

Steering Committee of UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict

Terms of Reference

18 March 2021

1. Background

United Nations Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict (“UN Action”) was created following the Brussels Call to Action in 2006 to provide system-wide coordination on prevention and response to conflict-related sexual violence (“CRSV”) with the goal of ending sexual violence during and in the wake of armed conflict. Endorsed by the Secretary-General’s Policy Committee in June 2007 and by the Security Council resolution 1820 (2008), it represents a concerted effort by the United Nations to “work as one” with the aims of improving coordination and accountability, amplifying advocacy, and supporting country efforts to prevent conflict-related sexual violence and respond more effectively to the needs of survivors. In Security Council resolution 1888, the Security Council further requested that the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict promotes cooperation and coordination of efforts among all relevant stakeholders, primarily through the inter-agency initiative ‘United Nations Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict’.

Regarding the CRSV trust fund, in January 2009, UN Action established the UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict Multi-Partner Trust Fund (the “UN Action MPTF”). The purpose of the UN Action MPTF was to mobilize funds to support the work of UN Action, streamline joint programming, fund the UN Action Secretariat and a range of joint catalytic programmatic activities. The UN Action MPTF expired on 31 December 2019. The Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Multi-Partner Trust Fund (“CRSV-MPTF”), is succeeding the UN Action MPTF. The CRSV-MPTF will facilitate the work the respective entities and windows established under its overall governing structure.¹ While each window has its own oversight and decision-making process, all windows will benefit from the overall strategic advice of the UN Action Steering Committee (which also includes the entities constituting the UN Team of Expert on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict (“Team of Experts”)) resulting in improved planning, coordination, and implementation.

2. Membership

The UN Action Steering Committee comprises principals from each UN organization working on CRSV. The membership as of the time of updating these TORs comprises of DPPA, DPO, IOM, OCHA, OHCHR, OSAPG, OSGEY, OSRSG CAAC, OSRSG-VAC, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN Women, UNOCT, UNODC, ODA and WHO. The Steering Committee is chaired by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (“SRSV-SVC”) to provide coherent and strategic leadership.

¹ The SRSV-SVC, as the Chair of UN Action, shall make every effort to secure funds to implement the Network’s Strategic Framework. The OSRSG-SVC shall consider the use of its extra-budgetary resources to ensure the business continuity of the UN Action Secretariat under circumstances of severe funding constraints of the CRSV-MPTF.

3. Functions of the UN Action Steering Committee

The UN Action Steering Committee serves as high-level forum for discussing and coordinating substantive policy and operational matters regarding CRSV with a view to taking decisions on concerted courses of action and follow up by UN Action.

The key tasks of the Steering Committee include:

- a) Serving as high-level forum for discussing and coordinating substantive policy and operational matters regarding CRSV;
- b) Endorsing the multi-year Strategic Framework for UN Action developed by focal points, which sets out clear tasks and outputs to be achieved by the network, indicating the contributions and added value of each member entity;
- c) Provide leadership and advocacy within the members own entities on addressing CRSV and on the participation in UN Action;
- d) Ensure that CRSV prevention and response is mainstreamed within the members own entity;
- e) Ensuring that resources are made available within the members own entity to implement UN Action’s workplan and the Strategic Framework;
- f) Reviewing and endorsing the annual report of the Secretary-General on CRSV;
- g) Endorsing decisions by the UN Action Resource Management Committee on the allocation of UN Action’s resources from the CRSV-MPTF;²
- h) Providing strategic advice **related to the CRSV-MPTF**. This includes:
 - a. Reviewing and approving its Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure, based on the generic steering committee terms of reference, and updating and/or modifying them, as necessary, in case of compelling requirements. In case of departures from the generic terms of reference, the terms of reference (“Terms of Reference”) of the Steering Committee should be referred for endorsement to the HQs Fiduciary Management Oversight Group;
 - b. Reviewing and approving the allocation of available unearmarked CRSV-MPTF resources based on proposals or other statements of need presented by the UN Action Secretariat on behalf of the respective windows in alignment with the CRSV-MPTF terms of reference;

