

POLICY ON THE PREVENTION OF HARASSMENT

The policy on the prevention of harassment has been amended. The revised policy and related procedures for resolving harassment cases are outlined below.

Harassment means any improper behaviour by a person that is directed at, and is offensive to, another individual and which the person knew or ought reasonably to have known would be offensive. It comprises objectionable or unacceptable conduct that demeans, belittles or causes personal humiliation or embarrassment to an individual. Mildly offensive comments or behaviour can rise to the level of harassment if they are repeated; a single incident can be considered harassment if it is so severe that it has a lasting negative impact on the individual(s) concerned.

Although harassment may occur more often between persons of different levels of authority it may also occur between peers. When behaviour of this kind is engaged in by any person who is in a position to influence career or employment conditions (including hiring, assignment,

the repetition of suggestive comments or innuendo;
the exhibition of sexually-oriented material in the workplace;
the use of crude or obscene language or gestures, including obscene jokes or stories;
repeated and/or exaggerated compliments or comments about a colleague's personal appearance, or his/her physical features;
invitations to social activities or "dates", if they persist after it should be clear to the person issuing the invitations that they are not welcomed by the recipient;
deliberate and unsolicited physical contact, or unnecessarily close physical proximity;
direct propositions of a sexual nature;
any link between submissions to sexual advances and conditions of employment, promotion, professional development, etc.;
unwelcome and inappropriate letters, telephone calls, emails or other communications.

Discriminatory harassment is harassment based on grounds such as race, nationality, creed, religion or sex, which may have the purpose or effect of giving less favourable treatment to a staff member or group of staff members than to any other stare neme aroup of sf

The cardinal rule for dealing with unwelcome behaviour is to discourage it at an early stage. A person who believes that he/she is being subjected to harassment should first, where possible, make it clear to the alleged harasser that the behaviour is unwelcome, that it is offensive and that it should immediately cease.

In the event that the offensive behaviour continues or if the person who believes he/she is being subjected to harassment is not comfortable approaching the alleged harasser on his/her own, the following informal and formal means of resolving the problem are available.

(a) The Informal Approach

The informal approach is aimed at resolving a complaint of harassment through an assisted negotiation process between the person who believes he/she is being subjected to harassment and the alleged harasser, by the provision of advice and support on a strictly confidential basis. Persons who believe they are being subjected to harassment and alleged harassers are encouraged to use informal means in order to resolve problems as soon as possible, in a fair and respectful manner.

A person who believes he/she is being subjected to harassment may seek assistance from another staff member, a Human Resources or Personnel Officer or the Staff Counsellor in the Medical Service. Persons in duty stations outside Headquarters or on official missions who believe they are being subjected to harassment may seek advice from another staff member or a senior manager from one of the UN organisations represented in the area. Staff members may also request advice from their respective staff representative bodies.

A person who believes he/she is being subjected to harassment may call for mediation by a third party. The mediation procedure is outlined in Administrative Circular 2006/06 - *Mediation*.

(b) The Formal Approach

Formal complaints will be dealt with rapidly in the strictest of confidence and where warranted, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. The person submitting the complaint should address it in writing on a strictly confidential basis to the Director, CSH, and:

- (i) The complaint should describe the specific offensive act or acts, the time, location and circumstances under which they took place and any other information relevant to the case. The complaint should identify the alleged harasser/respondent as well as any witness to the act(s) or anyone else who may have information relevant to the complaint. The complaint should also specify whether and in which circumstances the complainant made it clear to the respondent that his/her behaviour was unwelcome and, where appropriate, any reasons that prevented the complainant from doing this. The complaint must be signed and dated by the complainant and the information provided should be as precise and concise as possible.
- (ii) The Director, CSH, will send within five working days written acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint to the complainant and forward a copy of the complaint to the respondent, who will be given the right to respond in writing to the allegations within 10 working days of receipt of the copy of the complaint.
- (iii) On the basis of the information received, the Director, CSH, may initiate

disciplinary proceedings in respect of the respondent and the matter will thereafter be dealt with in accordance with the provisions set out under paragraph 330.3.2 of Manual Section 330 – Disciplinary Measur