

JOINT STATEMENT –SAFEGUARDING SUMMIT, 5 MARCH 2018

On 5 March 2018, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the Charity Commission co-hosted, with support from the international development network Bond, a Safeguarding Summit with UK international development charities, regulatory bodies, and Government and independent safeguarding experts.

The Summit addressed the safeguarding prevention and response failures that have led to sexual exploitation and abuse within the UK international development sector.

We commit to always putting beneficiaries first, to concrete steps to improve the effectiveness of safeguards, to meet our duties and responsibilities and to lead a system-wide process of improving standards and restoring trust.

We commit to improving the standards and delivery of safeguards, including a culture of zero tolerance to sexual exploitation and abuse in all we do. We all agree to meet these five commitments.

1. We will demonstrate accountability to beneficiaries and survivors, including staff and volunteers, prioritising those who have suffered and survived exploitation, abuse and violence, and design systems of accountability and transparency that have beneficiaries at their centre.
2. We will demonstrate a step change in shifting organisational culture to tackle power imbalances and gender inequality; policies alone are not enough to prevent abuse. The responsibility lies with Board and management, not survivors to tackle all forms of sexism and discrimination and hold individuals to account.
3. We will ensure that safeguards are integrated throughout the employment cycle so that we ensure strong checks are in place at the start of employment and regular training and performance management - reinforced by strong codes of conduct and standards - throughout the career.
4. We will ensure full accountability through rigorous reporting and complaints mechanisms, for any misconduct that occurs under the banner of our organisations, including by sub-contractors and partners. We will pursue all reported misconduct to the fullest extent, for our own staff, in our own organisational procedures and refer to regulatory authorities in the UK and overseas. We will work together to share relevant information on staff and volunteers who have committed acts which breach standards of conduct.
5. We will ensure that concerns are heard and acted on, through a whistleblowing process which protects anonymity and safety and that will ensure that ways of reporting are actively promoted.

This is rightly a demanding set of actions. While it will take time for everyone to raise their standards to those of the best, and change the culture, we must ensure the collective challenge starts today. In addition, we will take forth actions agreed at the summit, and further explore how safeguarding can be strengthened in all settings including in emergency, humanitarian and conflict.

For those of us who are membership bodies, we commit to communicating and promoting this statement to our members. We commit to offering our members support to raise safeguarding standards through advice, information and training. We will be commending these commitments to our membership for adoption by their Boards.

We will monitor progress on these commitments for review at a wider Safeguarding Conference to be held later in 2018

We commit to a set of **immediate** actions that we will take individually and jointly and will publish these from our organisations within two weeks.

We commit to **define and propose implementable solutions on** the following through a set of working groups which will report to DFID, charity regulators in the UK, relevant devolved authorities and the sector and be presented at the Safeguarding Conference in Autumn this year this.

We commit to ensuring that these groups and conclusions go beyond those represented today to represent the involvement, perspectives and experience of the full breadth of charities working on international development.

Working group 1: **Accountability to beneficiaries and survivors**

Working group 2: **A step change in shifting organisational culture**

Working group 3: **Safeguards throughout the employment cycle**

Working group 4: **Rigorous reporting and complaints mechanisms**

Working group 5: **Ensure that concerns are heard and acted on**

Where we are involved in funding, regulating, scrutinising or providing expert advice to charities involved in delivering international development, we are committed to supporting them, providing a proper framework, and holding them to account in order to achieve these objectives.