Department for Gender, Rights, Equity and Sexual Misconduct Prevention (GEM)

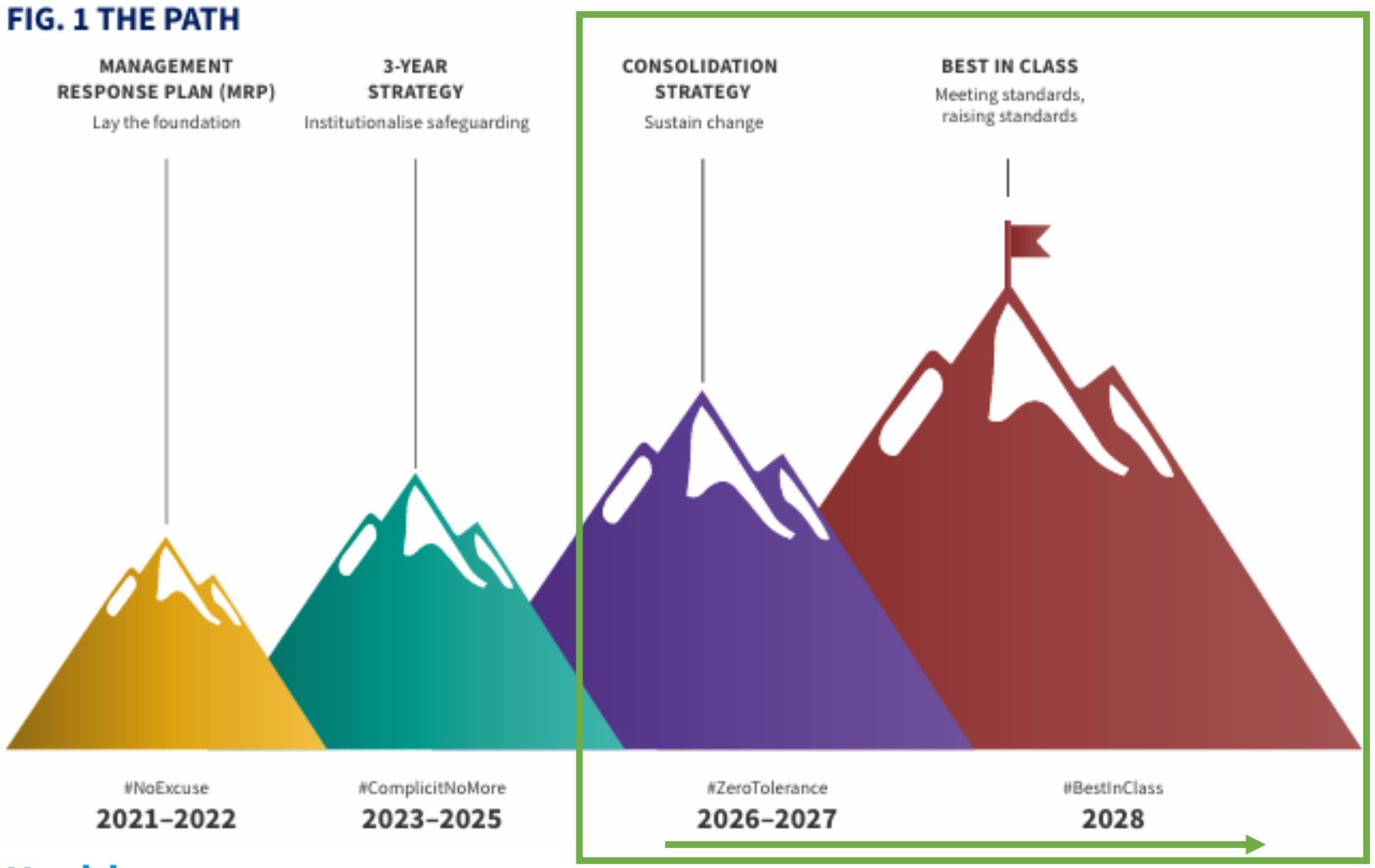
WHO's Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Misconduct (2026–2029)

