

# CONVERSATIONS WITH RC/HCs: BEST PRACTICE SERIES



## Kenya RC/HC Aeneas Chuma on Addressing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN Staff and Related Personnel

Aeneas Chuma has been the UN Resident Coordinator, UN Humanitarian Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Kenya since July 2008. He joined UNDP in 1985. Since then, he has served UNDP with increasing responsibilities in the Sultanate of Oman, United Arab Emirates, UNDP Headquarters, Uganda, South Africa, Mozambique and Zambia.

**BEST PRACTICE:** Following the post-election violence in Kenya in 2008, it became clear through assessments and interviews that incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) were common but unreported among the displaced population. To ensure that adequate steps were taken to address SEA and develop an inter-agency SEA network, request was made for a dedicated IASC Gender Standby Capacity (GenCap) to assist by deploying a GenCap Adviser. Since his arrival in Kenya in 2008, RC/HC Chuma has been an active supporter of the SEA Network. In an interview in April 2008, Mr. Chuma explained Kenya's approach to protection from SEA (PSEA).

### *What was Kenya's approach to introducing PSEA?*

When the Kenya UN Country Team (UNCT) set out to establish an inter-agency PSEA network, it was well-known that significant progress had already been made in this regard in Liberia and Somalia; to ensure its efficacy, though, the team recognized that it was **important to adapt it to the Kenyan context**. For instance, in Kenya there were no UN peacekeepers; the country office was not a "remote" office like Somalia and most programmes focused on development rather than humanitarian action. At the same time, UNHCR had been managing one of the world's largest refugee camps on the Kenya/Somalia border for 16 years, where they successfully implemented PSEA work. Furthermore, PSEA was new to most staff and the UNCT with the exception of UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP.

RC/HC Chuma recognized that it was vital to bring everyone on board; he decided that **establishment of an In-Country Network** should move one step at a time, taking an incremental approach.

A network composed of UNCT agencies was established first, making sure everyone understood

the issues and approved the priorities before involving a broader range of stakeholders. PSEA Focal Points were selected in every agency, and went through an intensive three-day training spearheaded by the Headquarters-based ECHA/ECPS UN and NGO Task Force on PSEA. The RC/HC also advised Focal Points to ensure that their responsibilities were endorsed by their supervisors and included in their Terms Of Reference (TOR) and Performance Assessment, so that they would have the support and freedom to fulfill their obligations. Meanwhile, to keep the UNCT informed, RC/HC Chuma facilitated placement of PSEA progress reports on the UNCT monthly agenda.

A deliberate decision was made to put prevention first. The RC/HC felt strongly that **prevention is everyone's business**, and every staff member can act to prevent SEA. The UNCT produced awareness-raising brochures for widespread distribution, outlining the standards of behaviour and the UN zero tolerance policy. This was followed by all agency Focal Points setting up training schedules to ensure that all country-level and field office personnel received awareness-raising sessions on PSEA followed by the nomination and training of Field Office Focal Points. The sessions were delivered by Focal Points, in some cases with support from the GenCap Adviser.

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## ***What was the role of NGOs and other partners in the PSEA effort?***

Once the momentum had been established within the United Nations, the next step was to invite others to join the PSEA effort. A key partner was the Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS), a major humanitarian actor in Kenya. With the KRCS on board, outreach was then made through the Kenya Humanitarian Forum – a large and influential group of stakeholders (NGOs, CSOs, donors) – to form a second PSEA network. This network included a diverse range of actors, all of whom received training on their roles and responsibilities from the UNICEF Consultant for Gender in Emergencies.

In May 2009 the two networks were scheduled to combine into one In-Country Network to be co-chaired by the United Nations and KRCS.

## ***What other efforts are anticipated?***

In late April, with financial support from the RC's Office, the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP International) delivered a one-day tailor-made training on developing complaints and reporting mechanisms for both UN and non-UN Network participants. This was a prelude to embarking together on the challenge of establishing complaints mechanisms that are safe, effective and accessible.

In the near future, the UNCT Senior Management will participate in specialized training to strengthen their engagement on PSEA and become more familiar with their respective responsibilities. RC/HC Chuma emphasizes that visible and meaningful commitment by senior management is essential to the success of PSEA in Kenya.

## ***What other challenges confront PSEA efforts in Kenya?***

It is widely acknowledged that exploitation and abuse of women and children is a societal problem; it happens not only to those most vulnerable and exposed (e.g. displaced persons and/or aid beneficiaries) but, sadly, is commonplace in Kenya. The RC/HC believes that the In-Country Network has an important role to play by setting standards of behaviour for humanitarian actors, whether UN or non-UN partners, by responding effectively to complaints, publicizing beneficiaries' rights and humanitarians' obligations and eventually by providing assistance to victims of PSEA as mandated by the General Assembly.

## ***What steps are being taken to ensure all this is sustainable?***

RC/HC Chuma emphasizes that Kenya's PSEA efforts have worked towards sustainability from the outset by not doing too much too fast, by training and supporting the Focal Points with their work and by grounding the two networks securely before combining them. Now the challenge of establishing complaints and victim assistance mechanisms will be tackled in the same systematic manner: through consultation and participation with all stakeholders, especially recipient communities.

But this is not enough, he says. Agency Focal Points have full-time responsibilities on top of PSEA, and the Network needs advice, support, leadership as well as administrative back-up. For this reason, he is seeking to establish a permanent PSEA Coordinator position, which requires commitment, resources and continued UNCT support. However the RC/HC, proud of what the Kenya team has accomplished on PSEA in a relatively short time, is not easily deterred and confident that with Kenya's PSEA record and the UN commitment the position will be established.

*For more information about hosting a senior managers or focal point training in your duty station or other PSEA efforts, contact [seatf@un.org](mailto:seatf@un.org) or see the training packages at [www.un.org/pseatactforce/tools.shtml](http://www.un.org/pseatactforce/tools.shtml)*

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