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Decree Number 2682

ASSISTANCE PROTOCOL BEIRUT FILM SOCIETY

PURPOSE:

- 1- The Protocol aims to elaborate a common set of norms and standards based on existing frameworks to strengthen a coordinated, system-wide approach to the provision of assistance and support, which prioritizes the rights and dignity of victims, regardless of the affiliation of the alleged perpetrator. This approach is aligned with broader BEIRUT FILM SOCIETY efforts to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse and takes into account established good practices to address gender-based violence.
- 2- The victim-centered and system-wide approach to assistance and support elaborated in the Protocol is intended to be integrated into BEIRUT FILM SOCIETY'S work to promote and protect human rights, contribute to peace and security and realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In particular, implementation of the Protocol is aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 5 on achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, including the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres. It is also aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 16 to end all forms of violence against children and promote peaceful and inclusive societies, including access to justice for all. The Protocol also contributes to implementation of the Inter- Agency Standing Committee Plan for Accelerating Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Response at Country Level, which aims to provide prompt, quality assistance to all victims of sexual exploitation and abuse.

This Protocol applies to BEIRUT FILM SOCIETY staff, activities and programs.

PRINCIPLES:

The following guiding principles and rights must be respected and carefully monitored at all stages in the provision of assistance and support.

- Assistance and support will be made available to all victims of sexual exploitation and abuse irrespective of whether the victim initiates or cooperates with an investigation or any other accountability procedure.

- Assistance and support shall be provided in a manner that is victim-centered, rights-based, age, disability-and gender sensitive, non-discriminatory and culturally appropriate. The rights and best interests of victims shall guide how assistance and support are designed and provided. Assistance and support to child victims (under age 18) shall be provided in a manner consistent with the rights enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in particular the “best interests of the child.”
- Assistance provided to victims shall adhere to the principle of “do no harm” and be provided in a manner which seeks to uphold their rights, dignity and well-being. This may entail provision of safety measures to protect against retaliation, re-victimization and re-traumatization.
- The rights of victims to privacy, confidentiality and informed consent in respect of assistance shall be respected. Victims (or their parents/caregivers where appropriate) have the right to decide on the assistance they need, and information should be provided on the full range of options available. Victims should be informed of the progress and outcomes of actions or processes that concern them.
- Victims are entitled to pursue applicable accountability measures, including legal redress where desired. The United Nations shall cooperate with States on all available measures to hold perpetrators of sexual exploitation and abuse accountable, while respecting due process, confidentiality and the principle of informed consent.

DEFINITIONS

- **Sexual abuse** is the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.
- **Sexual exploitation** is the 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.
- **Victim** is a person who is or has been sexually exploited or abused.
- **Child** is a person under the age of 18, regardless of the age of majority or age of consent in national legal systems.
- **Children born as a result of sexual exploitation and abuse** are children who are found by a competent national authority to have been born as a result of acts of sexual exploitation and abuse by BEIRUT FILM SOCIETY staff.

- **BEIRUT FILM SOCIETY staff and related personnel** are BEIRUT FILM SOCIETY officials, staff members, consultants, individual contractors, BEIRUT FILM SOCIETY volunteers, experts on mission, other categories of non-staff personnel and contingent members.
- **Implementing partner** is an entity to which a BEIRUT FILM SOCIETY office or entity has entrusted the implementation of a program and/or project, or portion thereof, specified in a signed agreement, that details the assumption of responsibility and accountability for the effective use of resources and the delivery of outputs. Implementing partners may include – but are not limited to
 - Government institutions, inter-governmental organizations, and civil society organizations, including non-governmental organizations. Implementing partners’ subcontractors are subsumed within this definition.

VICTIM ASSISTANCE & SUPPORT

- 1- The responsibility of BEIRUT FILM SOCIETY is to provide assistance and support begins as soon as information indicating that an individual may be a victim of sexual exploitation or abuse is received in any way or form. It does not require the receipt of a credible allegation of sexual exploitation or abuse by BEIRUT FILM SOCIETY staff member or related personnel.
- 2- Victims, as well as affected populations more broadly, should be fully informed of the guiding principles on the provision of assistance and support set out in this Protocol. They should also be informed that all BEIRUT FILM SOCIETY staff and related personnel have an obligation to report allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse.
- 3- The assistance and support provided to victims of sexual exploitation or abuse perpetrated by BEIRUT FILM SOCIETY staff or related personnel or non-BEIRUT FILM SOCIETY forces should be provided, first and foremost, through existing service providers based on partnerships, bilateral agreements or other arrangements between BEIRUT FILM SOCIETY and service providers. Referrals for assistance should be based on the existing services and programs, such as the established gender-based violence and child protection referral pathways in-country.
- 4- BEIRUT FILM SOCIETY and all BEIRUT FILM SOCIETY implementing partners are responsible for having a defined and articulated procedure for prompt referral to qualified service providers within the program sites in which they operate and for having personnel trained on the process for referring victims for assistance in a safe and confidential manner.
- 5- Assistance and support for victims of sexual exploitation and abuse should be provided in a holistic, integrated manner with the support of a designated case manager where feasible and/or service provider with the necessary expertise and capacity. Assistance is provided on a case-by-case basis, in accordance with the needs of the victim. Common services for victims of sexual exploitation and

abuse include:

- **Safety and protection:** This entails the development of an immediate safety or protection plan to address the risk of retaliation, possible breaches of confidentiality or other further violence against the victim. The safety response should clearly set out roles and responsibilities, as well as capacities of designated or relevant actors. Subject to a risk- assessment, and based on the victims' consent and best interest, the safety or protection plan may include relocation support where necessary and appropriate.

