



administrative circular

ORIGINATOR: Human Resources Division (CSH)

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ENQUIRIES TO BE DIRECTED TO: CSH Director (CSH-Director@fao.org)

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PREVENTION AND RESPONSE TO HARASSMENT, SEXUAL HARASSMENT, ABUSE OF AUTHORITY AND DISCRIMINATION

Purpose

1. FAO does not tolerate harassment in any of its forms, abuse of authority nor discrimination and is committed to fostering respectful and inclusive working environments. The Organization has an obligation to take all appropriate steps to prevent and respond to harassment, sexual harassment, abuse of authority and discrimination (hereinafter referred to collectively as “abusive conduct”) and all FAO Personnel have a role to play in this process. This includes the responsibility of the Organization and all its personnel to promote respectful and inclusive work environments.
2. The Organization is committed to ensuring a victim-centred approach in preventing and addressing all forms of harassment, including sexual harassment, from the moment FAO is made aware of an allegation, incident, or concern. A victim-centred approach engages with a victim/survivor in a way that respects their rights, needs, wishes, dignity, safety and well-being, and protects them from retaliation, re-traumatization, and discrimination, and keeps them informed and supported.
3. Consistent with the Staff Regulations and Rules and with the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service,¹ FAO takes a zero-tolerance approach to abusive conduct. If abusive conduct comes to the attention of the Organization, it will be addressed as promptly, as fairly and as effectively as possible in accordance with this Policy. FAO Personnel shall also be protected for speaking up about abusive conduct as set out in this Policy, and in accordance with the Whistleblower Protection Policy.²
4. This Policy sets out the roles and responsibilities of the Organization and its personnel in preventing and responding to inappropriate and abusive conduct. See Annex I for a summary of the overall roles and responsibilities under this Policy.

¹ The Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service are incorporated into [Administrative Manual Section 304, Appendix A](#).

² [Administrative Circular 2021/10 – Whistleblower Protection Policy](#).

Application

5. This Policy applies to all FAO Personnel and to conduct occurring in the workplace or anywhere in connection with work for FAO, including, but not limited to, when commuting to and from work, when teleworking, during or outside working hours (such as in social interactions), and during work-related activities (such as travel, training or work-related events).

6. Anyone, including individuals who are not members of FAO Personnel, may bring complaints of abusive conduct under this Policy against any member of FAO Personnel. Action taken by the Organization will depend on whether or not the affected person and/or the alleged perpetrator are members of FAO Personnel, either current or former.

Definitions³

7. For the purposes of this Policy:

- (i) **“Abusive conduct”** refers to harassment, sexual harassment, abuse of authority and discrimination as defined in this Policy.
- (ii) **“Inappropriate conduct”** is conduct which may not meet the definition of abusive conduct but is nonetheless inconsistent with the principles set forth in this Policy. It can be addressed through informal resolution, including through management intervention, as set out in paragraphs 19-25.
- (iii) **“Abuse of authority”** is the improper use of a position of influence, power or authority against another person. This is particularly serious when a person uses their influence, power or authority to improperly influence the career, performance assessment or employment conditions of another, including but not limited to, appointment, assignment, contract renewal, performance evaluation, working conditions or promotion. Abuse of authority may also include conduct that creates a hostile or offensive work environment which includes, but is not limited to, the use of intimidation, threats, blackmail or coercion. Discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment, are particularly serious when accompanied by abuse of authority.

The mere expression of disagreement, criticism or similar action regarding work performance, conduct or related issues within a supervisory relationship is not normally considered harassment within the meaning of this Policy. Disagreements on performance matters will normally be addressed through the framework applicable to performance management⁴.

- (iv) **“Discrimination”** is any unfair treatment or arbitrary distinction based on a person’s race, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, disability, age, language, social origin or other similar shared characteristic or trait. Discrimination may be an isolated event affecting one person or a group of persons similarly situated, or may manifest itself through harassment or abuse of

³ In line with the UN common definitions. See UN Secretary General Bulletin’s [“Addressing discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, and abuse of authority”](#) (ST/SGB/2019/8).

