

Office of the Humanitarian Coordinator in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

**Statement by the Humanitarian Coordinator in the Democratic Republic of the Congo,**  
**David McLachlan-Karr, on media articles published by**  
**The New Humanitarian**  
*Kinshasa, 12 June 2020*

I remain deeply concerned about allegations of fraud, corruption, and sexual exploitation and abuse in the delivery of humanitarian aid in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I take this very seriously. It is not acceptable for aid to be diverted and not to reach those who need it. And sexual exploitation and abuse can never be tolerated.

Humanitarian organizations operating in the DRC have taken, and will continue to take, action to prevent malpractice and malfeasance to ensure that our operations are free from fraud, corruption and abuse.

Allegations of fraud in the DRC first surfaced in 2018. Since that time, the humanitarian community has mobilized to investigate all allegations in a spirit of transparency and accountability. The detection of fraud cases has tested our collective ability and determination to identify and resolve weaknesses within our ranks and system.

Pursuant to the allegations, the UN and its partners have taken a number of decisive steps to stamp out fraud and abuse. These have been taken by individual organizations where fraud has been discovered, and some have been adopted collectively. These remedial actions include, but are not limited to:

- Internal reviews by agencies of operational procedures to identify and correct oversight and managerial weaknesses. Collective measures have been adopted and implemented on the ground for enhanced triangulation of information, analysis of targeting data by external teams, and more rigorous audit, oversight and monitoring by senior managers. For transparency, partners are increasingly utilizing data platforms with enhanced controls for sharing of data and analysis.
- An Anti-Fraud Task Force has been set up, under the leadership of the Country Humanitarian Team, to identify and share best practices and collectively identify and propose remedial measures.
- An “Operational Review”, to be undertaken by external consultants of the entire humanitarian response and distribution system in the DRC has been commissioned. The objective of the review is to establish the facts and to propose risk mitigations strategies to prevent fraud, corruption and abuse. The final version of the Operational Review is expected in July 2020 and will be made public.

Grave allegations have also been made of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) in the delivery of aid in the DRC.

The United Nations has an absolute “Zero Tolerance” policy for SEA. And I am determined as Humanitarian Coordinator to see that we adopt strict policies to stamp out abuse and if found, to swiftly investigate and prosecute the perpetrators. Justice must mean that we also effectively assist the victims and survivors of sexual exploitation and violence.

An inter-agency mechanism to prevent SEA is in place. It is designed provide a safe space for victims to report abuse. In tandem, the SEA Network will seek to improve the quality of our programmes through the adoption of global best practices. I will endeavour to ensure that we have the mechanisms in place to ensure our accountability to the populations we support and serve.

The New Humanitarian has also published allegations of fraud within the operation of the Humanitarian Pooled Fund, including kickbacks for the award of project financing. These allegations are extremely serious and have the potential to damage donor confidence in the Fund and ancillary financing.

In 2019, the Fund underwent a review of its functioning. The overall outcome of the review has been positive and has allowed us to strengthen our internal accountability and control frameworks and improve the transparency of our reporting to donors. Meanwhile, I give my assurance that any allegation of malpractice by either the implementing partner, or any staff working in the Fund, will be taken seriously and be thoroughly investigated.

Humanitarian aid is a collective and altruistic endeavor. As much as we collectively share the successes, we also share the faults. We consistently strive to improve our systems to provide the best assistance possible on time to the people in need.

Humanitarian operations in the DRC every year save millions of lives. It is essential that humanitarian operations continue to be delivered in an effective and timely manner. In this context, we recognize that our operations can only continue if the highest levels of trust exist between beneficiaries, the host government, the humanitarian agencies and our donors. We are determined to do everything possible to maintain this level of trust by fighting fraud, corruption and abuse at all levels.

We look forward to the publication of the final report and we will carefully consider any recommendations made to improve the performance of humanitarian aid in the DRC.

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