Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Abuse of Authority*", "*Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)*" and "*United Nations Course on Working Together Harmoniously*". Completion rate for these courses is constantly monitored, encouraged with targeted communications and information sessions and specific indicators in the corporate performance management system (PEMS) for supervisors⁷. In addition the e-learning "*Sexual Harassment: the Role of Managers*", launched in April 2021, is also available to remind supervisors of the principles that every FAO manager must follow in relation to sexual harassment and the actions that managers should take when dealing with issues involving sexual harassment in the workplace.

31. The Staff Counselling Unit has been offering individual support to victims of sexual harassment in the workplace by providing them with tools to gain awareness on the matter and to build resiliency and confidence throughout the decision and process of reporting. Besides the direct negative effects of sexual harassment, there are collateral consequences linked to social stigma, fears about reputation within the Organization, fear of retaliation, of isolation and of not getting justice. Such aspects are being addressed through the organization of new initiatives to increase awareness.

32. The Ethics Office organized several webinars in order to raise awareness:

- a) A webinar on PSEA, held on 15 September 2021, aimed at providing information and guidance to FAO personnel on how and why PSEA is relevant to the design, delivery and effectiveness of their work and how to meet organizational and UN standards regarding the prevention of SEA. Speakers included representatives from RLC, headquarters, the UN Office of the Special Coordinator on Improving United Nations Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (OSC) and the IASC Secretariat. The webinar was attended by 528 employees.

⁷ [FC 191/7](#) – Human Resources Annual Report 2021, paragraphs 55-58

- b) A webinar on the Code of Ethical Conduct, held in October 2021, opened by the Director-General, outlined the main content of the Code with a goal to raise awareness about proper conduct, including in relation to sexual harassment and PSEA. The webinar was attended by 825 employees.

33. In 2021 and 2022, prevention and outreach in the area of PSEA have been further expanded and strengthened in order to support the necessary measures for ensuring a respectful and inclusive workplace, and a safer environment for FAO beneficiaries:

- a) A **PSEA dialogue** is ongoing with senior-level representation from decentralized offices to identify practical recommendations for developing capacity of PSEA focal points and strengthen knowledge in different country contexts, taking into account the reality and human resource situation of many country offices.
- b) A **three-day face-to-face intermediate training** regarding prevention and response to SEA has been developed to support and embed organizational and cultural change around PSEA, whilst a course outline, key content and scenarios have been designed for a dedicated e-learning for PSEA focal points. Further specific technical guidance was also provided to PSEA focal points and others regarding how to take in and manage complaints of SEA incidents involving children, including detailed guidance regarding how to obtain informed assent and informed consent from children, the meaning and responsibility of Best Interests Determination and the necessity of access to child sensitive services.
- c) A **series of training and briefing sessions** were provided to FAO personnel and partners in Pakistan, South Africa and Ukraine on the intake of complaints, referral pathways and victim-centred approach. They support the implementation and localization of key tools and standard operating procedures provided to PSEA focal points and the effective implementation of policy.
- d) A **new dedicated section on PSEA** was included in *the Emergency Preparedness and Response area of the FAO Handbook*, which contains specific guidance regarding how and when to take a victim-centred approach.
- e) A **compendium of good practices for accountability to affected populations (AAP)** including PSEA was finalized and is anticipated to facilitate learning and knowledge sharing across regions. Overall, AAP aims to ensure development and humanitarian actors are held accountable and interventions do not result in inadvertent harm to the people they serve. It acknowledges that even with good planning and best intentions, unanticipated impacts and conflict may arise, so accountability mechanisms need to be in place to ensure affected people's participation throughout the project cycle, as well as to receive and respond to grievances related to FAO's projects. Consulting with communities and identifying protection risks, including those related to SEA, at the beginning of the project cycle, is crucial to both prevention and identification of effective mitigating actions.
- f) **Operational Guidelines for Project Formulators** have also been prepared on minimum standards for integrating the AAP in the project cycle. Following FAO's project cycle phases, the guidance illustrates some of the considerations and activities the project task force should implement in each phase of the project. While the grievance mechanism is mandatory in all FAO project documents since 2015, in 2021 the FAO standard project document section on grievance mechanism has been further integrated with more detailed information on PSEA as part of the FAO project cycle manual.
- g) In 2021, SEA became part of FAO country risk logs, which require FAO programmes to conduct **SEA risk analyses** and elaborate SEA mitigation strategies at the country level. FAORs and Programme Managers are required to integrate SEA considerations into the design of needs assessment and new project proposals, including identification of activity-specific SEA risks and related SEA mitigation measures.
- h) A **detailed report including specific country-based data for each region** and an overview of PSEA data extrapolated from the additional PSEA specific questions within the 2021 Country Annual Reports was prepared and shared with all decentralized offices. Examples of

