

Accountability to Affected Populations Task Force Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Task Force

Co-Chairs' message to the Global Cluster Coordinators on the Haiyan (Yolanda) Response

Dear Colleagues,

While your clusters are responding to the very difficult situation in the Philippines as part of the Haiyan L3 Response we take the opportunity to remind you of the IASC Commitments to Accountability in Humanitarian response, and hope that through your cluster coordinators on the ground you can help to instil a 'culture of accountability' in the response. Our collective response must include the active participation of the affected population in assessing, planning and monitoring of our relief activities. We must ensure consistent two-way communication with communities and that response planning adapts to the wishes of the affected community.

In any large scale emergency there are huge numbers of international staff deployed and very large numbers of new national staff that are recruited. New NGOs emerge and programmes are implemented very quickly. During this confusion and chaos it is possible that crisis responses inadvertently put men, women, boys and girls at greater risk of harm or abuse. Minimum operating standards for protection against sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) of affected populations are required by to be incorporated into the work of individual UN and NGOs during emergencies. Abuse, exploitation and other harm or potential harm caused by staff conduct or poor programming practice need to be addressed through preventive rather than reactive approaches. There is no inter-agency mechanism that has a responsibility or mandate for this critical area of work, and we encourage you to commit to principles of accountability and prevention of abuse as a collective, where members of all clusters agree to adhere to these principles.

We encourage you to make use of the variety of AAP and PSEA tools and procedures available from a variety of organisations, including your own global cluster accountability tools. We are ready to offer advice and assistance through the AAP/PSEA Task Forces, including any advocacy you may require on AAP/PSEA. We have deployed an Inter-Agency Coordinator Barb Wigley, whose contacts are below, who is ready to assist you directly in the Philippines. As an annex we include key messages that could or should be relayed to the communities we serve.

Best Regards,

Nan Buzard & Brian Lander

Marie Elseroad & Bintou Keita

Co-Chairs - IASC AAP Task Force

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FIVE AAP/PSEA KEY MESSAGES FOR COMMUNITIES

1. All assistance provided by humanitarian organisations is based on need and is free. Humanitarian organisations and their staff work on principles of humanity, impartiality and respect. If you feel you have been discriminated based on gender, ethnicity, religion, age, political affiliations or any such basis or you have been asked by someone working in a humanitarian organisation to do something inappropriate, demanded any kind of favour or sexual action from you in return for their help, please report them to *[insert name of cluster/organisation and contact details]* or nearest humanitarian organisation.
2. Women, girls, boys and men of all ages, ethnicities, orientations and those with special needs have the right to have a say in how humanitarian assistance is provided. Your opinion is important to decide how assistance is provided. This can include how distributions will take place, the design and location of facilities, such as latrines, washing and cooking areas in this *[insert site – location – camp - settlement]* Please make your views known to *[insert name of cluster/organisation, contact person and details]*
3. You have the right to be informed about the humanitarian services provided in your area. This includes information about the organisations working in your area and their contact details, the beneficiary selection process and criteria and what assistance and services are being provided, at what times and who to contact in case you have a concern or complaint.
4. All humanitarian agencies endeavour to provide the best assistance and treat everyone with respect. In case you have any complaints or problems about the services provided go to *[insert name of cluster/organisation and contact details]*. They will do their best to attend to your needs and queries.

This assumes that the complaints system in place ensures the protection and confidentiality of users. Before disseminating the next message, make sure the system is robust and that people reporting abuse are properly protected, confidentiality maintained and complaints dealt with rapidly.

5. You have the right to complain and to report any inappropriate behaviour, exploitation or abuse by a humanitarian worker including any UN staff member. A complaints system has been set up at *[insert name of cluster/organisation /location]*. Contact *[insert contact details]* for further support and advice about this. All complaints are kept confidential and no harm will come to you for reporting the issue.