⁴ Please refer to [Administrative Circular No. 2015/17 – Performance Evaluation and Management System \(PEMS\)](#).

authority.

- (v) **“Harassment”** is any unwelcome conduct that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offense or humiliation to another person, when such conduct interferes with work or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. Harassment may take the form of words, gestures or actions which tend to annoy, alarm, abuse, demean, intimidate, belittle, humiliate or embarrass another. Harassment may be directed at one or more persons based on a shared characteristic or trait. Harassment normally implies a series of incidents.

- (vi) **“Sexual harassment”** is any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or perceived to cause offense or humiliation when such conduct interferes with work, is made a condition of employment or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. Sexual harassment may occur in the workplace or in connection with work. While typically involving a pattern of conduct, sexual harassment may take the form of a single incident. In assessing the reasonableness of expectations or perceptions, the perspective of the person who is the target of the conduct shall be considered. Sexual harassment is the manifestation of a culture of discrimination and privilege based on unequal gender relations and other power dynamics. Sexual harassment may involve any conduct of a verbal, non-verbal or physical nature, including written and electronic communications. Sexual harassment may occur between persons of the same or different genders, and individuals of any gender can be either the affected individuals or the alleged perpetrators. Sexual harassment may occur outside the workplace and outside working hours, including during official travel or social functions related to work. Sexual harassment may be perpetrated by any colleague, including a supervisor, a peer or a subordinate. A perpetrator’s status as a supervisor or a senior official may be treated as an aggravating circumstance.
Sexual harassment should not be confused with sexual exploitation and abuse, which is subject to a separate Policy⁵.

- (vii) **“Affected person”** is any person affected by the possibly inappropriate or abusive conduct.

- (viii) **“Alleged perpetrator”** is the person possibly responsible for inappropriate or abusive conduct.

- (ix) **“Witness”** is any person observing the possibly inappropriate or abusive conduct or otherwise able to provide information about the alleged conduct; the witness can also be an affected person.

- (x) **“FAO Personnel”**, refers to staff members and other personnel within the meaning of Staff Regulation 301.13.6, including Consultants under Manual Section 317, as well as subscribers to Personal Services Agreements under Manual Section 319, National Project Personnel under Manual Section 375, interns, volunteers and fellows, and any other individual engaged directly by the Organization.

⁵ Please refer to [Administrative Circular No. 2024/09 – Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse \(PSEA\)](#).

Obligations of the Organization

8. The Organization shall take appropriate measures to prevent and respond to inappropriate and abusive conduct by:

- (i) Making available safe and confidential avenues for speaking up about possible inappropriate or abusive conduct and making available support for those who do speak up, as set out in paragraphs 14-37.
- (ii) Supporting FAO Personnel, particularly supervisors and managers, in meeting their obligations under this Policy, including by providing advice, training, updated guidance material and other awareness-raising initiatives as well as holding them accountable for these obligations.
- (iii) Acting promptly and consistently once potential inappropriate and abusive conduct has come to its notice by taking action through informal resolution, management intervention and/or the formal process, as well as considering interim protective measures, if and as appropriate, regardless of the function, seniority, length of service or contractual status of the alleged perpetrator or of the affected person.
- (iv) Taking appropriate measures where necessary to protect persons who speak up about concerns of possible misconduct or abusive conduct in accordance with the Whistleblower Protection Policy.
- (v) Applying due diligence in implementing measures to minimize the risk of employment of individuals with a record of behaviour that is deemed incompatible with service with FAO, including through the implementation of adequate reference checks, screening via internal disciplinary records and ClearCheck, the UN system-wide database for screening UN system personnel for sexual harassment⁶.
- (vi) Adopting a centralized, coordinated, multidisciplinary and confidential approach to addressing abusive conduct through the Committee on Workplace Conduct and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse⁷ and/or other organizational arrangements made from time to time.

