

Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy

Purpose & Rationale:

IPAC depends on the ability of its staff and representatives to uphold and promote the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct. IPAC recognizes our responsibility to operate in a manner consistent with the fundamental principles of human rights and we are committed to the prevention of and response to sexual exploitation and abuse. IPAC is committed to preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse in the delivery of international assistance. This abuse of power and trust violates human rights and undermines the efforts to aid the most vulnerable people in this world. It is vital that we all understand the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse and our own role and responsibility in preventing it. Employees, consultants and volunteers need to consider how their conduct might cause serious harm to others and negatively affect IPAC's reputation. IPAC will not tolerate harassment, coercion and sexual exploitation and abuse of any form.

Definitions:

According to the UN Secretariat, "the term "sexual exploitation" means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. Similarly, the term "sexual abuse" means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions." ¹

Policy:

- IPAC expects that its board members, staff, volunteers and consultants will have the highest standards of conduct at all times. In carrying out its mandate, neither IPAC nor any person or entity associated with IPAC, will engage in sexually exploitive or sexually abusive behaviour of any kind.
- IPAC has a zero-tolerance approach for involvement in or condoning of any act of sexual exploitation and abuse of any type or in any circumstances, whether perpetrated by board members, staff, volunteers and consultants and is determined to prevent, and where this is not possible, to detect and investigate such acts. 'Zero-tolerance' means that IPAC will pursue all allegations falling under the scope of this policy and that appropriate sanctions up to and including termination and referral to the appropriate legal authorities, will be applied where the allegations are substantiated.

IPAC affirms the Six Core Principles adopted by the United Nation's Inter- Agency Standing Committee Task Force Working Group in July 2002 on Prevention and Response to Sexual exploitation and Abuse.

1. Sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian workers constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment.
2. Sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defense.

¹ UN Secretary-General's Bulletin on Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (ST SGB/2003/13), 9 October 2003.

3. Exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour is prohibited. This includes exchange of assistance that is due to clients' beneficiaries.
4. Sexual relationships between humanitarian workers and beneficiaries are prohibited since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of humanitarian aid work.
5. Where a humanitarian worker develops concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or exploitation by a fellow worker, whether in the same agency or not, s/he must report such concerns via established agency reporting mechanisms.
6. Humanitarian workers are obliged to create and maintain an environment which prevents sexual exploitation and abuse and promotes the implementation of their codes of conduct. Managers at all levels have particular responsibility to support and develop systems which maintain this environment.

Note: Humanitarian worker — for the purpose of this Policy no distinction is made between humanitarian worker and development worker; the term is meant to include all IPAC workers, volunteers and consultants whether internationally or nationally recruited.

Reporting

IPAC employees and managers are bound to uphold this policy and to report people or incidents that they believe contravene it. Management is responsible for the communication and implementation of this policy in their respective departments and projects. Management must strive to create an environment in which staff, volunteers and consultants feel able to approach them with any concerns they may have about sexual exploitation and abuse. IPAC managers and corporate leadership have a duty to ensure that allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse are investigated and that appropriate disciplinary measures are taken and will:

- Deal promptly with the matter with the utmost confidentiality
- Report the matter to the HR Officer and Chief Executive Officer or to the President of the Board of Directors if the complaint involves the Chief Executive Officer.
- Obtain advice from the Chief Executive Officer or President, who will arrange for an appropriate investigation to be carried out
- Record all the evidence received
- Ensure that the evidence is sound and adequately supported
- Implement disciplinary procedures where appropriate
- Contact other agencies, for example the police or international authorities, when necessary

This policy is being implemented as a compliment to our international code of conduct and sexual harassment policies.

Date Revised:

Approved in Principle by:

Date Approved: