**INTERVIEW CHECKLIST**

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| **Preliminary Matters*** Discrete, safe and secure location; childcare services where required.
* Composition of team (gender sensitive/diverse).
* Introductions: name, title and role of persons present (investigators, prosecutors, interpreters).
* Establish rapport.
* Ensure witness comfort: physical, with people present, with location of interview.
* Explain purpose of interview: nature of investigation; to ascertain whether witness may be able to assist; and to obtain a statement if that is the case.
* Ascertain whether the witness has provided information and/or a statement to anyone else before – ascertain details and copy if available.
* Seek permission to take notes/record interview.
* Where the witness agrees to participate in the interview and provide a statement, explain:
	+ That they must tell the truth
	+ That the statement must be given voluntarily and without expectation of reward
	+ That they may be required to testify before the court
	+ The measures available to protect their identity and information. As applicable, however, note that these are subject to the discretion of the court, and that if the matter proceeds to trial, the witness’s identity and statement will be made available to the court, the accused and his lawyers
	+ That the witness may have to face the accused in court
* Clarify purpose of any payments made, e.g. transportation costs etc: not an inducement.
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| **Formal Details*** Name, age, contact details etc.
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| **Substantive Interview*** Narrative: ask open-ended questions and allow the witness to tell the story in their own time. Avoid interruption. Note: It may take more than one interview to elicit full evidence.

**Areas to Cover*** Seek clarifying information to ensure an accurate and complete account having regard to potential offences and modes of liability; the evidence already available; and further evidence required.
* Recall that all witnesses may hold information regarding sexual violence. Refer to Manual Annex C and the table at para. 95.
* Probe the witness’s narrative by asking follow-up questions aimed at clarifying the witness’s account of what happened, when it happened, who was present, how the witness recognized or knew them, what was said, who did what, and other details relevant to the witness’s account and ability to perceive.

**During this process*** Empathize with the witness.
* Recognize that the subject matter may be difficult or painful to recount but that the witness should not feel embarrassed or ashamed.
* Use simple language.
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| * Stress the need for clear language where required, e.g. to establish penetration.
* Encourage the witness to seek clarification if they do not understand any question.
* Remain alert, and respond to, verbal and non-verbal signs of distress by the witness.
* Remain alert to one’s own verbal and non-verbal communication (language; demeanour etc).
* Take frequent breaks; suspend or abandon the interview where necessary.
* Where applicable, clarify any inconsistencies with available past statements.
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| **Statement*** Must be recorded in writing and read back to the witness.
* Ask the witness to amend or modify the statement to ensure its accuracy and completeness
* Emphasize the need for truth and correctness: explain that omissions may be used to discredit the witness at trial.
* Once the witness agrees with the content of the statement, it should be signed and dated in the presence of those present, who should attest to the same.
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| **Medical, Counseling and Related Services*** Wherever possible, counseling should be offered following interview.
* Inform/refer the witness to medical, counseling and other support services available in the local area.
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| **Closing*** Provide the witness with the contact details of the investigator/prosecutors.
* Advise the witness on the likely progress of proceedings, who, when and how contact will be made etc.
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