Obligations of FAO Personnel

9. FAO Personnel shall contribute to creating respectful and inclusive work environments by:

- (i) Demonstrating respect and promoting inclusiveness in their interactions with others and not engaging in, or condoning, inappropriate or abusive conduct.
- (ii) Familiarizing themselves with this Policy by completing mandatory training and engaging with guidance materials and awareness-raising initiatives related to this Policy.
- (iii) Speaking up about concerns of inappropriate or abusive conduct as soon as possible as outlined in paragraphs 14-37.
- (iv) Cooperating fully with any formal process as outlined in paragraphs 26-43.
- (v) Fully respecting the confidentiality of informal resolution, management intervention and/or the formal process, including after their conclusion.

10. Speaking up without genuine belief that inappropriate or abusive conduct may have occurred, or intentionally raising false claims knowing that such conduct did not occur is not acceptable and may constitute misconduct, warranting disciplinary or administrative action of a disciplinary nature.

⁶ Please refer to [Administrative Circular No. 2021/04 – Procedures for the use of the ClearCheck Screening Database](#).

⁷ As set out in [Manual Section 146, Appendix U](#).

Additional obligations of supervisors and managers

11. Supervisors and managers shall be responsible, in addition to the obligations applicable to all FAO Personnel, to provide protected, respectful and inclusive work environments through appropriate prevention and response, by:

Prevention

- (i) Leading by example in observing the standards set out in this Policy.
- (ii) Ensuring that FAO Personnel under their supervision or management are treated in a fair, respectful and inclusive manner.
- (iii) Making FAO Personnel under their supervision or management aware of the expected standards under this Policy and their role in creating respectful and inclusive workplaces. Supervisors and managers should use standard supervisory and coaching techniques, as well as through opportunities for discussions under the performance appraisal process, to raise any concerns about behaviour. They should reiterate the applicable standards of conduct, regulations, rules or policies.
- (iv) Encouraging FAO Personnel under their supervision or management to speak up freely, including by ensuring psychological safety in their teams (which refers to the feeling of being able to speak up, take risks and make mistakes without fear of negative consequences), and by creating an atmosphere in which personnel may express concerns about possible abusive or inappropriate conduct, including by maintaining open dialogues.
- (v) For Heads of Divisions/Offices/Centres:
 - Monitor their offices for conduct that may be in violation of the present Policy and ensure that FAO Personnel under their supervision take relevant mandatory courses.
 - Communicate the terms of the present Policy and applicable procedures to FAO Personnel in their offices on an annual basis through a dedicated meeting.

Response

Promptly and fairly responding to concerns of inappropriate or abusive conduct that come to their attention, in accordance with paragraphs 22-25 below.

12. In addition, Heads of Divisions/Offices/Centres are required to complete an annual internal control self-assessment checklist and submit it to the relevant Deputy Director-General for headquarters, or the Regional Representative for Decentralized Offices, as appropriate, to confirm their proactive engagement in preventing and responding to abusive conduct.

13. Promotion and recruitment of FAO Personnel to managerial and supervisory positions should take into account whether they have contributed to and, where relevant, promoted safe, respectful and inclusive work environments.

Avenues for speaking up

14. FAO Personnel should speak up about inappropriate and abusive conduct. This can be done through seeking recourse to:

- (i) Informal resolution (paragraphs 19-25), which focuses on understanding the concerns of the affected person and the other parties involved and supporting them in making adjustments and working effectively together. Affected persons may seek informal resolution through:
 - i. Communicating directly to the alleged perpetrator;
 - ii. Resolution through the Office of the Ombuds; and
 - iii. Management intervention through a supervisor, manager and/or HR Officer⁸.
- (ii) The formal process (paragraphs 26-43), which involves a fact-finding investigation conducted by the Office of the Inspector General followed, if warranted, by administrative and/or disciplinary action, as appropriate.

