

Funding to support the UN Action Secretariat [CRSV_UNA_1]	
UN ACTION MPTF PROJECT INTERIM REPORTING FORM	
Country	New York City, USA
Project Start Date	01/01/2020
Project Completion Date	31/12/2021
Project Duration	2 years
UN Implementing Entities	UN Action Secretariat
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Project Budget	\$892,059
Reporting Period	01/01/2020 to 31/12/2020
Report Date	31/03/2021

## 1. Project Context

In 2020, the UN Action Secretariat coordinated 15 UN entities<sup>1</sup> of the UN Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict Network, catalysed action, and provided Secretariat support for the Network and its Chair, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (SRSG-SVC).<sup>2</sup> The Secretariat also continued to manage the Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Multi-Partner Trust Fund (CRSV-MPTF) and support the Resource Mobilisation Committee (RMC) in the management of funded projects.

### *Governance*

During this reporting period, 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020, the Secretariat successfully built a strong foundation for a more cohesive, coordinated, and cooperative Network. Beginning with an all-network strategic retreat in February 2020, the Secretariat led the finalisation of the UN Action Strategic Framework 2020-2025, Results Framework, and key governance documents, including Terms of References for the Steering Committee, Technical-level Focal Points, the CRSV-MPTF, the UN Action window of the CRSV-MPTF, and the Secretariat itself.

### *COVID-19*

The most significant contextual change that the Secretariat faced during this reporting period was the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to travel restrictions, all in-person missions were cancelled, which prevented the SRSG-SVC and the Secretariat from providing in-person support to field

<sup>1</sup> DPPA, DPO, IOM, OCHA, OHCHR, OSRSG-CAAC, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC, UNODA, UN Women and WHO.

<sup>2</sup> At the time of writing this report (March 2021), UN Action coordinates 19 UN entities after adding OSRSG-VAC, OSGEY, OSAPG, and UNOCT to the network.

colleagues, as usual practice. Instead, missions were delayed or adapted for the virtual mission format. The Secretariat's coordination meetings, including the monthly Focal Points meetings, which are usually in-person, were seamlessly switched to online meetings via Microsoft TEAMS. Additionally, the pandemic prevented the Secretariat from organising the UN Action Network's first annual donor conference, which was intended to advocate for the CRSV mandate and to fundraise for the CRSV-MPTF.

#### *Funding Gap*

In the first year of the CRSV-MPTF, the Secretariat received limited funding from member states. The COVID-19 pandemic demanded that funding priorities shift to pandemic-related health care and away from the prevention and response to CRSV. The Secretariat has been supporting the SRSG-SVC in her advocacy with donors, including follow-up meetings at the technical level with donor counterparts.

## **2. Progress Summary**

#### *Staffing*

Led by the UN Action Coordinator (P5), in 2020 the Secretariat comprised a P3 Programmes Officer and a P2 Associate Programmes Officer. The Secretariat was also in the process of recruiting a Team Assistant (G5). The Secretariat further included a Junior Professional Officer donated by the Government of Japan starting December 2020.

#### *Support to the UN Action Network*

The Secretariat increased the level of cooperation, coordination, and coherence within the Network. The Secretariat hosted the UN Action Strategic Retreat on 27 and 28<sup>th</sup> February 2020. This retreat brought 19 individuals from 14 member entities to collectively set the strategic direction for the UN Action network. At this retreat, the Strategic Framework 2020-2025 and corresponding results framework were developed.

The Secretariat convened two Steering Committee meetings (21 January 2020, 5 March 2020) where UN Action's strategic direction was discussed and the Network's governance documents were endorsed. These meetings also served as a coordinating platform to discuss the Secretary-General's Annual Report on Conflict-related Sexual Violence.

The Secretariat coordinated and provided Secretariat functions to 12 monthly Focal Points meetings with the 15 Network entities. These meetings continued to serve as an important platform for entities to discuss how they are engaging with the CRSV mandate, especially on the support of the implementation of Joint Communiqués, Frameworks of Cooperation, and other CRSV-related national strategies and plans, and share information from the field. The September meeting invited the Senior Women's Protection Adviser (SWPA) from MINUSMA to brief Focal Points on the situation in Mali, which was going through a mutiny led by the army at the time. This was an opportunity for the SWPA to share its challenges with the Network and recommend ways for the Network to further support their work. In the same vein, the October meeting invited the SWPA from CAR to share its challenges and recommendations on how the Network could support its work. This meeting also included a collective discussion on the implementation of the Joint Communiqué in the DRC. Focal Points shared information on the emerging situations of CRSV in Nigeria and Ethiopia in the December meeting, discussing the potential

ways to support the SRSG-SVC if she chose to release statements. These activities demonstrate how UN Action was successfully a consultative forum and platform for coordinating CRSV-focused interventions.