Medical care: Medical care includes the provision of necessary treatment for conditions directly arising from sexual exploitation and abuse. In cases of sexual abuse, this includes informing victims about the importance of seeking medical care within 72 hours and providing the necessary referral to services, including HIV post-exposure treatment, post exposure prophylaxis (PEP), and reproductive and sexual health care as needed and desired. Medical care should be provided by the designated United Nations system organization or relevant partner.

- **Psychosocial support:** This comprises the provision of basic psychosocial support, including psychological first aid, and psychosocial counselling to assist victims, in addition to evidence-based, focused mental health and psychosocial support network (MHPSS) interventions and facilitating referrals to more specialized mental health care, as needed. Support may also include facilitating access to basic services, peer-to-peer support, enhanced social support through reconnecting victims with family members, friends and neighbors, and/or fostering social connections and interactions through existing community networks.
- **Education, livelihood support and basic material assistance:** This entails the provision of food, clothing, shelter, school re-integration and livelihood support, in particular for victims in the most vulnerable situations to help address their immediate needs. In cases involving children, support and assistance should be provided for children's families or caregivers when determined to be in the best interests of the child. In such cases, the provision of food to host families, and provision of clothing and hygiene kits to victims may also be included.
- **Legal services:** This entails the referral by the BEIRUT FILM SOCIETY to providers of legal assistance if desired by the victim. In cases involving alleged perpetrators who are not nationals or permanent residents of the host country, legal service providers should be capable of handling cases that may involve multiple jurisdictions.
- **Support for children born as a result of** sexual exploitation and abuse: The BEIRUT FILM SOCIETY will facilitate the pursuit of paternity and child support claims for victims, where desired by the victim and legally applicable, in cooperation with the relevant State.

- 6- Where there are gaps in service coverage and needed services are unavailable, assistance and support will be provided to victims using BEIRUT FILM SOCIETY internal resources. Additional resources to address gaps in service coverage may be provided through, for example, the Trust Fund in Support of Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR CHILDREN

Children, including adolescent girls and boys, are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation and abuse because of their age, gender, size and dependency on others. In responding to child victims, United Nations entities and their partners shall adopt a child-sensitive approach that takes into account the vulnerabilities and capacities of the child, in a manner consistent with the Convention on the Rights of the Child: non-discrimination; best interests of the child; the right to life, survival and development; the evolving capacity of the child and their right to express one's views and have them considered

As a primary consideration, a determination of the best interests of the child involves an ongoing assessment as to what would best protect a child's physical, psychological and emotional safety, security and well-being, and applies to decisions which affect the child as an individual, as a member of a specific group, and in general.

- 1- It is essential that those who interact with child victims have the necessary professional expertise and training. Because child victims of sexual exploitation and abuse may have particular assistance needs, assistance and support should be provided by, or in coordination with, child protection actors. The Protocol recognizes that adults who were victimized as children may also require special attention and appropriate measures will be considered.

- 2- In cases involving children, informed consent includes the informed consent of the child, according to their evolving capacities, and the child's parent, legal guardian or person acting *in loco parentis*, except when informing the parents or caregivers could put the child at risk (of retaliation, violence, abuse and/or neglect). Consent should be explained at the outset and obtained prior to, or in conjunction, with the provision of assistance to child victims.

- 3- During any investigation or legal process that may ensue, a child victim should be provided with appropriate assistance, which should include the accompaniment by a trained professional throughout the process when it is in the child's best interests. As in the case of any victim of sexual exploitation and abuse, children should be informed of the process and provided with clear information as to what to expect. This should include the provision of psychosocial support during information-collection and investigations. Interviews with children should be conducted in a way that is sensitive to the developmental stage and capacities of the child by persons who are properly trained on interviewing in a child-sensitive manner. The views of the child are important in the decision-making process and will be considered a significant factor in the settlement of the issue concerned.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITY

Cooperation among all relevant BEIRUT FILM SOCIETY system organizations is needed to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse. The following outlines the overall roles and responsibilities of the BEIRUT FILM SOCIETY system relating to the provision of assistance to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse perpetrated by BEIRUT FILM SOCIETY staff or related personnel. It is also essential to strengthen engagement and cooperation with national authorities, communities and civil society organizations and actors, including national human rights institutions and service providers and humanitarian actors.