Zero Tolerance in Practice



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The path that brought us here



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New Business Model



Pre-2026

- **Single, centralized and fire-walled budget envelope** for PRS across the three-levels of the Organization
- PRS stewardship & governance provided at HQ level for allocation based on risk/needs
- High-level activity monitoring and reporting on PRS centralized at HQ level for accountability to Member States
- No direct costing of PRS safeguarding measures in VC-funded programmes proportionate to the risks associated with delivery of community-facing projects

Programme Budget 2026-2027

- **Decentralized budget approach**: PRS stewardship integrated into RO & CO budget envelopes will full delegation
- Guidance on integration of PRS provided through operational planning
- Allocation monitoring through workplan approval processes managed by PRP
- PRS safeguarding for VC (with <13% PSC) implemented through relevant programmes

Underpinning the Strategy



The following documents and frameworks have been either developed, or updated in the period 2021-2025 to reflect WHO's commitments towards the prevention of and response to sexual misconduct. They contain clear definitions which in turn support the Strategy.

- WHO's Policy framework (encompassing: Code of Ethics, Policy on Preventing and Responding to Sexual Misconduct, Policy on Preventing and Addressing Abusive Conduct, Policy on Preventing and Addressing Retaliation)
- WHO PRS Accountability Framework
- WHO's Staff Rules and Regulations

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*This list shall not be intended as exhaustive

Underpinning the Strategy



There are also several inter-agency and system-wide protocols and standards to which WHO adheres, including, but not limited to:

- UNSG Bulletin
- UN CEB framework
- IASC Minimum Operating Standards
- UN Protocol for Assistance to Victims of SEA
- UN Victims' Rights Statement
- CAPSEAH
- OECD-DAC Recommendation on ending SEAH

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*This list is not intended as exhaustive

Vision

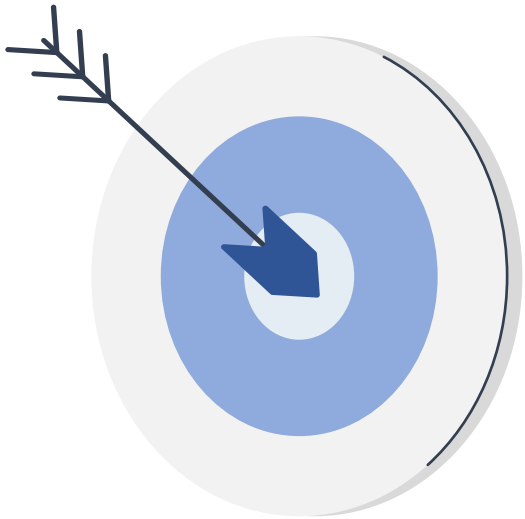


Zero tolerance for sexual misconduct is a hallmark of our organization

We do no harm - to the people we are entrusted to serve or to the people with whom we serve.