good practice as well as key gaps and concerns were highlighted. In this regard, FAO participation to the UNPP, as previously mentioned, will provide access to additional data and information on prospective CSO partners. This will support also the SEA screening of all implementing partners in FAO.

- i) **SEA prevention activities** including engagement and communication with beneficiaries, partners and suppliers are mandatory. Regular reviews of ongoing projects are required to ensure that activity-specific SEA risks are taken into consideration and related SEA mitigation measures developed and implemented. These reviews aimed at ensuring that the SEA mitigation measures designed are put into practice during the project implementation. FAORs, Programme Managers and Project Managers for all sectors are required to monitor and regularly review the effectiveness of the SEA mitigation measures designed and report about any challenge faced in implementation.

C. Reporting channels and investigations

34. Harassment, sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse all amount to serious forms of misconduct under FAO's internal rules and regulations and as such can be reported directly to OIG for review and investigation. OIG currently provides multiple reporting channels so that anyone inside or outside the Organization can make such a report. These include a dedicated confidential email address, a web-based form, a confidential telephone number, and the possibility to contact OIG personnel directly, either at headquarters or while they are visiting decentralized offices. Before the end of 2022, OIG will launch an integrated "hotline" including local telephone numbers and operators capable of assisting individuals in local languages in countries where FAO is active. This hotline will be managed by an external provider.

35. FAO country offices have PSEA focal points available to receive information regarding possible SEA. This is then referred to the senior focal point for PSEA at headquarters, from where it can be forwarded to OIG for review and investigation. In relation to harassment and sexual harassment, both the Ethics Office and the Ombudsperson are available to provide advice and assistance in handling these situations, including, with the consent of the individual raising concerns, forwarding relevant information to OIG. Greater detail on existing reporting mechanisms is available online in the document "*From Concern to Clarity – FAO's Roadmap on where to go when in need*", in various FAO web pages.

36. With regard to investigations, [FAO's Investigation Guidelines](#)⁸ ensure the effectiveness and independence of the investigation process, as well as fairness to all parties involved in that process. These incorporate principles and key aspects of the victim-centred approach in line with the Investigators' Manual for Investigations of Sexual Harassment Complaints in the United Nations.

37. FAO participates in the UN Annual survey on reporting of sexual harassment organized by the CEB Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment within the organizations of the UN system. The annual survey gives the Task Force a baseline to work from, especially with individual benchmarking against the rest of the UN system. The results from 2021 confirmed that sexual harassment is rooted in power differentials but also occurs in a rapidly changing workplace – indeed, most incidents happened in the field (missions, country offices and sub-offices, where operational entities normally carry out their core operations). We also know from the survey data that 93 percent of investigations concern male on female instances, and 69 percent of alleged perpetrators are more senior.

38. The Organization participates in the iReport SEA Tracker, which the UN developed starting from 2018. The iReport SEA Tracker presents detailed information on allegations received, updated in real time on, *inter alia*, the date of incident and date of reporting, the type of victim (adult or child), the nature of the allegation, the support provided to the victim, the status of the investigation, the final action, and any referral to national authorities for criminal accountability.

⁸ Administrative Circular 2021/06, issued in April 2021

39. OIG maintains statistical data of SEA and sexual harassment related cases. This data (summarized for 2021 in paragraphs 6 and 7) is reported each year as part of the Annual Report of the Inspector General presented to the Finance Committee. The Ethics Office has further maintained a record of contacts, including contacts related to harassment, sexual harassment and SEA, not all of which result in a referral to OIG for investigation.⁹

D. Accountability

40. The *Administrative Circular on the Practice of the Organization in Disciplinary Matters* (AC 2022/02) was issued on 7 February 2022 in all FAO languages. This Administrative Circular, which is issued on an annual basis, provides information on disciplinary action taken in respect of staff members, as well as administrative action taken against other personnel who are found to have engaged in misconduct during the previous year. It includes a specific section on harassment and sexual harassment. Whilst the identities of the individuals concerned are not disclosed, sufficient factual information is provided to allow the Administrative Circular to serve as an awareness-raising instrument. It provides real examples of actions that constitute unsatisfactory conduct, as well as the consequences of such conduct. The Administrative Circular also serves as a reminder of the obligations of staff members and other personnel, as it lists the relevant rules and policies covering the conduct of FAO personnel.