² In that regard, these TORs are to be read in conjunction with the Terms of Reference of the CRSV-MPTF and TORs of the UN Action window of the CRSV-MPTF

- c. Delegating to the Team of Experts Advisory Group the authority to approve distribution of allocations to their respective window in alignment with the CRSV-MPTF terms of reference ³;
- d. Discussing the CRSV-MPTF requirements and priorities concerning, inter alia:
 - i. Programme/project management, including consistent and common approaches to programme/project costing, cost recovery, implementation modalities, results-based reporting and impact assessment; and
 - ii. Information management including appropriate MPTF and MPTF donor visibility.
- e. Agreeing the terms of reference of the overall CRSV-MPTF, as well those of the UN Action window. Delegating to the Team of Experts Advisory Group as the oversight and decision-making body for the Team of Experts-window of the CRSV-MPTF the authority to approve the terms of reference for the Team of Experts Advisory Group;
- f. Ensuring appropriate consultative processes take place with key stakeholders to avoid duplication or overlap within the CRSV-MPTF windows and between other funding mechanisms;
- g. Reviewing and approving the periodic progress reports (programmatic and financial) consolidated by the Administrative Agent based on the progress reports submitted by the Secretariat based on contributions received by Participating UN Organizations. Consolidated annual reports should include a section on the activity of the overall fund and windows and Steering Committee;
- h. Reviewing findings of the summary audit reports consolidated by the internal audit service of the Administrative Agent, and highlighting lessons learnt and periodically discussing follow up by Participating UN Organizations on recommended actions that have MPTF-wide impact;
- i. Agreeing on the scope and frequency of the independent “lessons-learned and review” of the CRSV-MPTF commissioned by the Steering Committee, in consultation with the HQ Fiduciary Management Oversight Group;
- j. Reviewing the draft/final reports on lessons learnt, ensuring the implementation of recommendations and identifying critical issues for consideration by the HQs Fiduciary Management Oversight Group (to be brought up to the ASG Group, if/as required)
- k. Ensuring that its decisions are in accordance with the regulatory requirements and frameworks of the Participating Agencies and agreements with the programme country and donors;
- l. Ensuring that its decisions are duly recorded and promptly communicated to Participating Agencies, the programme country, and donors, as appropriate;

³ The Terms of Reference for the UN Action window and the TOE advisory group are included in the Annexes to the Terms of Reference of the CRSV MPTF

- m. Monitoring the implementation of its decisions;
- n. Reporting to the MDTF Fiduciary Management Oversight Group on the evolving risks and to flag issues that may affect the implementation of the decisions of the Steering Committee or otherwise impede the operations of the Fund;
 - i. The Chair, representing the Steering Committee, is accountable to the Chair of the MDTF Fiduciary Management Oversight Group, representing the Committee, for the inter-agency fiduciary issues related to the Participating UN Agencies on issues related to funding through the UN for the MPTF activities.

4. The UN Action Steering Committee will take decisions as follows:

- To fulfill its functions, the Steering Committee meets three times a year (twice at the level of UN Action principals, and at least once a year at the level of heads of agencies/departments);
- Issues requiring Steering Committee decision will be presented to UN Action focal points beforehand, with adequate time for technical review and internal consultation within the respective member agencies;
- Decisions of the Steering Committee shall be made by consensus;
- Prior to presenting their position on a significant issue to the Steering Committee, its UN members must make sure that it is endorsed internally and is in line with their agencies' regulatory requirements;
- Decisions on the use of funds by each window of the CRSV-MPTF are made by the governance structure of each window as described in the respective window programmatic documents which are attached as annexes to the TORs of the CRSV-MPTF;
- Decisions of the Steering Committee shall be duly recorded by the UN Action Secretariat.