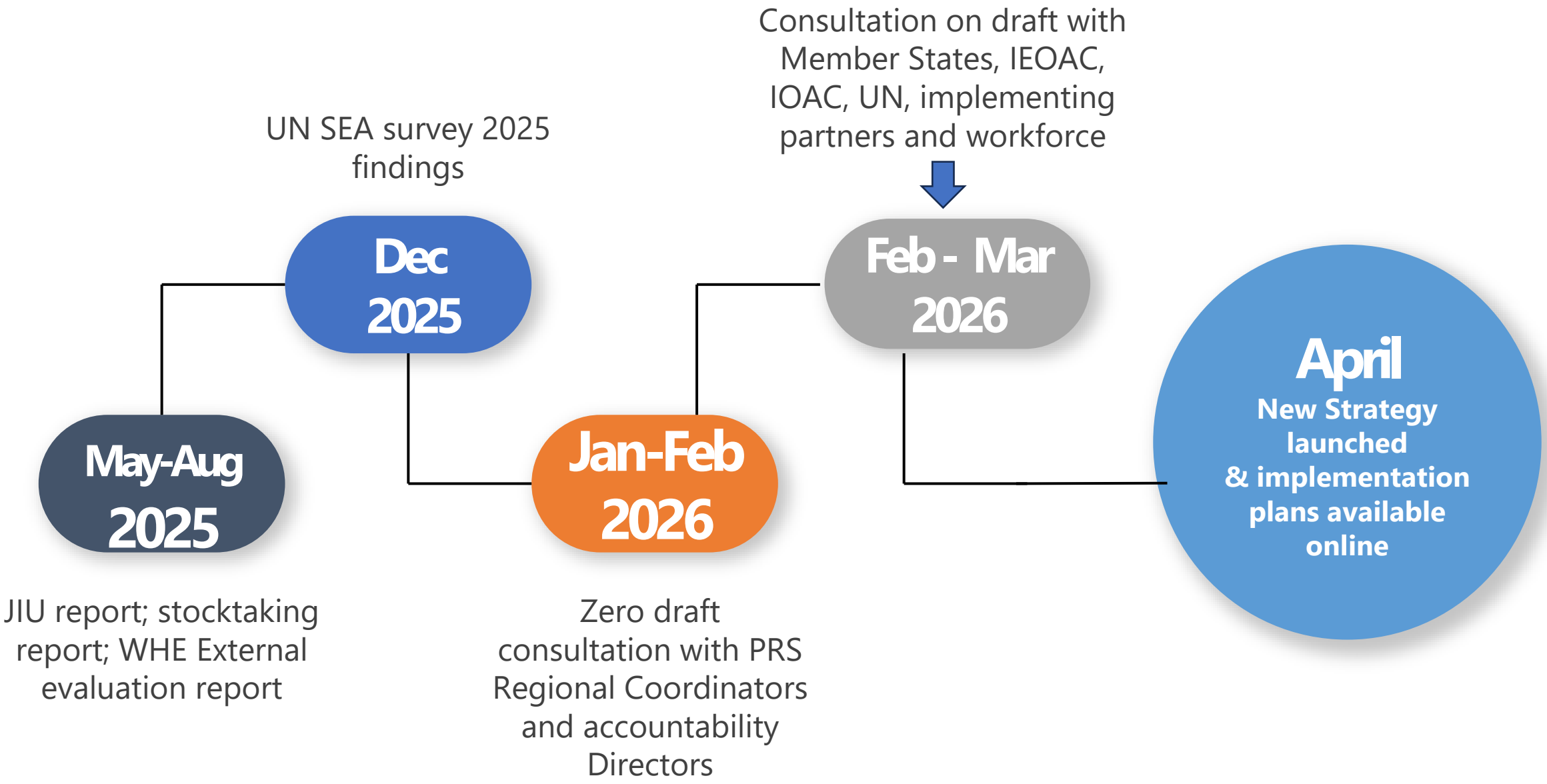
We envision a world in which

- No victim of sexual misconduct perpetrated by WHO personnel goes unheard or unsupported
- No perpetrator goes unpunished
- No workforce member has any excuse for sexual misconduct or for inaction when they hear about an incident
- No implementing partner is exempt from meeting our standards.

