

Commitments Made by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance and the Global Fund to Address Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment

18 October 2018

Sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment are driven by power imbalances linked to social and gender-related inequalities. Such behavior breaches core human rights. Any sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment is unacceptable. We will act on every allegation in line with agreed procedures of each organization.

Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria are recipients of funding from public and private sources at the same time as being significant donors to health programs in countries. Both organizations are Geneva-based financing agencies¹, working in a partnership model and without regional or country offices. We are determined to drive the necessary changes in culture, values, programming and accountability which promote integrity and the highest possible standards of behavior by everybody in our organizations. We see these commitments applying to us and by extension to the wider stakeholder environment in which we operate, including our governance bodies and partners who receive funding from us.

We will focus on prevention and empowering our staff, and work with our governance bodies, implementing partners and suppliers to do the same. We will strengthen the mechanisms by which we hold ourselves and our partners to account and will seek to increase capacity and capability on these issues.

In line with the commitments made by sovereign donors at the DFID Safeguarding Summit in October 2018, we will focus on four strategic shifts to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment and to respond appropriately when it does occur. Together and individually we are taking actions which are designed to achieve this.

Strategic shift 1: Ensure support for survivors, victims and whistle-blowers, enhance accountability and transparency, strengthen reporting and tackle impunity

1. Clearly communicate requirements and guidance for reporting of incidents, including whistle-blower protection measures. Considerations of confidentiality, protection of relevant individuals and relevant legislation will be central.
2. Review and where necessary renew efforts within and between our organisations, and where possible within the wider international system to deter hiring and recirculation of perpetrators in the aid sector and to hold them to account, including helping to bring them to justice when appropriate in line with due process and human rights obligations.

¹ Gavi also has a small office in Washington, D.C.

3. Ensure that relevant information about allegations, confirmed cases, prevention measures and response activities, are integrated into reporting mechanisms.
4. Review best practice and lessons from our shared ombudsman services to explore the potential to improve systems of complaints mechanisms and independent accountability.

Strategic shift 2: Incentivize cultural change through strong leadership, organizational accountability and better human resource processes

5. Have one or more named senior-level champion(s) accountable for work on sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, while stressing that the responsibility for safeguarding rests with all individuals in an organisation.
6. Introduce a mandatory training program for all staff on ‘dignity in the work place’ as a means to creating an organizational culture of respect, awareness and accountability.
7. Encourage at least annual discussion in our relevant governance bodies about sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment and how they are being addressed.
8. Work towards gender parity at senior management level and throughout workforces to send a clear signal about the importance of gender balance and a diverse and inclusive workforce.
9. Review and where necessary strengthen recruitment and referencing processes to build workplace cultures of respect and accountability and so help prevention.

Strategic shift 3: Adopt minimum standards and ensure we and our partners meet them

10. Review, and where necessary strengthen, our internal standards (Codes of Conduct, Employee Handbook and equivalent) and due diligence tools to reflect those standards and include clear and specific language on sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, including common definitions. This also includes reviewing, and where necessary strengthening, language for our implementing partners to apply the same minimum standards in their on-granting and contracting requirements for downstream partners.

Strategic shift 4: Strengthen organizational capacity and capability across the international aid sector, including building the capability of implementing partners to meet the minimum standards

11. Review and if necessary strengthen core oversight and management systems for tackling sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, and use victim/survivor-centred responses.
12. Provide guidance and minimum training requirements for relevant staff on prevention and response to sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment.

Next steps

13. We will take action on the above through our own systems, processes and stakeholders. It is up to each of us to decide which measures are the most urgent and how we will communicate progress to our stakeholders.
14. We will meet no later than 12 months from now to assess progress, while continuing to liaise regularly to keep up the pace of progress and share lessons on this vital issue.

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