15. Informal resolution processes can in some cases resolve issues and prevent situations from escalating to the point where making a formal report becomes necessary. FAO encourages, but does not require, the use of informal resolution, where appropriate, in particular for inappropriate conduct, harassment and abuse of authority. FAO Personnel are strongly encouraged to speak up as soon as possible, as early action may significantly contribute to FAO's ability to address the allegations. To facilitate speaking up and the follow-up on concerns, affected persons and witnesses are encouraged to keep a record with a detailed description of occurrences of inappropriate or abusive conduct, including where and when it occurred, as well as, if available, supporting evidence and names of potential witnesses. The absence of evidence and witnesses should not discourage speaking up in good faith.

16. FAO Personnel who report, through the formal process, abusive conduct or possible misconduct or who cooperate in an investigation into abusive conduct have the right to be protected from retaliation in accordance with the Organization's Whistleblower Protection Policy.

17. In cases involving physical harm, FAO Personnel are also encouraged to seek immediate medical attention including through FAO Health Services, psychological support, including through FAO's Staff Counselling Unit and a Security Officer. FAO will respond to critical incidents, including matters involving sexual assault or rape, in accordance with FAO Critical Incident Guidelines.

18. In cases of sexual harassment and discrimination, various factors, including the nature and/or instances of possible sexual harassment may render the use of informal resolution inappropriate, and there is therefore no requirement for such action to be taken.

Informal resolution

19. Affected persons may seek informal resolution through the following ways.

- A. *Communicating directly to the alleged perpetrator*

⁸ For the purpose of this Policy, any reference to "HR Officer" is intended as a general term to indicate FAO Personnel handling HR matters.

20. When possible, affected persons or witnesses may choose to communicate directly with the alleged perpetrator about their concerns of inappropriate or abusive conduct and ask for such conduct to stop. This approach may be particularly effective in situations of inappropriate conduct or where the alleged perpetrator may not be aware of the negative impact of their behaviour on others.

B. Resolution through the Office of the Ombuds

21. The Office of the Ombuds provides a safe, confidential, and neutral place to help FAO Personnel navigate and respond to situations of potential inappropriate or abusive conduct⁹. In addition, the Office of the Ombuds offers support through one or more of the following:

- (i) Provision of locally based Ombuds Respectful Workplace Facilitators with whom any FAO Personnel can go for a safe first point of contact to discuss the situation and explore options for resolution¹⁰.
- (ii) Provision of Ombuds services such as reviewing possible inappropriate or abusive conduct and identifying adequate responses with affected persons, witnesses, managers or supervisors who consult the Office of the Ombuds.

Subject to the consent of the affected person and with due consideration of the nature of the conduct:

- (iii) Speaking with the parties involved to identify and review ways in which the situation could be resolved informally.
- (iv) Leading a facilitated conversation between the concerned parties to foster understanding, stop any repetition of misconduct and when possible, restore work relationships.
- (v) Facilitating mediation in accordance with the Terms of Reference of the Office of the Ombuds.

C. Management intervention through a supervisor, manager and/or HR Officer

22. Affected persons or witnesses may raise concerns of inappropriate or abusive conduct with management by choosing to speak up with either of the following:

- (i) Their supervisor or a manager: if the matter involves a supervisor, then the second-level supervisor or senior management in the relevant location, including the relevant Regional Representative, FAO Representative or Head of Division/Office/Centre at headquarters, may be the most appropriate person to speak to; or
- (ii) An HR Officer at the relevant Decentralized Office or within the Human Resources Division at headquarters or wherever they might be located.

⁹ In accordance with the [Terms of Reference of the Office of the FAO Ombudsperson](#).

¹⁰ Contact details of the Ombuds Respectful Workplace Facilitators are available in the [Country Office Information Network \(COIN\)](#).

