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## The Whistler Declaration on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in International Assistance

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Sexual exploitation and abuse cannot be tolerated, including in the development and humanitarian assistance sectors. These malign practices amount to a flagrant abuse of trust and power and undermine the efforts and legitimacy of international assistance and cooperation and can also violate human rights. While we recognize that the recent cases of sexual exploitation and abuse do not represent the conduct of the vast majority of aid workers, nevertheless, in recent months, G7 members have communicated their expectation that partners adhere to the highest ethical standards in numerous international fora and called for concrete actions to keep people safe from this harm. Addressing these instances of sexual exploitation and abuse requires a system-wide approach that tackles deep rooted gender inequality and power imbalances, prioritizes transparency and accountability, and meets the needs of beneficiaries and survivors, recognizing the particular challenges faced by certain individuals including those with a disability and persons belonging to minorities who are often marginalized in society . There is a pressing need to lead a step change on tackling sexual exploitation and abuse, building on previous efforts to strengthen safeguarding policies and procedures to drive positive change; recognizing we must also address closely-related issues of sexual harassment.

We welcome the UN Secretary General's zero tolerance approach to sexual exploitation and abuse across the UN system and the Voluntary Compact on Preventing Sexual Abuse and Exploitation. We recognize efforts over the last decade by international agencies and partners, including through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), to systematize protection from sexual exploitation and abuse within the humanitarian architecture, such as the IASC's Six Core Principles of Codes of Conduct and IASC's Eight Minimum Operating Standards on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

We, the G7 Development Ministers commit that our Governments will work together and with our partners to strengthen our national and international system's ability to protect individuals from, and respond to, sexual exploitation and abuse in international assistance.

Our Governments will:

- Deliver on our commitment to the UNSG's zero tolerance approach to sexual exploitation and abuse contained in the Voluntary Compact and encourage other governments to do the same;
- Encourage, and where feasible require, our partners to implement:
  - Strong and publically available safeguarding policies and procedures in place, in both the humanitarian and development sectors including codes of conduct, such as, in humanitarian



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assistance the IASC Six Core Principles of Codes of Conduct and IASC's Eight Minimum Operating Standards on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse;

- Recruitment and referral practices that prevent the hiring of perpetrators;
  - Systems in place to efficiently deal with perpetrators;
  - Regular training for all staff in prevention of and response to incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse; and,
  - Anonymous, confidential and accessible reporting processes (e.g. whistleblowing mechanisms), where all allegations of misconduct are pursued transparently and impartially, where concerns are heard and acted upon and where survivors are protected from retaliation.
- Promote the development, and implementation, of formal feedback and complaints and response mechanisms by partners, to increase protection of, and accountability to affected populations;
  - Encourage an integrated, strategic response to victim assistance in collaboration with United Nations system actors, governments and civil society, for example through the work of the UN Victims' Rights Advocate;
  - Work towards harmonization of standards and mechanisms to combat sexual exploitation and abuse across the international system;
  - Recommend that all partners share and implement best practices, in particular those that close system-level gaps and increase the capacity of smaller organizations;
  - Drive organizational change to strengthen transparency and accountability in our own systems to set standards, prevent harassment and protect our own staff.

G7 Ministers will continue their collaboration to advance these commitments, including through the participation of their governments at the upcoming international conference on tackling sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, to be held in London, UK on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2018.