#### *Guidance, Policies, and Tools*

The Secretariat developed and published the [2019 Annual Progress Report and Consolidated Final Report of the UN Action-MPTF 2009-2019](#) during this reporting period. This report outlined the key results of the 52 projects funded by the UN Action-MPTF across 16 conflict-affected contexts. It serves as a reference document for UN entities and its partners, providing an overview of the first decade of UN Action's work. The report shows how UN Action has evolved in scope and focus since its establishment as a coordination platform and how the Secretariat has continued to support it.

Additionally, the Secretariat mobilised the Network to contribute to the [Secretary-General's 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Report on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence](#) published in 2020 and to the Secretary-General's 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Report on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, which will be published in the next reporting period. The Secretariat also supported the SRSG-SVC in developing a policy brief titled the '[Implications of COVID-19 for the Prevention and Response of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence](#)' by mobilising the Network to share information from field offices.

#### *Advocacy and Communications*

UN Action, with the support of the Secretariat, marked the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda with a [joint statement](#) echoing the Secretary-General's Call for Global Ceasefire. Further, the Secretariat completed and launched its website [www.stoprapenow.org](http://www.stoprapenow.org). This website contains pages on UN Action's past and present projects, an extensive Digital Library containing guidance, policies, and tools developed by, or supported by, UN Action, and news on how each member entity contributes to the CRSV mandate. The Secretariat has also been actively upgrading its social media presence on [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [Facebook](#) in alignment with the website and in anticipation of the reinvigoration of the #StopRapeNow campaign for the next reporting period.

#### *Support to the CRSV-MPTF*

The Secretariat actively engaged donors through the SRSG-SVC's good offices to raise funds for the CRSV-MPTF through principal-level and technical-level meetings. The Secretariat supported the SRSG-SVC as she sent communications to 30 member states, both traditional donors and other countries who champion the CRSV agenda, to introduce the CRSV-MPTF and appeal for resources. This was followed up with bilateral engagements with the SRSG-SVC as well as technical level meetings. The CRSV-MPTF has since received modest contributions from Belgium, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Estonia, Japan, and Luxembourg.

Despite limited funds, the CRSV-MPTF was able to fund one project in Somalia implemented jointly by IOM and UNSOM that began on 1 April 2020. Through this project, UN Action provides direct support to survivors of CRSV committed by Al-Shabaab as a tactic of war. This project provides strengthened Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services and socio-economic reintegration support to 100 women formerly associated with Al-Shabaab. As the CRSV-MPTF is replenished, the Secretariat will continue to support projects such as this one that provide comprehensive and multi-sectoral assistance to survivors.

### 3. Project Beneficiaries

The direct beneficiaries of the support of the Secretariat are the 15 member entities of the UN Action network.

The indirect beneficiaries of this project are the beneficiaries of the projects funded by the CRSV-MPTF, including survivors of CRSV, local women's organisations, and national stakeholders, as well as those who engage with the Secretariat's advocacy efforts, including social media.

### 4. Challenges

The Secretariat faced two main challenges throughout this reporting period:

1. *Restrictions due to COVID-19:* COVID-19-related travel restrictions led to the modification of activities that were originally planned to be in-person. For example, missions to field offices were delayed for 2021 or adapted to the virtual mission format. Also, the donor roundtable was postponed to 2021. Furthermore, resources were diverted to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic as emergency relief and, as such, financing work on the prevention and response to CRSV was often not a priority for donors.
2. *Limited Staffing:* The Secretariat did not have a full team throughout the year. However, these challenges did not prevent the Secretariat from completing its planned activities.

### 5. Lessons Learned

- A. *Discussions led by SWPAs/specific Focal Points on the implementation of various Joint Communiqués/Frameworks of Cooperation/other CRSV-related national strategies/initiatives:* The Secretariat began these discussions during this reporting period in recognition of the need to consistently share information within the UN Action network and with colleagues in the field.
- B. *Virtual ways of working:* The Secretariat learned to quickly adapt to virtual ways of working, including coordinating high-level meetings such as the Steering Committee meetings and regular meetings with Focal Points. The Secretariat increasingly learned how to leverage online systems, such as Microsoft Teams, to not only communicate with colleagues but also edit documents with multiple editors or penholders online.

### 6. Communicate Strategy, Products, Tools and Media

The Secretariat's communication strategy has improved thanks to the soft launch of our website ([www.stoprapenow.org](http://www.stoprapenow.org)) and the development of a new social media strategy in anticipation for the reinvigoration of the #StopRapeNow campaign. The website was re-built with the support of a consultant and includes a digital library, news updates from the network's member entities, and pages presenting UN Action's past and present work. The UN Action [Twitter](#) page most actively engaged with the public in September with 25 new followers and 12.6K impressions, as the Secretariat covered the General Assembly; [Facebook](#) page saw 5,563,67 clicks on our posts; An [Instagram](#) account was created.