



**Report of the Secretary-General on
Combating Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse
(A/71/97)**

Introductory remarks by
Mr. Victor Kisob
Officer-in-Charge, Office for Human Resources Management

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Madam Chairperson, distinguished delegates,

I have the pleasure to introduce the report of the Secretary-General, contained in document A/71/97, entitled “Combating sexual exploitation and abuse”.

Also before the Committee pursuant to resolution 70/286 is A/71/99, which is the report of the External Independent Review Panel that the Secretary-General appointed in June 2015 to review and assess the response of the United Nations to allegations of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse by international peace-keeping forces in the Central African Republic. The Panel submitted its report in December 2015, and it was thereafter made public without any changes.

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/286, the Secretary-General’s report A/71/97 provides an update on the initiatives undertaken across the United Nations system to combat sexual exploitation and abuse since February of this year.

This includes those initiatives under way to address the recommendations made by the External Independent Review Panel.

Madam Chairperson and distinguished delegates,

In direct response to the Panel's report, in February 2016, the Secretary-General established a High-Level Steering Group, under the leadership of the Chef de Cabinet, comprised of the heads of the Secretariat departments and offices as well as representatives from the UN funds and programmes involved in responding to issues of sexual abuse and gender-based violence.

The Steering Group, with its high level membership, was by design established to ensure the direct involvement of senior officials in strengthening the system-wide response to combatting sexual exploitation and abuse. In addition, the Secretary-General appointed the Special Coordinator on Improving the United Nations Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, Ms. Jane Holl Lute, assigning her a mandate to organize, unify and prioritize system-wide measures for prevention and response.

It should be noted that relevant departments and offices retain their respective direct authority and oversight with respect to their operational mandates for monitoring and reporting on sexual exploitation and abuse. By contrast, the role of the Special Coordinator is to ensure coherence and harmonization across the UN system.

Madam Chairperson and distinguished delegates,

Following the extensive review of the systems and procedures in place for prevention of, and response to cases of sexual exploitation and abuse conducted by the Special Coordinator and overseen by the High-Level Steering Group, the report describes the comprehensive strategy being implemented by the Secretary-General for strengthening the United Nations response to sexual exploitation and abuse.

Importantly, the report re-emphasizes the United Nations policy of zero tolerance of sexual exploitation and abuse, and sets out in detail the concrete measures being taken to prevent these acts by United Nations personnel, to ensure accountability and to provide support to victims.

Madam Chairperson and distinguished delegates,

Leadership at all levels recognizes that the Organization must approach cases of sexual exploitation and abuse through a human rights lens that prioritizes the needs of the victim, irrespective of the nature or affiliation of the perpetrator.

We must also ensure that accountability mechanisms are properly activated. A number of initiatives are underway. Some of those initiatives are outlined in the report before you and others have been initiated since publication of the report to support this strategy.

The work aims to create synergy from initiatives already underway in DFS/DPKO, OIOS, OHCHR, UNICEF, UNHCR, and elsewhere in the system to strengthen the Organization's practices across the board.

Madam Chairperson and distinguished delegates,

The Secretary General in the report before you has provided a comprehensive update on efforts to combat sexual exploitation and abuse to fulfil his on-going commitment to keep Member States updated and to maintain the Organization's and Member States collective focus on the issue.

Thank you.