



Strategic Management Consultants

Stocktaking Exercise to assess WHO's Institutionalization of the Prevention of and Response to Sexual Misconduct

*Quarterly Member State Information Session on the Prevention and
Response to Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PRSEAH)*

June 12th, 2025



Contents / Agenda

- **Overview of Stocktaking Exercise**
- **Stocktaking Preliminary Findings**
- **Preliminary Recommendations**
- **Next Steps**



Strategic Management Consultants

Stocktaking Exercise to assess WHO's Institutionalization of the
Prevention of and Response to Sexual Misconduct

Overview of Stocktaking Exercise



Overview of the Stocktaking Exercise

Purpose

Since 2021, Member States and the WHO Secretariat, including its independent accountability functions, have conducted **extensive oversight and monitoring of WHO's efforts aiming at the prevention of and response to sexual misconduct.**

Previous reviews and assessments of WHO's work on PRS have focused on elements or systems components, while **this stocktaking exercise has focused more on:**

- **the degree to which prevention of and response to sexual misconduct have been institutionalized** across the Organization, and,
- **what remains to be done to consolidate progress.**

Findings of this exercise will inform the 2026-2027 Consolidation Strategy.

Overview of the Stocktaking Exercise

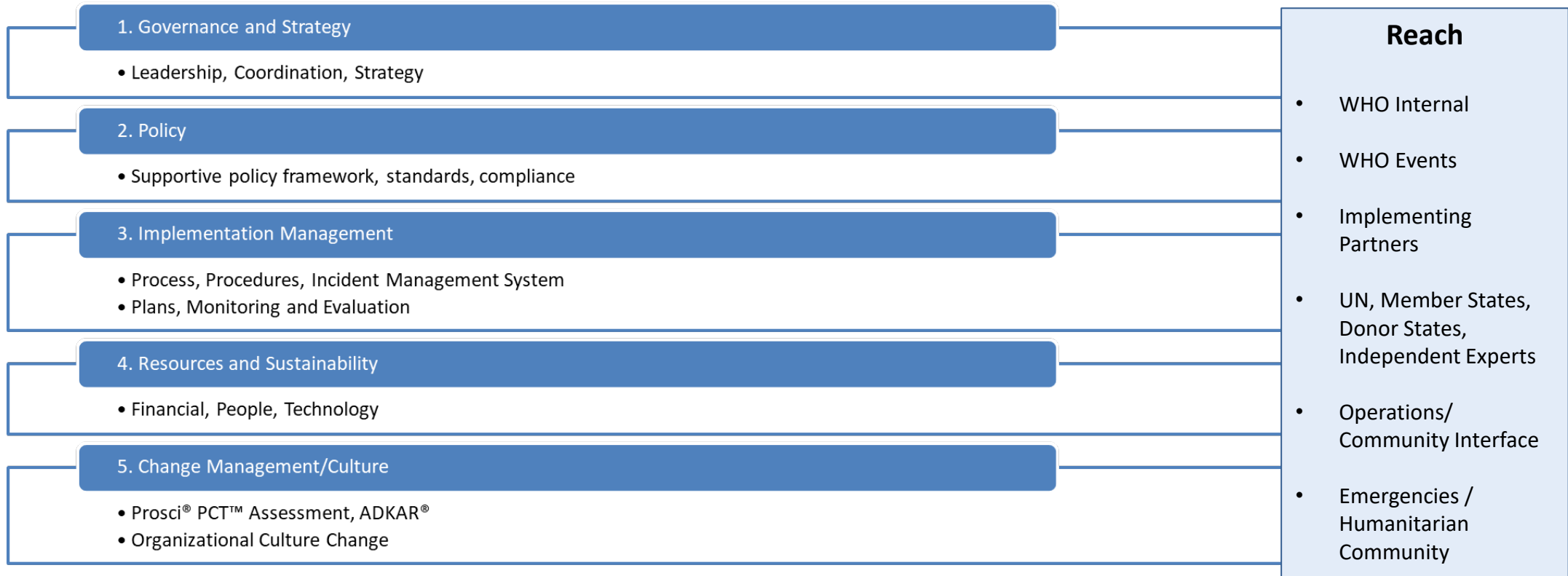
Purpose

The World Health Organization (WHO) commissioned TDV Global Inc. to perform an **independent, comprehensive stocktaking exercise** to assess the **WHO's institutionalization of the prevention and response to sexual misconduct**.

The stocktaking exercise, **overseen by the Independent External Oversight Advisory Committee of the WHO Executive Board**, was intended to assess the **progress made by WHO against agreed milestones to date** (including results, targets, and standards).

Overview of the Stocktaking Exercise

Methodology – Overall Stocktaking Framework





Strategic Management Consultants

Stocktaking Exercise to assess WHO's Institutionalization of the
Prevention of and Response to Sexual Misconduct

Preliminary Results



Preliminary Findings

Pillar 1: Governance and Strategy

Description: This pillar sets up leadership, governance, and a clear value proposition to ensure everyone in the organization is committed to achieving a top-tier WHO in terms of PRS.

Objective: Attain leadership endorsement, strengthen institutional mandates, and inter-departmental (and across three levels) cooperation and coordination through a shared vision and understanding of the value of PRS, and the roles and responsibilities to achieve the vision.

Preliminary Findings

Pillar 1: Governance and Strategy

Conclusions

- WHO has made **substantial progress**, over a relatively short period, **in establishing a strong governance and strategic foundation** for the Prevention and Response to Sexual Misconduct (PRS).
- **The organization is recognized as a leader in the UN system in this area**, notably through the appointment of a dedicated PRS Director and the adoption of a comprehensive 3-year PRS strategy.
- **Governance structures**, such as oversight by the Director General, IEOAC, the Executive Board, and the World Health Assembly, **provide high-level backing and legitimacy**.