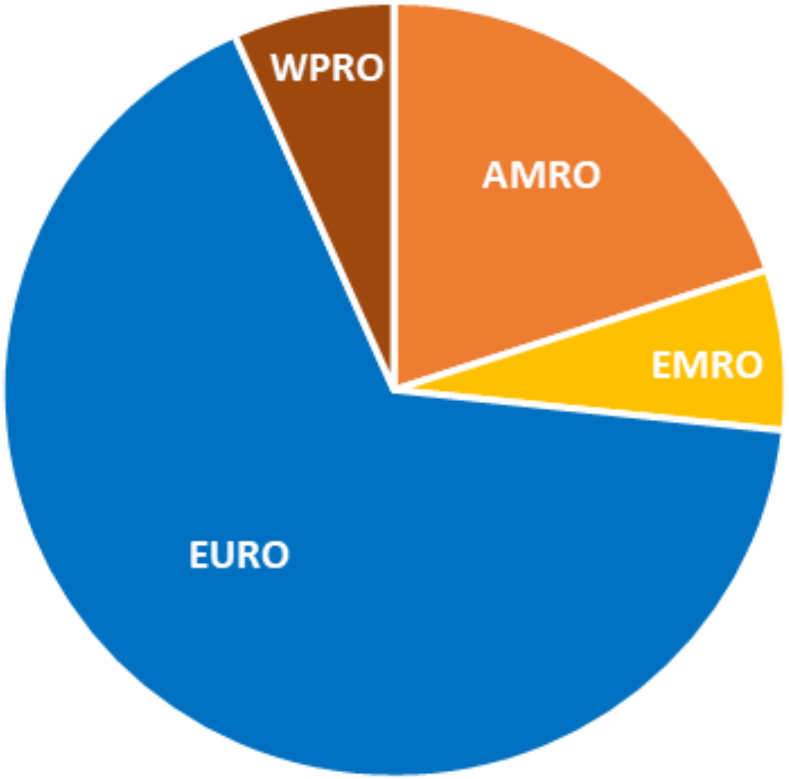


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Process for developing the 2026-2029 PRS Consolidation Strategy



Overview of inputs received



The strategy was shared with all Missions on 2 March 2026 and a total of 15 inputs were received

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Summary of feedback from Member States



- The Strategy is **strong, coherent, and forward-looking**, reflecting WHO's leadership in advancing integrated, survivor-centred approaches to preventing and responding to sexual misconduct
- The six-pillar framework provides a **solid foundation for sustained organizational change** aligned with system-wide efforts
- Emphasizing the **need to translate commitment to operational certainty**, measurable accountability and survivor-credible systems, particularly at **country level** and beyond the Secretariat

Key strengths

- **Clear commitment** to zero tolerance for inaction, leadership accountability, and risk-based prevention
- Adoption of an integrated SEA/SH approach, positioning **WHO as a UN system leader**
- Emphasis on embedding PRSEAH into **core systems and culture**, rather than parallel processes
- Recognition of the importance of **localisation, community engagement, and evidence-informed decision-making**

Opportunities to further strengthen impact

- **Clear operational pathways**, underpinned by adequate resourcing, defined responsibilities, measurable indicators and accountability mechanisms.
- Strengthen **links between global commitments and country-level delivery**, including in relation to **digital environments** and national systems
- **Minimum standards** for consistent implementation across diverse contexts
- **Practical guidance** for complex delivery models
- Rights-based and culturally competent **survivor assistance pathways**

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Summary of feedback from UN



Key strengths

- **Alignment** with UN system-wide standards and partnerships
- **Strong coordination** with OVRA, UN OSCSEA, IASC, and engagement with UN-wide data and reporting initiatives reinforces coherence & comparability.
- Strong **victim/survivor-centred foundation** with explicit recognition of dignity, safety, and trauma-informed approaches across prevention, investigation & assistance.
- **Improved accountability and transparency**
- Inclusion of **structured survivor feedback and tracking of victim assistance** (beyond investigations) enhances accountability for outcomes

Opportunities to further strengthen impact

- Institutionalize l**earning and feedback loops** (including survivors)
- Address **emerging digital risks** more explicitly in the risk management and evidence pillars of work
- Further strengthen links of WHO's internal data systems with **UN-harmonized SEA data standards** and promote the use of data for oversight (e.g. trends, substantiation rates, access to assistance).
- Further highlight **WHO's normative role in survivor care** (clinical management of rape, MHPSS), embedding inclusivity and quality at scale
- **Strengthen culture change** through values-based recruitment and leadership capacity building.

