

UN Action Multi-Donor Trust Fund

In December 2008, UN Action established a Multi-Donor Trust Fund to mobilize funds to support a range of joint catalytic activities as well as the UN Action Secretariat (Coordinator, Advocacy Officer and Programme Assistant). The Multi Donor Trust Fund aims to: (i) streamline joint programming, (ii) strengthen governance and financial management systems, and (iii) standardize reporting to donors. The entities participating in UN Action have appointed the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to serve as the Administrative Agent for the UN Action MDTF.

The Context: Sexual Violence in Conflict

War-time sexual violence has been one of history's greatest silences. Long dismissed as the random acts of renegade soldiers, rape has been steeped in a self-serving myth of inevitability. Conflict creates a climate for rampant sexual abuse. Communities are awash with small arms; moral and social restraints give way to a culture of sexual entitlement among certain armed groups; and many arms bearers rape with impunity, treating women and girls as the "spoils of war". Children born of war and their mothers risk stigmatisation and economic exclusion. Desolate villages and fallow fields bear stark witness to the terror of sexual violence in displacing populations and destroying the social fabric of communities. The wars that have raged in Bosnia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Darfur have made the military logic of mass rape undeniable.

Sexual violence in conflict is now recognized as a core security challenge. In June 2008, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1820 on Women, Peace and Security acknowledging sexual violence as a tactic of war linked with the maintenance of international peace and security. SCR 1820 demands the "immediate and complete cessation by all parties to armed conflict of all acts of sexual violence against civilians". In calling for women's participation in peace-talks, urging sanctions for perpetrators, and requiring that sexual violence be excluded from amnesties, SCR 1820 is both a milestone in itself and a reinforcement of its path-breaking predecessor, SCR 1325.

SCR 1820 provides an ambitious platform for confronting a present-day emergency affecting millions of women and children. The resolution expressly welcomes the "coordination of efforts" marked by UN Action, and its efforts to "create awareness" about sexual violence and "ultimately, put an end to it". It empowers security actors, including the UN and regional peacekeepers, to respond to sexual violence with as much alacrity as they would to any other war-time atrocity.

SCR 1820, paragraph 15, requests the Secretary-General to submit a global report on implementation to the Council by 30 June 2009, including analysis of prevalence and trends; benchmarks for measuring progress; and plans for a lasting solution to the dearth of reliable sexual violence data. Statistics on sexual violence are notoriously unreliable and grossly under-report the magnitude of sexual violence in armed conflict. Rape victims caught up in conflict are among the world's least visible people in some of the most austere, remote regions. Rape is a torture tactic of choice precisely because survivors are reticent to report. Known victims are stigmatized: wives rejected by husbands, girls rendered "unmarriageable", pregnant women accused of adultery or of tainting family "honour". This misplaced blame and shame has deep roots in a historical absence of accountability.

For instance, of some 14,200 rape cases registered in South Kivu, DRC between 2005-2007 just 2% of perpetrators were ever called to account. Of 10,000 genocide-related trials heard by Rwandan national courts, just 3% included convictions for sexual violence. Moreover, formal justice rarely

means reparations or services for survivors. SCR 1820, paragraph 13, calls on States to strengthen their judicial and health-care systems to better support survivors.

There is an urgent need to disseminate the fact that rape – whether a single act or concerted campaign – is categorically prohibited under international law. SCR 1820 notes in paragraph 4 that sexual violence “can constitute a war crime, a crime against humanity, or a constitutive act with respect to genocide”. Mass rape is no more inevitable than mass murder. For communities, it is a weapon of mass destruction like any other. It ranks among the grave breaches of international humanitarian law, reflected in the 1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court; 1949 Geneva Conventions; and jurisprudence of the international criminal tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. Every opportunity must be seized to characterize sexual violence as a crime, not the timeless “collateral damage” of war.

Assistance Strategy

UN Action seeks to amplify existing efforts by the UN system and its peacekeepers to address sexual violence in conflict – reinforcing good practice, strengthening coordination and avoiding duplication of effort. To achieve this synergy of action, it harnesses the comparative strengths of each UN entity for a “force-multiplier” effect. This is in recognition of the fact that sexual violence requires a broad-based, multi-sectoral response. It aims to:

- Align the UN’s work more effectively behind national efforts to address sexual violence;
- Deepen partnerships with civil society actors working to address the issue;
- Harness the comparative strengths of each UN system entity;
- Work alongside existing UN coordination mechanisms including the Gender Sub-Working Group of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), and the Area of Responsibility (AOR) on Gender Based Violence within the Protection Cluster;
- Position responses to sexual violence in conflict more centrally within UN tools and mechanisms including CAPs, CERFs, PRSPs, and CCA/UNDAFs; and
- Enhance the UN’s response to Security Council Resolutions 1820, 1325, 1612 and 1674, broadening the constituency for addressing sexual violence against civilians.