Preliminary Findings

Pillar 2: Policy

Description: This pillar establishes a robust policy framework that is essential for instituting change and compliance throughout the organization.

Objective: Address current policy issues by improving the policies associated with, and having an impact on, sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, and sexual harassment (SEAH). This is achieved by proactively monitoring the implementation of relevant corporate policies, including mandating responsibility for data/reporting, and keeping abreast of issues and challenges arising.

Preliminary Findings

Pillar 2: Policy

Conclusions

- WHO has established a **comprehensive and up-to-date policy framework** to support the prevention and response to sexual misconduct (PRS), anchored by the 2023 **Policy for Preventing and Addressing Sexual Misconduct (PASM)**.
- The PASM policy is **well-regarded**, integrating the latest standards and unifying SEA and SH under a single framework. This innovative approach is seen as a key strength of WHO's policy landscape.
- Supporting policies—including the **Code of Ethics, Policy on Retaliation, Policy on Abusive Conduct**, and the **Legal Framework for Standards of Conduct**—have been recently revised and **broadly align with PASM**, reinforcing a shared commitment to accountability, ethics, and safeguarding.

Together, these create a **robust policy environment** that supports the organization's PRS agenda.

Preliminary Findings

Pillar 3: Implementation Management

Description: This pillar is about the management of the implementation of the PRS Strategy including strong project management processes in place and performance management including assessment of results.

Objective: Manage time, costs, and scope of the strategy to deliver activities, produce necessary outputs that will lead to expected results.

Preliminary Findings

Pillar 3: Implementation Management

Conclusions

- WHO has made **measurable progress** in implementing the PRS agenda across multiple operational areas, supported by a strong policy foundation, a dedicated department, and increased strategic attention at all levels of the organization.
- However, the overall picture of implementation management is **mixed**, reflecting both significant achievements and **notable gaps** that continue to limit full and effective implementation.

Preliminary Findings

Pillar 4: Resources and Sustainability

In this context, sustainability refers to the sustainability of results. At some point in the future the PRS Departments' mandate will have been completed and all related activities mainstreamed into respective DGO Units.

Objective: To assess the extent or likelihood that results achieved will be sustained into the future

Preliminary Findings

Pillar 4: Resources and Sustainability

Conclusions regarding sustainability:

While there has been much progress made and there are signs of PRS being institutionalized, **there is a risk that gains may be lost if there is any further loss of momentum and attention.**

Fundamentally, **PRS is about driving culture change**, which also involves addressing other forms of inappropriate conduct, and therefore requires a holistic, organization-wide approach.

Conclusions regarding resources:

Given the current situation at WHO, the stocktaking does not make any recommendations in terms of resources except to reiterate that the **PRS initiative is still fragile** and while progress has been made, **the sustainability of that change requires a deep institutional culture change**, which will required sustained effort, resources and leadership at all levels of the organization.



Strategic Management Consultants

Stocktaking Exercise to assess WHO's Institutionalization of the
Prevention of and Response to Sexual Misconduct

Preliminary Recommendations



Preliminary Recommendations

Strategic Leadership and Coordination Context:

WHO's governance framework for PASM is **strong** and **maturing**, with notable leadership and integration mechanisms. However, **uneven implementation**, particularly at regional and country levels, highlights the need for **strengthened coordination, role clarity, and enforcement**.

Recommendations:

1. Assign Unified Leadership for Policy Implementation

- Designate a single unit with senior leadership to oversee implementation of PAAC, PAR and PASM policies.
- Apply successful practices from PASM and PRSEAH Strategy implementation.
- Ensure resource efficiency, project/change management discipline, and culture change acceleration.

2. Prioritize Operational Coordination with WHE

- Improve collaboration across WHO's three levels to implement PRSEAH in the Emergency Response Framework (ERF).
- Clarify roles, reduce duplication, and prioritize high-risk settings.

3. Enhance Risk Management Across Operations

- Define WHO/UN accountability boundaries with Implementing Partners and Member States.
- Strengthen Implementing Partner safeguarding capacity.
- Intensify support to Member States in applying the PRSEAH Accountability Framework during joint operations.

Preliminary Recommendations

Institutionalization and Resourcing Context:

While PASM policies are well-developed, **effectiveness is limited** by inconsistent implementation, lack of contextual adaptation, and gaps in victim/survivor support. **Institutionalizing** PASM and sustaining momentum are essential.

Recommendations:

4. Maintain Organizational Standing for PRS Work

- Preserve the structural positioning and core resourcing of the PRS Department over the next 2–3 years.
- Signal continued leadership and commitment to PRS as a top organizational priority.

5. Accelerate Institutionalization of PASM Strategy

- Develop a clear roadmap to fully integrate PRS into WHO's systems and practices.
- Ensure monitoring, accountability, and alignment across all levels of the Organization.

6. Strengthen IOS Capacity for Investigations

- Provide IOS with sufficient resources, capacity development, and an effective case management system.
- Reduce investigation timelines and embed victim/survivor-centred approaches to support sustainable organizational change.



Strategic Management Consultants

Stocktaking Exercise to assess WHO's Institutionalization of the
Prevention of and Response to Sexual Misconduct

Next Steps



Health | Agriculture & Food Safety | Science and Technology |
Public Sector & Civil Society



(613) 231-8555 | www.tdvglobal.com | Ottawa@tdvglobal.com
102-2460 Lancaster Road, Ottawa ON, Canada K1B 4S5