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Summary of feedback from workforce



Key strengths

- **Strong strategic ambition**
- Recognizes PRS as part of a **broader ecosystem** with clear emphasis on collective responsibility and system-wide change
- **Promotes collaboration** across HQ, RO, CO levels, UN agencies, and implementing partners
- Recognition of **accountability, risk management, and culture change as core priorities**
- Endorses a **global evidence backbone, monitoring frameworks, and learning loops** to support continuous improvement.

Opportunities to further strengthen impact

- Clarify **KPIs across levels and delivery models**
- Include behavioural indicators
- Strengthen **operational guidance and SOP**s for implementation
- Improve **reporting reliability** and strengthen **protection against retaliation**
- Address structural, contextual, and partnership-related **risk drivers**
- Provide guidance for the operationalization of the **WHO-Government Accountability Framework** in joint operations

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Summary of feedback from survivors



Key strengths

- Strong **survivor-centred intent** & policy alignment
- Anchors **non-retaliation and protection** within PRS commitments, aligned with the PAR Policy and UN system standards.
- Positions **accountability as a core leadership function**, creating a strong normative basis for complainant protection.
- **Risk-aware** and strong learning-oriented approach, enabling operational follow-through.

Opportunities to further strengthen impact

- Introduce a **protection-focused KPI**
- **Institutionalize** "Zero Tolerance for Retaliation" through mandatory, automatically triggered protection upon reporting, shifting the burden away from complainants.
- Institute **minimum protection standards**, with clear timelines and compliance tracking.
- Strengthen **early risk prevention mechanisms**
- Explore cautious, appropriate **internal UN information-sharing** (e.g. via VSSO offices) in cases of repeated concerns to prevent escalation while respecting due process.

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Six Strategic Approach



1

Policies Aligned, Institutionalized, Contextualized, and Operationalized

2

Accountability and Transparency Consolidated

3

Risk Management Enhanced

4

Victim/Survivor-Centered Approaches Codified

5

Evidence-Informed Decision-Making Strengthened

6

Organizational Culture Change Accelerated

Six Strategic Approach



1

Policies Aligned, Institutionalized, Contextualized, and Operationalized

- **Meaningful and consistent integration of prevention and response to sexual misconduct across all relevant WHO corporate policies,** ensuring continued coherence within the broader WHO's foundational policy framework.

- **Contextualized policy packages** to support implementation of **minimum standards across all WHO operational contexts,** including emergencies and fragile/conflict affected settings where heightened risks for vulnerable population are present; in environments where governments or partners lead implementation; and in health-related prevention and response strategies where WHO is in the lead

- **Coordinated efforts,** working closely with the Office of the Special Coordinator on Improving the UN Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (UN OSCSEA) and interagency partners, including the IASC.

- **Capacity development** through regularly updated, role specific, and **context appropriate training** aligned with evolving policies

- **Continuous improvement,** with PRS integration guided by regular review, adaptation, and learning from best practices. Monitoring frameworks will track progress, **identify bottlenecks**, and drive optimization of policy implementation.

Six Strategic Approach



2



Accountability and Transparency Consolidated

- **Zero tolerance for inaction** as a formal accountability requirement
- **Public facing dashboards** and other information products on misconduct matters
- **Clarifying and embedding accountability** into leadership and staff performance management through strengthened corporate mechanisms
- **Strengthening investigation and post-investigation case management** with monitored timelines, electronic case tracking, and regular audits to ensure transparency and consistency – in line with the benchmarks included in the WHO PRS Accountability Framework
- **Strengthening victim/survivor assistance** by **ensuring timely support**, enhanced protection from retaliation, and feedback from victims/survivors into prevention and response processes
- **Regular reporting** across all WHO offices and programmes against resourced PRS implementation plans and associated KPIs, reinforcing accountability for delivery.
- **Institutionalizing learning** through after action reviews for substantiated incidents
- **Advancing accountability standards with Member States** through continued development of the Accountability Framework in WHO–Government operations through practical toolkits to allow adaptation and uptake

