



Thursday 24 May 2018

Letter to all staff in the UN Common System on reforming policies dealing with harassment, sexual harassment, abuse of authority and discrimination

Dear UN and Specialized Agency Colleagues,

As staff in the UN common system, and regardless of our duty station, work or grade, we all have a duty and an obligation to create an environment that is welcoming to all, where everyone feels valued and where each colleague can perform at their best regardless of who they are or where they are from.

To this end the staff federations have for a number of years been calling for much-needed improvements in our organizations' policies on preventing harassment, sexual harassment, abuse of authority and discrimination.

We are therefore encouraged that our organizations are now reviewing their policies and coordinating their approach through the Chief Executives Board. In most organizations, staff representatives have also been invited to take part in internal policy reviews through staff-management bodies.

This in itself is a positive step and a recognition that things must change.

However, as staff federations we believe that our role is not limited to participating in a legal reform exercise. We believe our role is to bring to the table the views, concerns, hopes and fears of all staff. This includes the many victims and witnesses of abuse, those who are still in their organization and those who have left, those who complained, successfully or not, and those who felt intimidated in doing so.

To ensure our participation is productive and meaningful we will undertake the following actions, which will be communicated shortly:

- A survey of all UN common system staff on their experiences with current policies, what works and what needs to change. These surveys will be anonymous and confidential but will ensure that our work is informed by those who have seen the process up close, including with regards to due process;
- The recruitment of external experts to advise us on the best external practices and how we can integrate them into our organizations' policies; and
- Regular updates on how our work is proceeding.

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In closing allow us to note that regardless of the policies in place, we also believe that the UN Charter (<http://www.un.org/en/charter-united-nations/>) and ICSC code of conduct (<https://icsc.un.org/resources/pdfs/general/standardsE.pdf>) make clear the fundamental importance of decent human behaviour in our organizations. Unfortunately this is not always the case, but we must work to change that.

Thank you for your kind attention and support.

Yours sincerely,



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