NBA to tackle sexual harassment with new policy

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NBA to tackle sexual harassment with new policy  
  
The Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) has launched a sexual harassment policy drafted by its Women’s Forum.  
  
The Policy was launched at the recently concluded 61st NBA Annual General Conference (AGC) which was held in Port Harcourt, the Rivers State capital.  
  
Article 4 of the Policy states its scope as follows:  
  
“The policy applies to all companies, enterprises/businesses, both the public and private sectors, irrespective of size.  
  
“The term ‘workplace’ refers not only to the exact location where work is being done, such as an office or factory but also to locations where work-related business may be conducted.”  
  
These could include but are not limited to work-related social activities, conferences and workshops, official business travel, business meals, work-related telephone conversations and work-related communications through electronic media.  
  
Article 5 defines sexual Harassment as “…any behaviour of a sexual nature that affects the dignity of women and men, which is considered as unwanted, unacceptable, inappropriate and offensive to the recipient, and that creates an intimidating, hostile, unstable or offensive work environment. Actions constituting harassment may be physical, verbal and non-verbal.”  
  
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The policy gave examples of conduct or behaviour which constitute sexual harassment to include “unwelcome physical contact including patting, pinching, stroking, kissing, hugging. fondling, or inappropriate touching; sexual assault.”  
  
Others are the use of job-related threats or rewards to solicit sexual favours, Comments on a worker’s appearance, age, private life, etc.  
  
NBA President Olumide Akpata commended the leadership of the forum, Prof Oluwayemisi Bamgbose (SAN); the Chairperson of the NBA’s Advocacy Committee, Mrs Folashade Alli as well as Dr Foluke Dada, a former Vice-President of the Lagos Bar for coming up with the policy.  
  
He noted that not every man is a sexual predator, a sexist, or an apologist for male patriarchy, adding that the actions of a few unprincipled people “can undo the good work of many others if they are allowed unchallenged.”  
  
Akpata observed that the policy paper was “a clear rejection of all forms of harassment and victimization, including physical, verbal, and non-verbal harassment.”  
  
He tasked the Attorney-General and Commissioner of Ekiti State and new SAN-designate, Wale Fapohunda and Mr Ajagbe to work with the Forum in the enforcement of the policy.