





- ◁ The Secretary-General has also requested Member States to assess their existing national legislation to determine applicability to sex crimes committed by nationals while in service with the UN and, if necessary, to assess whether new legislative action is required.
- ◁ In order to further promote criminal accountability, the Secretary-General has also requested Member States to agree to establish on-site court martial proceedings when allegations amount to sex crimes under national legislation in cases involving members of military contingents. Such courts martial may allow better access to victims, witnesses and evidence, and ensure greater transparency. So far, Egypt, Bangladesh and South Africa have conducted such on-site court martial proceedings.
- ◁ Over the past years, the United Nations has made concerted efforts to engage concerned Member States in systematically addressing matters of [paternity and child support](#). In 2014, the Department of Field Support shared a DNA collection protocol with concerned Member States and offered to assist those Member States in obtaining DNA samples from mothers and children for the purpose of testing their DNA against DNA samples from alleged fathers. Furthermore, the Secretary-General in his previous reports on Special Measures called upon Member States to appoint national paternity focal points to receive and advise on paternity claims. The paternity focal points are an important part of the process, as they can bridge the gap between the facilitation that can be offered by the United Nations, including DNA collection, and steps required under national laws to advance paternity claims. Several Member States have indeed appointed such focal points, and the United Nations has facilitated contacts between the focal points and the complainants.

## PROGRESS IN OUTREACH TO COMMUNITIES

- ◁ All peacekeeping missions have [community-based complaint reception mechanisms](#) or referral pathways in place to ensure that members of the local community are able to report complaints, follow-up on status of reports, and receive assistance and support as required. The objective of this approach is two-fold:
  - provide a safe and secure reporting mechanism to population at risk
  - sensitize communities on the risk associated with sexual relationship with mission personnel deployed to those locations.
- ◁ All peacekeeping missions, as part of their [community-based complaint reception mechanisms](#)

## PROGRESS ON VICTIM ASSISTANCE

- ◁ The Uniform Protocol on the Provision of Assistance to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (the 'Protocol') provides direction to relevant organizations of the United Nations system on the provision of assistance and support to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse by UN staff and related personnel or by non-UN forces operating under UN Security Council mandate. Endorsed in December 2019, the Protocol aims to strengthen a coordinated system-wide approach to provide assistance and support in a consistent and effective manner in response to all allegations of SEA.
- ◁ The Victim Assistance Tracking System (VATS) database is being rolled out following training of Conduct and Discipline Teams and Focal Points in June 2019. This confidential platform serves as a central repository of critical information on complainants and victims of SEA, referrals and services provided, the tracking of follow up communications with victims and service providers, and the handling of paternity claims
- ◁ At the core of the victim assistance strategy is the [Trust Fund in Support of victims of sexual exploitation and abuse](#) established in 2016 by the Secretary-General. Its purpose is to fund victims' assistance and support services through service providers to victims and children born of sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations personnel. Over US\$ 2.5 million have been available in the Trust Fund, which include voluntary contributions from 21 countries as well as from payments withheld from personnel against whom sexual exploitation and abuse allegations have been substantiated, which amount to approximately US\$ 600,000. Twelve projects have been supported by the Trust Fund: 9 in DRC (3 implemented, 6 at the starting stage on livelihood support, psychosocial support and reintegration of victims into their communities); 2 in CAR (1 ongoing on medical, psychosocial support and awareness-raising within communities; and 1 at the starting stage on legal services); 1 in Liberia (ongoing on educational vocational support). A first meeting with Member States on the Trust Fund took place in June 2019 and we hope to make this a regular event.
- ◁ Ms. Jane Connors of Australia was appointed late 2017 as the first [Victim's Rights Advocate](#) at the level of Assistant Secretary-General. She is working across the UN system to make sure victims have access to urgent assistance; that they can file complaints safely and reliably while fully respecting their rights, dignity and privacy; and that they get timely information on the progress of their case. On the ground, she is supported by Victims' Rights Advocates in four missions (BINUH, MINUSCA, MONUSCO, and UNMISS).
- ◁ To support Missions in identifying risks and mitigating measures, a [Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Risk Management Toolkit](#) offers practical tools to identify, assess, treat and monitor. The toolkit has been expanded to include all forms of misconduct is being disseminated to all Secretariat entities, including peace operations and has been shared with Member States.
- ◁ The Secretary-general established in September 2017 a [Circle of leadership on the prevention of and response to sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations operations](#) made up of 87 sitting and former Heads of State and Governments to set an example of how leaders hold their personnel accountable for sexual exploitation and abuse violations and on reporting back to the UN on steps taken in this regard.

