

Gender-Based Violence and the Workplace

Report of the Expert Group Meeting

Organized by United National Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women
(UN Women)

12 & 13 December 2011

Executive Summary

“Violence against women means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.”

- Elements to disallow retaliation against victims,
- Recommendations for flexibility with the provision of leave and benefits,
- Encouragement for employers to actively participate in safety planning for victims.

An effective policy strongly urges employers addressing gender-based violence in the workplace at all stages to:

- Respect the confidentiality of the situation,
- Defer to the survivors' assessments of safety wherever reasonably possible, and
- Actively promote prevention and awareness training.

When employees are actual or suspected perpetrators of gender-based violence, employers are encouraged to fully investigate the situation and to hold perpetrators accountable. Workers must never be allowed to use workplace resources – such as phones, e-mail or other workplace resources -- to perpetuate abuse. Employers addressing incidents of gender-based violence should take into consideration the wishes of the victim when possible, and gain the benefit of community resources where available.

These proactive strategies will facilitate the safety of all employees while at work, can assist employees who are coping with abuse in safely retaining employment, and should reduce the employers'

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