

Reference: DFS/OASG/2017/0484

The Secretariat of the United Nations presents its compliments to the Permanent Missions of Member States of the United Nations.

The Secretariat refers to its Note Verbale DFS/OASG/2017/0378 of 19 June 2017, which followed up on a number of key initiatives in support of the United Nations zero tolerance policy on the prohibition against sexual exploitation and abuse. The Secretariat invited Member States to a meeting on 13 July 2017, chaired by the Under-Secretaries-General for Field Support and Peacekeeping Operations, to discuss how best to move these initiatives forward together.

The Secretariat is grateful for the engagement of Member States during the meeting of 13 July 2017, and welcomes the statements made in support of approaching the difficult issue of sexual exploitation and abuse as a collaborative partnership. The meeting also emphasized the commitment of the United Nations and Member States to address sexual exploitation and abuse by all categories of personnel, across the entire United Nations system.

The Secretariat took the opportunity of the meeting of 13 July 2017 to discuss with Member States the Secretary-General's proposal to develop a voluntary compact between himself, on behalf of the United Nations, and Member States supporting United Nations operations on the ground ("Compact"). As articulated in his report to the General Assembly A/71/818, the goal of the Compact is to send a strong public signal of joint commitment and mutual accountability on preventing and addressing sexual exploitation and abuse.

The Compact sets out a statement of commitment by the United Nations and Member States that affirms that sexual exploitation and abuse runs counter to our common values, and pledges that we will take all possible measures to uphold the right of every person to be free from such deplorable acts without discrimination, with the victim at the centre of our concerns. The Compact also includes specific commitments by the United Nations and by Member States to ensure support and assistance to victims, maintain efforts to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse and strengthen accountability measures.

The Compact will be on the agenda of the forthcoming High Level Meeting of the Secretary-General on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, to be held on 18 September 2017. Reference is made in this regard to the invitation, dated 5 July 2017, from the Executive Office of the Secretary-General to your Government, to take part in the High Level Meeting.

The Secretariat would be grateful for your Government's consideration of the Compact, attached at Annex I.

The Secretariat invites Member States to add additional commitments to the Compact, on the part of your Government; in particular to the extent that they may highlight a best practice or specific effort your Government is making to address this issue. Should your Government be prepared to sign onto the Compact, the Secretariat would be grateful to receive the signed copy by 25 August 2017. The Secretary-General will sign it and a copy will be returned to your Government. The Secretariat will maintain original versions of the signed Compacts.

Should your Government wish to adjust the commitments that are presented in the Compact, the Secretariat welcomes the opportunity to engage in bilateral discussions to this effect. The Secretariat focal point for discussions regarding the Compact is Ms. Mercedes Gervilla, Chief, Conduct and Discipline Unit, Department of Field Support (gervilla@un.org).

All Member States that have signed on to the Compact prior to the High Level Meeting on 18 September will be recognized at the meeting. Member States which have not signed on to the Compact prior to 18 September will nonetheless have an opportunity to formally announce their intention to do so, which will also be acknowledged at the High Level Meeting. In this case, the Secretariat would expect to receive the signed Compact following the meeting for signature by the Secretary-General.

Member States that wish to engage in additional discussions with the Secretariat regarding the Compact are invited to do so, and your Government is encouraged to contact the Secretariat focal point in this regard. It is hoped that all Member States will be prepared to express their commitment in principle to becoming party to this important voluntary initiative.

The Secretary-General will report on the progress in concluding the Compact with Member States in his next report to the General Assembly on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as through publicly available information on efforts to implement the zero tolerance policy.

The Secretariat of the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Permanent Missions of Member States the assurances of its highest consideration.

2 August 2017