

REGIONAL NETWORK FOR PSEA AND SAFEGUARDING IN THE UKRAINE REFUGEE RESPONSE

Summary note – 13 January 2023

1. Welcome and introductions

The co-chairs introduced themselves and the reasons for the establishment of the Regional Network, highlighting that PSEA and safeguarding has been a high priority for the refugee response since the very early days of the emergency and the number of risk factors seen on the ground, including the high incidence of family separation and an exceptional number of women and children traveling alone, the multitude of actors on the ground, and the low level of awareness on PSEA among many new and non-traditional actors. 11 months into the response, a lot has been done at field level and by the national PSEA Networks, but further attention is needed to ensure continued momentum and raise awareness and visibility, including among host states and donors. Now is not the time to scale down on PSEA activities, given the potential of further displacement, the economic vulnerabilities the refugee population is facing, and the increase in fatigue among hosting states and communities.

On 13 October 2022, the Regional Refugee Forum therefore to establish a regional network dedicated to this topic, with the aim of support national PSEA networks, maintain attention and visibility to PSEA and safeguarding work, and enhance regional exchange and good practices.

2. Opening of the Regional Network on PSEA and Safeguarding

Mr. Mubarak Maman, the Regional Safeguarding Director for Save the Children officially launched the Regional Network. He underlined the hard work already done and the dedication seen in the emergency response for aid to be delivered in a safe manner. He highlighted the importance of the Regional Network and Save the Children's dedication to this work. He encouraged *all* actors involved in the response to use the Regional Network as a means of coming together and of delivering together, including by sharing approaches and practices developed at country level, and learning from this. The Regional Network is an opportunity to advance the PSEA and safeguarding agenda, move it forward and ensure more consistency in our response, for the purposes of better protecting those we serve, including children. It's important that we pool together what we have, both in resources, expertise, and dedication, thereby making it easy for everyone to deliver. There should be no competition in the area of PSEA. He thanked the co-chairs and participants for the call and expressed unwavering support for the Network and its work to come.

3. Short presentation on draft Terms of Reference

The co-chairs briefly presented the draft Terms of Reference for the Regional Network, as the draft was already shared with everyone in advance. The overall thinking is to support national networks, maintain and enhance attention to PSEA in the response at regional level, and to ensure further sharing and learning across operations.

The geographical coverage corresponds to that of the Regional Refugee Response Plan, *i.e.* neighboring states hosting significant numbers of persons fleeing Ukraine. It does *not* cover PSEA inside of Ukraine, which is coordinated by OCHA and UNFPA under the Cluster system.

On participation, the network aims to bring together colleagues working in regional functions and/or covering several countries, as well as the co-chairs and co-chairs of the national PSEA networks. Actors working in only one country are of course welcome, but participation in the national PSEA networks should be prioritized, as this is where activities in country are coordinated. Standing invitations were also shared with representatives of other regional working groups and networks.

In terms of activities, the TORs only include broad-stroke areas of potential work, as concrete activities are to be decided by the network itself. The TORs further clarify that the Regional Network does *not* replace individual agency accountabilities (including for investigating or adjudicating complaints), will *not* include discussions on individual cases, and will apply a victim-centered approach.

The TORs will be circulated again and open for comments until next meeting, 14 February 2023.

4. Presentation of the PSEA/safeguarding regional survey results

The co-chairs presented the key outcomes of the survey that was conducted with all participants in December 2022. In addition to highlighting a number of achievements on PSEA and safeguarding so far in the response, key challenges in strengthening reporting and complaints mechanisms, community engagement, engagement with governments and ensuring accountability.

The 2023 main priorities for the organizations that participated in the survey included training and capacity building, community engagement and enhancing capacity of PSEA coordinators and focal points. Beyond this, activities at organizational level will focus on reporting and complaints mechanisms, risk assessments, and safe recruitment. Volunteer management was also highlighted.

Based on the survey responses, the areas of strongest value for the Regional Network included:

- 1) Regional communications and awareness raising campaigns
- 2) Advocacy (host states and donors)
- 3) Training and capacity building
- 4) Sharing and documenting good practices

5. Group work: Defining common activities and priorities for 2023

Participants were divided into four groups to, under each of the four thematic areas above, agree on 3-5 activities where the Regional Network can have added value, and support national efforts. Organisations were also encouraged to express where they have specific interests and resources.

The outcome of the group work is the draft workplan for the Regional Network. The co-chairs will work on this and present a proposal at the next meeting. The members will then also have the opportunity to further prioritize and refine activities and decide on working modalities, including how to conduct joint advocacy and how to advance specific activities (for example in smaller groups).

6. AOB/closing

In line with the survey feedback, meetings of the Regional Network will be held on a monthly basis. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 14 February 2023.

The co-chairs will share the draft TORs again for any final comments by this date and, if there are substantial comments, these will be discussed during the next meeting.

The co-chairs will also work on a proposed Plan of Action for the Regional Network, based on the group work and input from the participants, to be discussed at the next meeting.

All members were encouraged to think about which activities they would prioritize and wish to be engaged in over the next 6 months, areas in which your organization has resources and expertise, and preferences and ideas in terms of working modalities.

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