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## JOINT MEETING

**Hundred and Twenty-sixth Session of the Programme Committee and  
Hundred and Seventy-fifth Session of the Finance Committee**

**Rome, 18 March 2019**

**Corporate Policy, Processes and Measures on the Prevention of  
Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Authority Abuse –  
Updated Action Plan**

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### *Context*

1. Measures at FAO to tackle harassment, sexual harassment and authority abuse were strengthened in 2018, and continue to be enhanced in 2019.
2. During the course of the last few months, FAO has acted on several fronts. The Organization continued its efforts for ensuring a workplace free from sexual harassment. In this regard, a new policy dedicated to the prevention of sexual harassment was introduced in February 2019. Along with other substantial measures, the policy enhances three key areas of work: reporting, investigation and decision-making, outreach and support.
3. In addition, the Organization has reviewed and updated its corporate Action Plan, taking into consideration the work carried out by the internal task force, and the results of the UN System Staff Survey on Sexual Harassment, which was made available to all staff and non-staff personnel in November 2018. The internal institutional arrangements for prevention of sexual harassment are predicated on a multidisciplinary approach, bringing together human resources, medical, ethics, training and investigation teams. Concomitantly, FAO continues to engage actively at the UN level, through active participation in the work of the CEB Task Force.

### **Progress within UN initiatives**

4. The first and second phases of the work of the CEB Task Force in 2018 delivered concrete progress on addressing sexual harassment across the UN system. The High-level Committee on Management (HLCM), at its meeting on 11-12 October 2018 at UNESCO in Paris, approved the agreed measures and recommendations of the Task Force, which were subsequently endorsed by CEB, at the Board's second regular session held on 7-8 November 2018 in New York. Key deliverables were:
  - a) A UN System Model Policy on Sexual Harassment applicable to all organizations.
  - b) Launch of the "ClearCheck" Sexual Harassment Screening Database to avoid re-hiring of individuals whose working relationship with an organization of the system has ended because of a determination that they perpetrated sexual harassment, and inclusion of individuals with pending allegations of sexual harassment who leave an entity before completion of the process.
  - c) Development of a mechanism for system-wide collection and analysis of data to ensure timely and accurate reporting and evidence-based policy-making – and results of a comprehensive system-wide questionnaire on reporting of sexual harassment.
  - d) Common Guide for Managers as a tool to develop awareness-raising, communication and outreach.
  - e) Assessment of the various hotlines/helplines solutions put in place by UN system organisations, and proposal for development of a framework of hotlines/helplines solutions vis-à-vis a set of criteria of best practices.
  - f) Continued system-wide efforts to strengthen investigative capacity and quality of investigations, including through a joint Task Force/ Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) meeting of heads of investigatory bodies.

## Results of the UN System Staff Survey on Sexual Harassment

5. In November 2018, the Survey on Sexual Harassment in our Workplace was carried out by an external company on behalf of the United Nations. This confidential survey was delivered online in the six official UN languages to sample critical incidences and perceptions of sexual harassment across the UN, in order to strengthen mechanisms for protection, enhance available support, and improve methods of reporting sexual harassment.

6. The response rate, globally and at FAO, was relatively low. The overall participation rate of staff and non-staff personnel across 31 UN entities was 17%, whereas at FAO it was 14.6%. This translates into 30,364 responses to the survey in total, of which 1,898 were from FAO.

7. The main outcomes of the results for FAO emanating from 1,898 responses with a response rate estimated at 14.6% (1,898 respondents out of a total headcount of 12,967 staff and non-staff personnel) are:

- a) Most common types of sexual harassment. The most common forms of sexual harassment reported by respondents were: sexual stories or jokes that were offensive, unwelcome attempts to draw them into a discussion on sexual matters, gestures or use of body language of a sexual nature, which embarrassed or offended and imply faster promotions or better treatment in case of sexual cooperation.
- b) Prevalence by gender and age. Respondents who identified as female reported the highest rates. Relative to age groups, respondents aged between 25 and 34 reported experiencing sexual harassment.
- c) Prevalence by sexual identity. Within the sexual identity category, respondents who identified themselves as gay reported the highest rates.
- d) Prevalence by employment type. Relative to employment types, rates were highest for respondents that identified themselves as Consultants.