41. FAO continues to use the UN “ClearCheck” Database, along with other 33 UN Entities. The Organization participates in ClearCheck by entering records of its personnel into the Database and by using it for screening candidates for recruitment, as provided for under FAO procedures for the use of ClearCheck screening Database (published in Administrative Circular 2021/04, March 2021). The Database is currently used for the screening of candidates for both staff member and other personnel positions.

42. In addition to the PSEA Risk Mitigation Checklist issued in October 2021 and developed as a mechanism to assist offices in mitigating the risks associated with sexual exploitation and abuse, a risk control point related to PSEA is now explicitly included in the Internal Control Questionnaire.

43. Still in the area of PSEA, specific additional questions have now been regularly included within the Country Annual Reporting requirements regarding the availability, location, inclusiveness and accessibility of reporting mechanisms at country level. A PSEA Scorecard was developed in 2021 following analysis of the responses to those additional questions and was included in the Country Annual Report for 2021. In addition, in the Country Office Management & Monitoring Indicators Tool (COMMIT) recently developed as a part of the Integrated Management Information System (iMIS), five questions selected from the PSEA Scorecard are included in the section “the ethical environment” in order to monitor whether the country office complies with specific requirements.

44. In June 2022, FAO launched the [Framework for Environmental and Social Management \(FESM\)](#), which aims to identify, evaluate and manage the environmental and social risks and impacts and promote resilient and sustainable agrifood systems in FAO’s projects and programmes. The FESM explicitly includes an environmental and social standard on gender equality and the prevention of gender-based violence (GBV) which covers organizational responsibilities and expectations regarding risks and accountabilities, including with reference to PSEA. Screening questions for this standard specifically include PSEA provisions and accompanying guidance are under development. A joint presentation of the Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment (OCB) and OER on the opportunity, risks and practical way forward to implement the new Standard on gender equality and prevention of GBV across the project cycle in the new FESM was also conducted.

E. Next steps: action 2022-2023

45. FAO is committed to providing a respectful work environment and to promoting and enforcing policies that respect the inherent dignity of all persons, including those whom the

⁹ [FC 191/10](#) – 191st Session of the Finance Committee, 2021 Annual Report of the Ethics Office.

Organization serves. FAO has an abiding responsibility to prevent and respond to discrimination, abuse of authority, harassment, including sexual harassment, and sexual exploitation and abuse.

46. For this purpose, the results of the 2022 E2S will also provide a baseline to develop new initiatives, based on the specific needs and measure progress from the last three years. In the medium term, FAO will continue implementing actions to strengthen its four focus areas in close coordination with UN system-wide initiatives:

- a) **Governance and policy.** Through a comprehensive review of the Organization's relevant policies and procedures to identify any gaps and inconsistencies, and to internalize and operationalize a victim- and survivor-centred approach to preventing and responding to sexual exploitation, abuse, harassment and sexual harassment.
- b) **Prevention and outreach.** Through targeted learning initiatives and communication campaigns to ensure awareness of employees, managers, implementing partners and beneficiaries. Initiatives to increase awareness will also focus on providing personnel with guidance to identify misconduct and available resources to tackle it and on supporting managers to face these situations. A PSEA learning strategy will be developed and assure the availability of dedicated training and resources for PSEA focal points as well as promote face to face training, including training of trainer packages to support increased awareness and promote cultural change.
- c) **Reporting channels and investigations.** Launch and disseminate an integrated "hotline" including with operators capable of assisting individuals in local languages, and with continuous training to further strengthen investigations into sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment and other forms of abusive conduct that incorporate a victim- and survivor-centred approach.
- d) **Accountability.** Through the development and enforcement of an accountability framework for all personnel which outlines the enhanced responsibilities for supervisors, managers and senior managers. The approach to specifically identify risks of PSEA and/or sexual harassment is also being developed as part of the due diligence and risk assessment reviews for formal engagements with the private sector.