23. Supervisors, managers and HR Officers shall promptly and fairly respond to possible inappropriate or abusive conduct that comes to their attention by taking the following actions and maintaining a record of the action taken:

- (i) Listen to the affected person and/or witness and other parties involved to obtain information about the concerns while avoiding offering personal opinions and speculating on the facts. Ensure that all discussions, communications and actions are handled with extreme discretion, sensitivity and utmost confidentiality. Refrain from any activities aimed at investigating the allegations, as this is the sole prerogative of the Office of the Inspector General.
- (ii) Support the affected person and/or witness by:
 - a. informing them of the available support as set out in paragraphs 14-17, as well as referring them to any available guidance material on this Policy;
 - b. implementing interim protective measures as requested by the Director of Human Resources¹¹.
- (iii) Address the concerns, as appropriate and where warranted, by for example:
 - a. For supervisors and managers: in consultation with the Human Resources Division or other relevant offices as necessary: speaking with the alleged perpetrator and warning them about the nature of the possible misconduct and reminding them that it would be inconsistent with the present Policy and to immediately stop inappropriate behaviour;
 - b. For supervisors and managers: through active supervision such as performance management and the use of remedial measures, including training and/or coaching. Performance management includes general discussions throughout the year and the completion of annual performance management assessments in line with applicable procedures;
 - c. For HR Officers: by involving and supporting, as appropriate, the supervisor or manager of the alleged perpetrator so that they can address and stop the conduct.
- (iv) Monitor the workplace environment by following up with the affected person and/or witnesses and ensure that appropriate action is taken to prevent FAO Personnel from retaliation. With due regard to confidentiality, outgoing supervisors, managers or HR Officers should inform their successor about any ongoing matters, actions taken and issues of which to be mindful.

24. The views of the affected person should be sought before action is taken. However, where it is not possible to obtain the affected person's views or where the affected person does not consent to action being taken, there may be instances where the supervisor, manager and/or HR Officer considers that action is necessary and appropriate. This may be the case where, for example, the relevant circumstances of the case such as the severity of the possible conduct and its potential impact on FAO and its personnel warrant action being taken to ensure a response consistent with this Policy. In such cases, the supervisor, manager and/or HR Officer should consult with the Human Resources Division.

¹¹ See paragraphs 53-59 of this Policy.

25. In fulfilling their responsibilities under this section, supervisors and managers may seek advice and guidance from: (i) HR Officers at the relevant Decentralized Office and/or from the Human Resources Division, (ii) the Ethics Office in respect of any concerns of retaliation under the Whistleblower Protection Policy and (iii) the Office of the Inspector General with respect to investigations.

The formal process

Investigation by the Office of the Inspector General

26. Any person, including former FAO Personnel, may submit a complaint to the Office of the Inspector General at any time after an incident has occurred in the workplace or anywhere in connection with work for FAO, as explained in paragraph 5 above. Early reporting is critical to the success of any investigation, as the passage of time may make it more difficult to investigate the allegations. Complaints may be submitted to the Office of the Inspector General according to the procedures laid down in the FAO Investigation Guidelines¹².

27. Where no steps have been taken by the affected person to handle their concerns through an informal resolution process, the Office of the Inspector General may discuss with the affected person the benefits of considering an informal resolution, if appropriate. The Office of the Inspector General will suspend its investigative activities if an informal resolution is initiated.

28. Should an affected person pursue mediation, the Office of the Inspector General will close the matter in its files pending results of the mediation.

29. In accordance with the principles of due process, details of reports and interviews, including with affected persons or witnesses, may be shared with the alleged perpetrator. This may include, following consultation with the affected person, sharing a copy of the complaint during the preliminary review so that the alleged perpetrator may reply in writing to the allegations against them.

30. Complaints are submitted to the Office of the Inspector General through any of the options listed on the Office of the Inspector General's intranet page. Complaints of sexual harassment may be made in person, in writing or by telephone. Complaints of harassment, abuse of authority and discrimination, must be in writing and should be as detailed as possible, and include any relevant documentation. The Office of the Inspector General will acknowledge all complaints of abusive conduct. The complaint should include:

- (i) the name of the alleged perpetrator(s);
- (ii) date(s) and location(s) of alleged incidents;
- (iii) a description of the incident(s);
- (iv) the names of any witness(es);
- (v) the names of other individuals who may be aware of the incident(s); and
- (vi) any other relevant information, including documentation (e.g., emails).