8. The final report has identified key groups of individuals for the Organization that require priority attention: (i) vulnerable targets –Women personnel, aged between 25 and 44, mainly Consultants; and (ii) potential harassers –men aged between 45 and 54, mainly colleagues, but also supervisors, managers and some senior leaders.

9. Despite the low response rate, and the related methodological shortcomings on extrapolating reliable outcomes, this survey represents an important first step. It has provided a baseline against which to measure change and to work for developing future initiatives, which will be adapted taking into account these specific categories. Furthermore, lessons learned may provide a basis for an improved survey with greater methodological integrity for the future.

## Progress in FAO

10. As mentioned above, a significant milestone was the introduction of a new policy on prevention of sexual harassment in February, following the UN System Model Policy and adapted to the specific institutional and legal frameworks of the Organization.
11. During the course of the last few months, FAO participated in several meetings with the CEB Task Force for ensuring system-wide alignment of entity policies with the Model Policy on Sexual Harassment. On 13 February 2019, FAO issued the new policy, and was one of the first UN agencies to adopt the UN Reference Model incorporating the uniform definition of sexual harassment.
12. In addition, as previously reported<sup>1</sup>, FAO developed an Action Plan and implemented concrete actions involving internal offices and divisions with the coordination of the Office of the Human Resources. The Action Plan will be also reinforced with appropriate activities to address the survey results. In particular, the internal task force is working on:
- a) Developing a Sexual Harassment Prevention toolkit, which will be part of the on-boarding process for all the new hires.
  - b) Including specific indicators in the Performance Evaluation and Management System (PEMS) regarding Prevention of Sexual Harassment and Gender Parity to assist managers in effectively fulfilling their obligations as role model of the cultural change.
  - c) Scheduling targeted travels for the Ethics Officer for providing support and advice at country and regional office level.
13. A brief summary of the updated actions is presented below.

### A. Reporting

#### *A.1 - Enhance Hotline/Helpline reporting capabilities*

14. FAO assigned a voice mailbox to the current internal Hotline handled by the Office of the Inspector General, so that complainants can leave voice messages outside working hours.

#### *A.2 - Establish mechanism to regularly monitor implementing partners accountability*

15. A specific section on prevention of sexual harassment has been included in the Country Annual Report (in English, Spanish and French), which requests the responsible officials to list the actions taken to create and promote a work ethos and environment that prevents sexual harassment, exploitation or abuse.

16. In addition, within the framework of the 2019 Internal Control Questionnaire for Decentralized Offices, FAO will introduce a section on implementing partners accountability and adherence to FAO standards in order to manage and monitor programme implementation and to detect issues in real time, thereby minimizing any reputational risks for the Organization.

#### *A.3 - Improve Community Based Complaint Mechanism*

17. Initial Guidelines for Community Based Complaints have been launched with specific attention to stakeholder engagement and grievance mechanisms for communities. In this regard, the Organization developed mandatory operational guidelines which describe the procedure for handling complaints received by affected individuals who believe that FAO has violated its own environmental and social safeguards. The Organization is also working on the development of a template for complaints on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse according to the IASC Best Practice Guide on Inter-Agency Community-Based Complaints Mechanisms.

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<sup>1</sup> CL 160/9

## **B. Investigation and decision-making**

### *B.1 - Strengthen network with peers in the humanitarian sector to share experiences and good practices*

18. The Ethics Officer keeps on participating in external meetings and webinars of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), of the Rome-Based Organizations and of the Ethics Network of Multilateral Organizations in order to share innovations and best practices.

19. It is also worth mentioning that FAO has participated since 2012 in the network of the UN-SWAP (UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) and practices peer learning with other 65 participating UN entities. In 2018, FAO participated in the network meeting and discussed how senior managers should articulate a vision of the ways in which the entity will support the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women as a central UN norm, including the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, and ensure that organizational goals reflect this vision.