Six Strategic Approach



3

Risk Management Enhanced

- **Activity-based and community- informed risk assessments** across all high-risk operations, including analysis of the local context, **technology-facilitated risks**, and barriers to reporting for communities at risk and victims/survivors

- **Integration of sexual misconduct risk into key corporate frameworks and processes**, including ERM, Country Cooperation Strategies, programme design, and budget reviews, and WHE surge deployments

- **Setting minimum requirements for vetting, capacity assessment, and accountability clauses** for implementing partners and vendors, addressing a major systemwide gap

- **Supporting partners through tailored training, resources, and joint action plans** to improve mitigation capacity

- **Engaging in UN and interagency initiatives** to harmonize standards, share lessons, and advance systemwide coherence

Six Strategic Approach



4

Victim/Survivor-Centered Approaches Codified

- Defining and implementing a **holistic, rights-based,** survivor-centric assistance pathway**,** aligned with UN OVRA's standards and WHO's Regulatory Framework

- **Embedding victim/survivor-centred approaches into all capacity-building efforts,** ensuring that the workforce and other stakeholders involved in WHO operations can apply them consistently across roles

- **Expanding WHO's capacity for trauma-informed investigation and case management** to ensure safe, respectful, and non-discriminatory processes

- **Integrating victim/survivor-centred approaches into the IOS charter** and related procedures, while clarifying roles and responsibilities at all stages of investigation and disciplinary processes.

- **Institutionalization of victim/survivor participation and feedback mechanisms,** including structured opportunities to inform policy development, SOP updates, and service design while respecting confidentiality and informed consent

- **Establishing** minimum standards for safe reporting across all operational WHO's contexts, in line with UN standards and interagency mechanisms where applicable**.**

- **Developing and applying metrics** to monitor quality of the assistance provided, system responsiveness, and overall impact.

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5

Evidence-Informed Decision-Making Strengthened

- **Exchange of evidence and good practices** across countries, regions, partners, and UN system entities
- **Contribute to ongoing UN efforts to harmonize data definitions and reporting standards,** including exploring information sharing across UN entities
- **Informing a forward-looking agenda for building a global evidence backbone** for the prevention of and response to sexual misconduct
- **Providing guidance** to Member States and the broader health sector informed by emerging evidence
- **Strengthen evidence translation and communication**, including in relation to technology-facilitated sexual misconduct, to ensure findings inform policies, programmes, and leadership decisions
- **Mainstreaming the use of data and evidence** in operational decision making related to the prevention and response to sexual misconduct across all levels of WHO
- **Building internal capacity** for evidence generation, documentation, analysis, and use

Six Strategic Approach



6

Organizational Culture Change Accelerated

- **Shifting from awareness to translating the WHO Values Charter[23] into daily behaviours**, ensuring expectations are clear and operationalized across all levels and functions

- **Ensuring behavioural accountability**, embedding behavioural standards across roles, with consequences for harmful behaviour or inaction and recognition of **leadership behaviours that demonstrate prevention strategies**