31. If, upon completion of the intake assessment of the affected individual, the Office of the Inspector General deems that if true, the alleged abusive conduct would fall within the scope of this Policy, the Office

¹² Please refer to [Administrative Circular 2021/06 Rev.1 – FAO Investigation Guidelines](#)

of the Inspector General will conduct a preliminary review to decide whether to initiate a formal investigation. The decision to open a formal investigation remains with the Office of the Inspector General in accordance with the FAO Investigation Guidelines. During the preliminary review, the Office of the Inspector General may seek the views of the affected person(s).

32. The Office of the Inspector General has the exclusive authority to determine whether a preliminary review provides a legitimate basis for an investigation. This determination is based on the evidence collected during the preliminary review. If the Office of the Inspector General determines that the issue presented, even if true, does not amount to abusive conduct or that the evidence gathered during the preliminary review does not provide a legitimate basis for an investigation, the Office of the Inspector General will close the case, inform the affected person of the reasons, and may refer the matter to another office for further action, as appropriate.

33. The Office of the Inspector General may also open an investigation into allegations of abusive conduct at its own initiative, including without reference to a specific complaint, following consultation with the affected person, and with due regard to the suitability of informal resolution and/or managerial intervention.

34. Where an investigation is initiated, it will be conducted in accordance with the FAO Investigation Guidelines and other applicable instruments.

35. FAO Personnel who are the subject of an investigation are provided with a written notification of investigation informing them of their status at the earliest possible opportunity after the investigation is opened, or after they have been identified as a subject during the course of an ongoing investigation. This notification will be provided no later than at the start of the first interview with the subject.

36. The Office of the Inspector General will inform the alleged perpetrator (if they were made aware of the investigation) and the affected person of the completion of the investigation in line with the FAO Investigation Guidelines. The provision of any such information shall respect confidentiality as applicable.

37. Reports of abusive conduct by personnel that are knowingly false constitute misconduct.

Disciplinary Process

38. If, based on the review of the Office of the Inspector General's investigation report, it is considered that the evidence gathered and analysed warrants the initiation of a disciplinary process, FAO will proceed in accordance with Administrative Manual Section 330 – Disciplinary Measures for staff members, or through the appropriate administrative processes for other personnel.

39. FAO's commitment to a zero-tolerance approach to abusive conduct means that action will always be taken if the allegations are confirmed following a disciplinary process, including through the imposition of administrative and/or disciplinary measures on the perpetrator as appropriate, which may lead to their separation from service, following due process.

40. In determining the appropriate measure, a case-by-case analysis will be conducted, taking into account factors, which may include:

- (i) The type of abusive conduct.

- (ii) The seniority and function of the perpetrator in relation to the affected person, and the existence of a hierarchical or supervisory relationship between the two.
- (iii) Prior substantiated instances of misconduct by the perpetrator.
- (iv) The severity of the impact of the abusive conduct on the affected person.

41. In addition to the measures provided for in the Administrative Manual, the perpetrator may be the subject of other administrative actions, such as required training, a change of functions or responsibilities, or coaching.

42. The Director of Human Resources will keep the affected person and the alleged perpetrator/perpetrator informed at key stages during the disciplinary process. The provision of such information shall respect confidentiality during the entire process.

43. Where there are credible allegations that a crime may have been committed by one of its personnel, the Director-General may refer the matter to the relevant national authorities¹³. In matters involving allegations of sexual harassment, consideration will be given to the safety of the affected person and the victim-centred approach before any referral is made.

Request for appeal

44. Grievances arising from disciplinary actions or administrative decisions taken as part of the application of this Policy may be lodged in accordance with Administrative Manual Section 331 - Appeals or the dispute resolution mechanism applicable to the individual's contract of employment.