## **C. Outreach and support**

### *C.1 - Mandatory learning tools on PSH and PSEA*

20. As part of the efforts on raising awareness on employees, a mandatory video was released on “Prevention of Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Abuse of Authority” (in English, French and Spanish). Compliance as of end of January 2019 was 97 percent staff members and 82 percent non-staff HR.

21. The UN e-learning “Working Together Harmoniously” was adapted for FAO and made available in English in November 2018. The course raises awareness on FAO’s zero tolerance of work place harassment and prohibited conduct. French and Spanish versions will be available by the end of March 2019 and then the course will be made mandatory to all FAO employees.

22. In addition, in February 2019 FAO released an interactive video on Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, which will be translated in French and Spanish by the end of April 2019. This training aims to raise awareness about Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) and FAO’s zero tolerance towards any form of SEA. The course informs about FAO’s Policy on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and its obligations. It also helps to identify SEA behaviours and provides with guidance on how to stop, prevent and report SEA abuses by FAO personnel and implementing partners.

23. Finally, an awareness video on “Whistleblower Protection” will be made available by the end of May 2019 and then translated in other languages.

### *C.2 - Face-to-face training and video training sessions in headquarters and DOs*

24. The Ethics Office scheduled additional three video conferences and one face-to-face training session which will be held by the end of March 2019. New PSEA Focal Points have been nominated in the Regional Office of Europe and Central Asia (REU) and will be trained by the end of the year.

### *C.3 - Awareness raising sessions on PSHEA for FAO focal points in selected priority countries*

25. Additional selected priority country offices are being identified and training agendas and material are being defined, tailored to specific country contexts. In anticipation of the face-to-face sessions, which will take place as of March, introductory video conferences have been carried out during February.

### *C.4 - Short Guide for Managers on Prevention of and Response to SH in the Workplace*

26. A short Guide for Managers on Prevention of, and Response to Sexual Harassment in the workplace has been developed and made available on the FAO intranet page in English, French and Spanish.

27. The Organization reinforced its internal communication on SEA and SH, highlighting the key role of the managers, which are at the forefront for creating a safe and harmonious working environment, free of fear, intimidation, hostility, and offence.

### Next steps

28. Building on the efforts and products developed since the launch, FAO will keep on working with the CEB Task Force with a view to report on the status of implementation of agreed actions to CEB at the Board's first regular session in spring 2019, through HLCM. In particular, these are FAO priorities for 2019 within UN initiatives:

- a) Improving Investigation. Establishment of a Sub-Working Group on Strengthening Investigative Capacity with Terms of Reference, with expected outputs including a reference model of best procedures, processes and practices for professional investigations.
- b) Accountability. Populating the system-wide "ClearCheck" sexual harassment screening database, and ensuring that it is continuously updated and systematically utilized during recruitment processes. Reporting on opt-in and deployment of the Expanded Guidelines on Sexual Harassment Screening Database on Pending Allegations of Sexual Harassment. Refining and launching an annual data collection exercise commencing in early 2019.
- c) Support and outreach. Delivery of a framework of hotlines/helplines solutions used by UN system and related international organizations, based on criteria of best practices. Launch of UN public website on Initiatives against Sexual Harassment in the UN System.

29. The results of the UN Survey on Sexual Harassment point towards strengths and weaknesses of the current UN and FAO approach in the field of prevention of sexual harassment. In light of this, and with a view to obtaining more reliable extrapolating, these results could be leveraged for developing a new independent and anonymous survey, possibly in collaboration with the other Rome-Based agencies.

30. The survey report highlighted also the importance of cultivating a work environment where people feel safe to speak up about their experiences, as targets of, or witnesses to, harassment. Based on this, a revised set of actions will be developed and targeted training courses will be released changing the order of priorities as appropriate for supporting specific categories of personnel and countries.

31. In addition, FAO will continue to update its policies in alignment with the UN system. In particular, the Whistleblower Protection Policy is being revised to incorporate best practices criteria as recommended by a recent JIU review<sup>2</sup> and will be issued together with the new awareness video on "Whistleblower Protection" by the end of May 2019.

32. Lastly, FAO keeps on monitoring the progress on the implementation of the Action Plan for the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment for reporting at future Council sessions using qualitative and quantitative indicators. An updated version of the Action Plan is in attachment to this document as *Annex 1*.