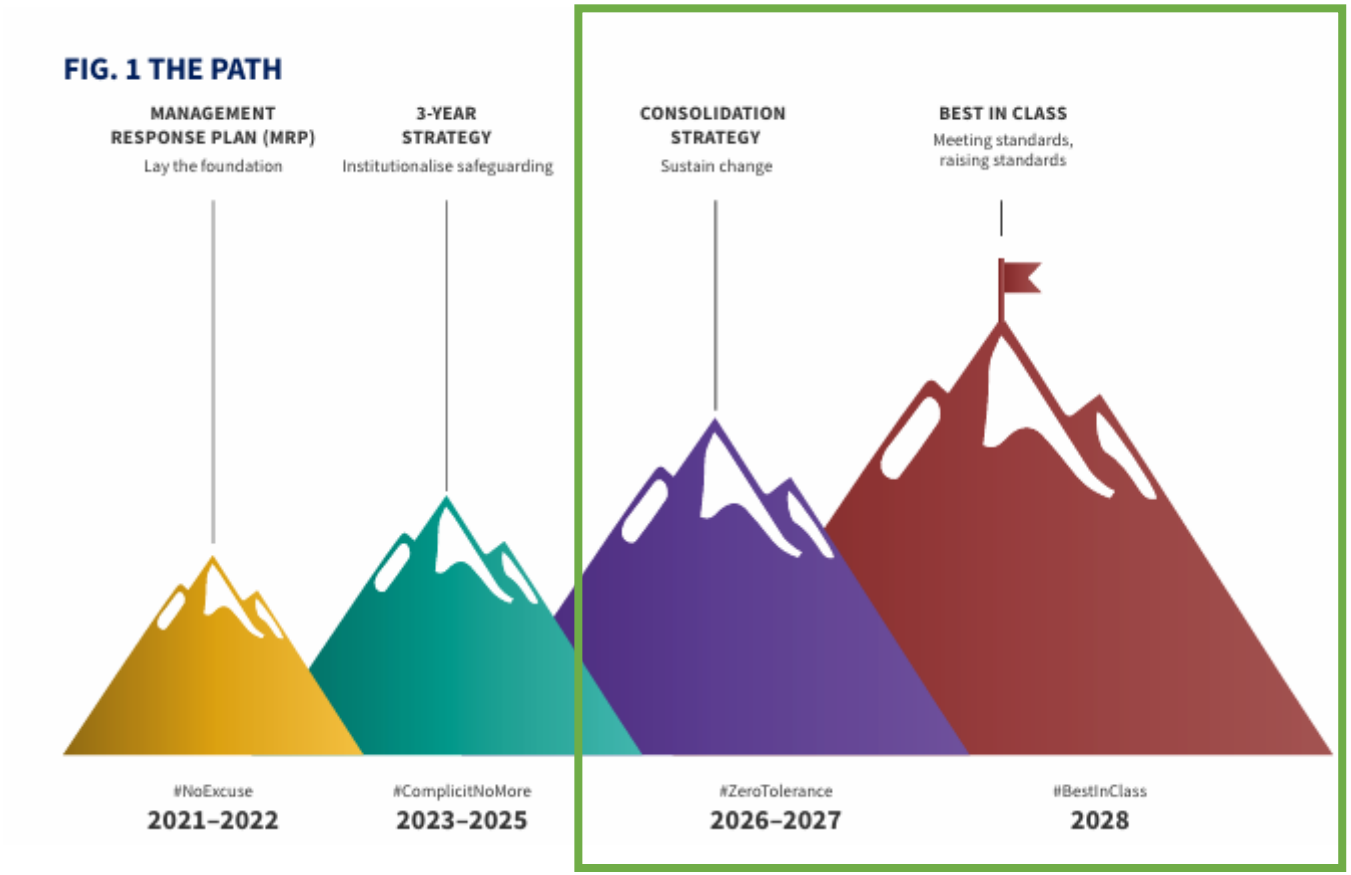
- **Fostering cohesive team cultures that** promote shared, organization-wide norms that reduce discrimination, fragmentation, and exclusion

- **Sustaining visible commitment at the most senior level and ensuring leadership at every level**, treating it as an essential, crosscutting responsibility

- **Regularly assessing organizational culture change** through staff surveys, feedback mechanisms, and independent reviews, with results used to refine actions and adjust strategies

Way Forward

With **Implementation Plans** focused on **operationalization and contextualization**, the Strategy is well positioned to deliver meaningful, trusted, and sustainable impact – serving as a **global benchmark** for PRS leadership in support of the health sector



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Thank you



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