Workplace restoration

45. Once the formal process is completed, and with due regard to its outcome and confidentiality concerns, appropriate measures may be taken with respect to the affected person or alleged perpetrator to ensure workplace restoration.

46. The Office of the Ombuds, the Staff Counsellor and HR Officers may assist in workplace restoration efforts including through reintegration of the affected person or alleged perpetrator/perpetrators, if they are FAO Personnel, into the workplace.

47. The Human Resources Division shall review, as appropriate, adverse administrative actions that are confirmed to have been a consequence of the abusive conduct.

Support for FAO Personnel

48. In line with a victim-centred approach, all FAO Personnel, including affected persons, are entitled to reasonable and appropriate support at different stages, including after an incident of possible inappropriate or abusive conduct, during any informal resolution, management intervention or the formal process, and following the conclusion thereof, as set out below.

Support person

¹³ Please refer to [Administrative Circular 2024/04 – Referral of Alleged Criminal Conduct to National Authorities for Investigation and Possible Prosecution](#)

49. The affected person and the alleged perpetrator have the right to be accompanied by a colleague, staff representative, family member or trusted friend¹⁴ of their choice for emotional support during the key stages of the informal resolution or the formal process, including the investigation interview, as well as in management intervention where appropriate. The support person must be readily available and abide by FAO's rules on confidentiality and must not be a witness nor be involved in any investigation, or otherwise subject to a potential conflict of interest. The support person must not interrupt, prevent, delay or interfere with the informal or formal process or with any management intervention. The participation of a support person at any phase of the investigation is governed by the FAO Investigation Guidelines.

Support mechanisms

50. All FAO Personnel may seek support and advice from the following resources: (i) the Staff Counselling Unit; (ii) Health Services; (iii) the Ethics Office (also for matters related to retaliation under the Whistleblower Protection Policy); (iv) a Security Officer; (v) a representative of the Association of Professionals in FAO (AP- in FAO) or of the Union of General Service Staff (UGSS); and (vi) an Ombuds Respectful Workplace Facilitator.

51. All FAO Personnel and former FAO Personnel are encouraged to contact the Staff Counselling Unit to access free psychosocial support in person, by telephone or through other electronic means throughout any informal resolution, managerial intervention or formal process. All consultations with the Staff Counsellor are confidential.

52. All FAO Personnel can contact a Security Officer in cases of abusive conduct involving safety and security concerns.

Interim protective measures

53. FAO does not tolerate retaliation or reprisals in any form. Retaliation as defined and addressed in the Whistleblower Protection Policy may manifest itself, among others, through forms of abusive conduct. If established, retaliation constitutes a separate form of misconduct. Other forms of retaliatory acts or reprisals that do not meet the definition of retaliation under the Whistleblower Protection Policy, may be instances of abusive conduct and addressed under this Policy.

54. Pending completion of informal resolution, management intervention or the formal process, a supervisor or manager may implement interim protective measures following a recommendation from the Director of Human Resources and/or the Office of the Inspector General.

55. Where informal resolution or management intervention is pursued, the manager, the Office of the Ombuds or the HR Officer engaged in the process may recommend, or request, the Director of Human Resources to initiate interim protective measures. The Director of Human Resources will consult with the Office of the Inspector General, the Office of the Ombuds, Health Services, Security Services and/or other relevant offices as necessary. Where the formal process has been pursued, the Office of the Inspector General may recommend interim protective measures to the Director of Human Resources who shall then ensure their implementation in coordination with the relevant office and/or manager.

56. Interim protective measures are implemented to: (i) protect the safety, security and well-being of the individuals concerned; (ii) protect the integrity of any investigation; (iii) prevent the occurrence or repetition of possible retaliation or abusive conduct; and/or (iv) protect the interests of FAO and/or its

¹⁴ The support person cannot provide legal representation or advocacy.

personnel, including the effective functioning of an office. Interim protective measures shall be taken promptly. Where applicable, the Office of the Inspector General or the official involved in the informal resolution process will be informed of measures taken.