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<sup>2</sup> JIU/REP/2018/4, Review of Whistle-Blower Policies and Practices in United Nations System Organizations.

## ACTION PLAN

### Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment

FAO applies a zero-tolerance policy towards Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and does not tolerate harassment in any of its forms. A true zero-tolerance policy requires a robust system to create an enabling working environment, through the reinforcement of the culture of prevention, the improvement of awareness-raising and enabling fair investigations, observing principles of confidentiality and discretion, and guarantying ongoing protection of those who report.

Within this framework, the Action Plan is intended in particular to clarify the key areas of work and the concrete actions which are essential to be set up in order to ensure total enforcement of the rules aimed at creating and promoting a working environment that prevents sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse.

The following pages provide an overview of the actions that will be carried out and a brief report on progress. The colour-coded reporting system summarized below indicates the status of each initiative and the timeframes.

#### Colour-coded reporting system

The initiative has been **completed**

Completed

Progress towards implementation is **on track**

Ongoing

Progress is **delayed** but remedial action is being taken and a revised timeline established

Delayed

**Continuing** activities

Continuing

<b>1. Reporting</b>			
<u>Overview</u> FAO engaged in several actions to better understand and address possible lack of data and under-reporting of sexual harassment cases, conducting analysis on causes and remedial approaches.			
<u>Major activities</u>	<u>Indicators</u>	<u>Target Timeframe</u>	<u>Status</u>
<b>1.1. Conduct the UN System Staff Survey on Sexual Harassment</b>			
Conduct targeted Perception Survey for FAO personnel, aligned to the CEB Task Force efforts to ensure timely and accurate reporting and evidence-based policy making	Result of the survey expected in December 2018	December 2018	Completed
<b>1.2 Enhance Hotline/Helpline reporting capabilities</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assigning a voice mailbox to the current hotline, so that complainants could leave messages outside of working hours.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ voice mailbox assigned</li> <li>▪ Out-sourcing hotline to ensure 24 hours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ December 2018</li> </ul>	Completed



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Engaged in discussion with other UN agencies to identify a suitable option for an outsourced 24-hour hotline.</li> </ul>	<p>coverage with trained personnel</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ June 2019</li> </ul>	Ongoing
<b>1.3 Establish mechanism to regularly monitor implementing partners accountability and adherence to FAO standards</b>			
<p>Work with country offices to establish documented routines to monitor implementing partners accountability through the inclusion of a specific section in the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Annual reporting of Country Offices</li> <li>- Internal Control Questionnaire for Decentralized Offices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Instructions released to country offices.</li> <li>▪ Periodic and random monitoring and beneficiaries' feedback sought on the perceived and demonstrated values of the partner.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ December 2018</li> </ul>	Completed
<b>1.4 Improve Community Based Complaint Mechanism (CBCM)</b>			
<p>Work with regions to improve a Community Based Complaint mechanism in Country Offices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Guidelines for CBCM at country level are prepared.</li> <li>▪ CBCM is implemented in priority country offices.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ January 2019</li> <li>▪ June 2019</li> </ul>	Ongoing

<b>1.5 Establish and maintain confidential database by PSEA Focal point network of all SEA reports received</b>			
This database maintained by the Ethics Office, records details of names, contact details of reporting and affected individual and summary of complaint including details of subject (if known).	All reports are recorded in the database.	Continuing	Continuing
<b>1.6 Inputs to Sexual Harassment Screening Database established by CEB Task Force</b>			
Database of personnel (Staff and NSHR) who have been found to have engaged in sexual harassment to avoid rehire.	Populate the Database and use it for Reference Checks.	Continuing	Continuing
<b>1.7 Provide yearly statistical data of Sexual Harassment related cases</b>			
FAO maintains statistics of formal complaints on Harassment, including Sexual Harassment allegations, and related case since 2015.	Provide Harassment statistics in the report of the Inspector General, available on the website.	Yearly	Continuing

