

Seventy-Sixth Session of the World Health Assembly

(Geneva, 21st May- 30th May 2023)



**Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
Government of India**

Agenda 22.1: Prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse, and Harassment

(Word count- 374)

Thank you Chair

India recognizes the efforts undertaken by WHO in this and suggests that WHO should focus on the two key areas at the national and field level. These key areas are:

- Align its policies with national law, actively involve local authorities, conduct regular training, and ensure vernacular communications.
- Have a coherent system, streamline reporting, the delegation of authority, and develop context specific, risk-informed, risk management for PREASH in field operations.

Chair,

PRSEAH and Gender-based violence are intrinsically and inherently linked. Ongoing emergencies have contributed to the dissemination of standardized community messages and training, gender-based violence referral pathways, and sexual and reproductive health.

In response operations in health emergencies, mainstreaming of protection from sexual exploitation and abuse among implementing partners, including coordination of their capacity assessments was imperative and a multi-sectoral approach.

This is essential for gender-based violence referral services so that all victims and survivors, including those affected by sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment can safely access services. **There is also a need to address the socio-cultural aspects** that govern violence and to address more strategically by working together on dedicated programs established together with the government.

Chair,

Institutional, financial, and programmatic resources are needed not only in high-risk settings but as part of preventive tools to address such issues.

Some considerations for ensuring predictable resource allocations could be:

- Earmark budget for PRESAH such as up to 15% of all budget centers to ensure funds for PRSEAH through common consensus.
- Designate dedicated human resources in every office.
- Invest in capacity building and awareness generation on PRSEAH, both internal and external.

- Have a pool of experts available for PRSEAH roles and for deployment into health emergency operations with a broader systems approach

Chair,

It is important to create a mechanism for early identification and address these incidents at a very nascent stage, by addressing the socio-cultural context which is the main cause of such incidents

India understands the need for suspension of **Financial Rule XII, 112.3 to fast-track the investigation related to sexual exploitation for specific cases.**

But It is equally important to deliberate for such a framework, which enables investigating authorities to complete investigation in such cases, in a very short span of time.

Thank you!