Working through Integrated Missions and UN Country Teams, UN Action seeks to both strengthen the UN’s response to survivors, but also to better protect women from conflict-related sexual violence, and to take action to address impunity – recognising that the problem is a security as well as a humanitarian and developmental issue. UN Action is also supporting women’s engagement in conflict prevention activities, peace negotiations and post conflict recovery processes. This helps to ensure that sexual violence is on the agenda of the police, security forces, justice and social support sectors after conflict. It also supports efforts to provide survivors with the economic security required to rebuild their lives. UN Action seeks to connect with governance and reform processes that improve women’s access to decision-making and strengthen their voices in public affairs, with the long term view of promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment.

The UN Action MDTF provides funding for proposals that embody the six guiding principles and contribute to one or more of the three pillars of activity listed below:

Six Guiding Principles:

- Rape is not an inevitable consequence of conflict. It must be prevented.
- Gender-based violence, including sexual violence, is a violation of fundamental human dignity and rights.

- Attempts to end to sexual violence must address gender-based inequalities by empowering women, and protecting and promoting their rights.
- The constructive involvement of men and boys is vital.
- Survivors of sexual violence must guide advocacy and programming efforts to end sexual violence and secure peace.
- Sexual violence in conflict is one of history's great silences. We all have a duty to act.

Three Pillars of Activity:

1. *Country Level Action*: strategic and technical support to joint UN system efforts to prevent and respond to sexual violence in conflict, including efforts to build capacity and train advisers on conflict-related sexual violence.
2. *Advocacy*: action to raise public awareness and generate political will to address conflict-related sexual violence.
3. *Knowledge Building*: creation of a knowledge hub on sexual violence in conflict and effective responses.

The UN Action MDTF, in accordance with its [Terms of Reference](#), is intended to facilitate and streamline the provision of donor resources to UN Action activities.

Governance

The **UN Action Steering Committee** provides overall leadership and sets strategic direction for UN Action. The Steering Committee comprises Principals from each of its member UN entities and is headed by a Chairperson.

The **UN Action Focal Points** from each of the UN Action member entities develop the Strategic Framework for endorsement by the Steering Committee. UN Action Focal Points meet regularly as an executive sub-group of the Steering Committee.

The UN Action Steering Committee has established a **Resource Management Committee (RMC)**, a sub-committee of the UN Action Focal Points, to take resource allocation decisions for UN Action. The RMC will be comprised of five UN Action Focal Points, one of whom will serve as the Chairperson, nominated by the broader group of UN Action Focal Points and endorsed by the UN Action Steering Committee Chairperson. For more information please refer to the UN Action MDTF [Terms of Reference](#).

The operating procedures of the RMC are set forth in its Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure.

Participating UN Organization(s) are those UN organizations who have signed an MOU to participate in the UN Action MDTF. They shall assume full programmatic and financial accountability for the funds transferred to them by the Administrative Agent. For more information please refer to the UN Action MDTF [Terms of Reference](#).

The **UN Action Secretariat** is responsible for coordinating the work of UN Action. It consists of a Coordinator, an Advocacy and Women's Rights Specialist, and a Programme Assistant. It will support the work of the RMC, Participating UN Organizations, Administrative Agent, and the UN Action Steering Committee. For more information please refer to the UN Action MDTF [Terms of Reference](#).

Administrative Agent

The Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF Office) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) serves as the Administrative Agent (AA) and is responsible for concluding [Standard Administrative Arrangements](#) (SAAs) with donors and [Memoranda of Understanding](#) (MOUs) with Participating UN

Organizations. It receives, administers and manages contributions from Donors. It disburses these funds to the Participating UN Organizations in accordance with the decisions of the RMC. Finally, the AA prepares and submits consolidated financial reports, as well as financial statements on the UN Action MDTF to the UN Action Steering Committee and donors.

Decision Making Process

Participating UN Organizations of the UN Action MDTF will submit proposals for the UN Action Secretariat for consideration by the Resource Management Committee (RMC). The RMC will:

- Evaluate proposals, taking into consideration available resources and the degree to which a proposal conforms to the UN Action Strategic Framework and the Selection Criteria;
- Ensure that UN Action MDTF financed projects are informed by decisions of the Steering Committee and UN Action Focal Points;
- Ensure appropriate consultative processes take place with key stakeholders to avoid duplication between the projects of UN Action entities, the UN Action MDTF, and other UN funding mechanisms;
- Periodically review the RMC's Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure and submit any necessary revisions to the UN Action Secretariat. Any revisions must then be approved by the UN Action Focal Points and endorsed by the Steering Committee;
- Periodically evaluate the cost effectiveness of the UN Action MDTF;
- Lead and direct the resource mobilization for the UN Action MDTF.

The operating procedures of the RMC are set forth in its Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure.

Selection Criteria

Proposals for the UN Action MDTF will be considered based on the following:

1. The extent to which the goals and objectives of the proposal conform to the UN Action Strategic Framework, including the six guiding principles and three pillars of activity;
2. The overall quality of the proposal;
3. Institutional capacity of the organization(s) to implement the project;
4. The extent to which the proposal fosters joint working (or programming) by a number of UN entities;
5. Potential for sustainability;
6. Commitment and plan for monitoring the activity;
7. Minimum budget of U.S. \$50,000;
8. Clear description of budget requirements and link to achieving results;
9. Implementation period of no more than two years.

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