<b>2. Investigation and decision-making</b>			
<u>Overview</u> FAO committed to strengthen capacities and instruments for investigating and supporting victims and to enhance sharing of resources, expertise and best practices.			
<u>Major activities</u>	<u>Indicators</u>	<u>Target Timeframe</u>	<u>Status</u>
<b>2.1. Increase investigative capacity</b>			
Increase investigative capacity by addition of one Professional position (P-3) in the Office of the Inspector General	Investigate capacity reinforced	July 2018	Completed
<b>2.2 Strengthen network with peers in the humanitarian and other sectors to share experiences and good practices</b>			
FAO actively participates in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rome Based Ethics officers meetings</li> <li>▪ IASC webinars</li> <li>▪ Task Team on PSEA webinars and phone conferences</li> <li>▪ UN-SWAP</li> </ul>	Sharing experiences and good practices through the participation in the network (50% of the invitations received on a yearly basis)	Continuing	Continuing

<b>3. Outreach and Support</b>			
<u>Overview</u> More detailed and systematic communication to staff using a variety of communication channels and outreach tools was seen as an effective way to enhance awareness and increase trust in the Organization.			
<u>Major activities</u>	<u>Indicators</u>	<u>Target Timeframe</u>	<u>Status</u>
<b>3.1 Mandatory learning tool on Prevention of Sexual Harassment</b>			
Establishment of a mandatory learning tool	Percentage rate of FAO personnel to complete the mandatory learning tool	October 2018	Completed
Release the customization of the UN e-learning "Working Harmoniously" as mandatory training, together with an additional video on Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.	Learning tools to be released	February 2019	Completed
Release of the video on "Whistleblower Protection"	Learning tool to be released	May 2019	Ongoing
<b>3.2 Face-to-face training and video training sessions in headquarters and decentralized offices</b>			
FAO keeps on organizing training sessions at HQ, face-to-face training courses in DOs and video conferences, where sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse is addressed. Special focus is given to regional offices and countries in emergency.	Complete the training sessions for all Divisions at HQ and DOs and increase the number of video conferences.	Additional 10 Divisions at HQ and 9/10 in DOs by March 2019 and additional 15 video conferences by December 2019.	Ongoing

<b>3.3 Awareness raising sessions on PSHEA for FAO focal points in selected priority countries</b>			
Conduct training on SEA and SH in country offices.	Training of focal points and training of trainers in 3- 5 countries each quarter	December 2019	Continuing
<b>3.4 Guide for Managers on Prevention of and Response to SH in the Workplace</b>			
A Guide for Managers on Prevention of, and Response to Sexual Harassment in the Workplace to assist managers in the effective fulfilment of their obligations, to create a safe and harmonious work environment, to respond to reports of sexual harassment in the workplace, and to hold personnel accountable for any form of prohibited conduct.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Guide available and published on OHR intranet page</li> <li>▪ Communication campaign to remind managers on their role</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ October 2018</li> <li>▪ January 2019</li> </ul>	Completed

<b>3.5. Reinforced internal communications on SEA and SH</b>			
<p>With regard to the reinforcement of internal communication on SEA and SH, FAO is moving forward with multiple approaches:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Broadcast email from the Ethics Office through corporate internal communication channels to all FAO personnel reminding of the Organization's commitment to zero tolerance and to encourage reporting of SEA and SH.</li> <li>▪ Direct and indirect references published on a continuous basis on the intranet homepage and on screens both in headquarters and in the regional offices, including articles, a training section and highlighted notices and pop ups.</li> <li>▪ Publications of newsletters on its intranet regarding Focus Topics, including SH matters and hotline reporting.</li> <li>▪ Specific internet and intranet webpages will be enhanced, listing policy and processes for reporting.</li> </ul>	Improving awareness and communication, which play a critical role in combating sexual harassment and prevention through organizational culture change.	Continuing	Continuing
<b>3.6 Counselling support to staff</b>			
The Staff Counsellor is in charge of the counselling service, aimed also at preventing, managing and solving the issues of harassment and sexual harassment occurring in the work environments brought to his attention.	Staff reporting sexual harassment referred to staff counsellors	November 2018	Completed
<b>3.7 Development of a dedicated intranet page</b>			
Creation of an Intranet page to provide updates	Section created and updated	October 2018	Completed