57. Interim protective measures may include, but are not limited to:

- (i) Physical separation of the alleged perpetrator and the affected person.
- (ii) Assignment of alternative duties or reporting lines for either the alleged perpetrator or the affected person.
- (iii) Flexible working arrangements.
- (iv) Special leave or annual leave.
- (v) Placement of the alleged perpetrator on administrative leave in accordance with Staff Rule 303.0.3 and Administrative Circular 2010/20 – *Suspension pending Investigation*.

58. FAO Personnel in relation to whom protective measures are implemented shall be informed of the duration of the measures, including any extension thereof.

59. Where an affected person considers that the alleged abusive conduct may have impacted their work performance, they are encouraged to discuss this with their supervisor, the relevant Regional Representative, FAO Representative, Head of Division/Office/Centre at Headquarters or the Director of Human Resources, as appropriate, so that their circumstances may be considered for the applicable performance cycle.

Data collection, monitoring and implementation

60. FAO will collect data and information for the monitoring and the analysis of the Organization's response to abusive conduct. An Administrative Circular containing anonymised data on the practice of the Organization in disciplinary matters, including matters relating to abusive conduct, will be published on an annual basis. Anonymised data and information may also be disseminated internally or externally in other forms.

61. The Director of Human Resources has overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation effectiveness of this Policy and proposing appropriate revisions to it.

62. This Policy takes effect immediately and supersedes and replaces Administrative Circular No. 2015/03 - *Policy on the Prevention of Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Abuse of Authority*, Administrative Circular 2018/02 - *Zero-tolerance on Sexual Harassment and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse*, and Administrative Circular No. 2019/01 - *Policy on the Prevention of Sexual Harassment*.

Annex I - Roles and Responsibilities

Office of the Ombuds and Respectful Workplace Facilitators	Managers or Supervisors	Human Resources Division	HR Officers at the regional and country levels	Office of the Inspector General	Staff Counselling Unit	FAO Health Services	Ethics Office	Security Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing support and information on the avenues for speaking up as well as the support available. • Providing confidential support in addressing possible inappropriate and abusive conduct through informal resolution. • Having confidential conversations with FAO personnel on resolution strategies. • Conducting neutral facilitation and mediation to help willing parties resolve workplace problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advising on the avenues for speaking up as well as the support available. • Addressing concerns of inappropriate and abusive conduct through management intervention, including by cautioning and through performance management. • Implementing interim protective measures following a recommendation from Director of Human Resources and/or the Office of the Inspector General. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advising on the avenues for speaking up as well as the support available. • Providing support in addressing possible inappropriate and abusive conduct through management intervention, including by informal warnings and supporting managers with performance management. • Ensuring the implementation of interim protective measures, disciplinary measures and other administrative actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advising on the avenues for speaking up as well as the support available. • Providing support in addressing possible inappropriate and abusive conduct through management intervention, including by informal warnings and supporting managers with performance management. • Ensuring the implementation of interim protective measures, disciplinary measures and other administrative actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advising on the avenues for speaking up as well as the support available. • Receiving formal reports of possible abusive conduct. • Based on an intake and preliminary assessment, may conduct a formal investigation into allegations of abusive conduct. • Make recommendations for interim protective measures where appropriate, pending an investigation, • Issuing the investigation report and making recommendations as appropriate upon completion of an investigation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advising on the avenues for speaking up as well as the support available. • Providing confidential emotional and psychological support to FAO personnel, dependents and former staff members. • Offering guidance on conflict resolution techniques. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing medical support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advising on the avenues for speaking up as well as the support available. • Providing support in protection against retaliation matters under the Whistleblower Protection Policy. • Recommending interim protective measures and corrective measures where appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing immediate assistance for safety and physical security of FAO personnel. • Providing support and advice on security considerations throughout the resolution of grievances.