

News

[Overview](#)[Stories](#)[News Releases](#)[Media Contacts](#)

WFP statement on strengthening of policies prohibiting sexual harassment

Published on 02 March 2018

In an email to staff, the World Food Programme's Executive Director David Beasley today announced the adoption of new provisions to strengthen policies that prohibit harassment, sexual harassment and abuse of authority. The entire email follows:

Dear Colleagues:

Today, we are taking another step to create and preserve a workplace culture that promotes and protects the dignity and respect of everyone, regardless of contract status or title. I am letting you know that the World Food Programme has formally adopted new provisions to strengthen our existing policies that prohibit harassment, sexual harassment and abuse of authority.

It's certainly no secret that failure to deal with this sort of misconduct has done great damage to some in the humanitarian sector. The cause of Zero Hunger is too important to put at risk, and that's why we must have a workplace that prioritizes dignity and respect.

As I continue to say, if you're not willing to do that, there's no place for you at the World Food Programme.

This week, our Executive Board provided further support for this effort. Working directly with Board President Zoltán Kálmán of Hungary, we will set up a joint WFP-Executive Board committee on harassment, sexual harassment, abuse of power, and discrimination. This committee will report to the Board on measures and actions implemented in those areas both for staff and for beneficiaries.

Over the past year, we have received feedback from experts, staff representative bodies, and people at all levels about the need to strengthen the prevention of abusive conduct and encourage the reporting of violations. WFP has zero tolerance for abusive conduct and I will ensure that our actions back up those important words.

That has led us to the new provisions, which include:

- A complete end to any time limit for reporting abusive conduct.
- Giving WFP's Office of Inspector General (OIG) authority to investigate suspicions of abusive conduct even in the absence of a formal report, or when the report is made anonymously or from a former employee.
- Clarifying that abusive conduct is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including summary dismissal, along with other measures, including ban from future employment with WFP.
- Assistance with reintegration into the workplace for those affected by abusive conduct.
- Creation of an inter-divisional standing committee that will monitor the effectiveness of the new policy and help ensure a quicker, more coordinated response to reports of abusive conduct, including protection measures. This committee will advise me about additional steps that could be needed to improve the workplace environment, and it is also charged with working with managers to help re-establish a harmonious working environment after an investigation is resolved.

- The addition of the category of “discrimination” to the list of prohibited conduct, defined as “any unfair treatment or arbitrary distinction in the workplace, based on a person’s race, sex, gender, religion, belief, nationality, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, age, language, social origin, or other status.”
- Employees eligible for promotion, especially at senior levels, will be evaluated on whether they help foster a “safe and harmonious working environment.”
- Clarifying that protection against abusive conduct extends to any person employed by WFP, including international professional staff members, general service staff members, locally recruited staff members, short-term personnel (e.g. consultants), volunteers, interns, and people recruited on Special Service Agreements and Service Contracts.

The provisions also apply to any other person working with WFP or visiting the workplace, such as contract workers, personnel of WFP vendors and cooperating partners, suppliers, etc.

In addition to the new policies, we have also increased the OIG budget to strengthen its ability to investigate allegations of abusive conduct, fraud and other issues. These are matters of high importance to our donors and our Board.

It is important that you know I believe the vast majority of WFP employees, regardless of gender, do indeed treat their colleagues with respect and dignity. There is, of course, another category of people, those who commit serious offenses that are prohibited by the policy. Our newly strengthened policies will help find, investigate, and if allegations are proven, fire these people. Through the work of the inter-divisional committee, and through informal channels, I’ll continue to monitor our progress toward the best workplace culture in the humanitarian sector. We can get there, with the help of everyone who works for WFP. Our mission to save lives and change lives depends on it.

Sincerely,

David

#

WFP is the world’s largest humanitarian agency fighting hunger worldwide, delivering food assistance in emergencies and working with communities to improve nutrition and build resilience. Each year, WFP assists some 80 million people in around 80 countries.

For more information please contact:

Jane Howard, jane.howard@wfp.org WFP/Rome, Tel. +39 06 6513 2321, Mob. +39 346 7600521

Follow World Food Programme on social networks

[Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [Instagram](#) [LinkedIn](#) [Google+](#)



World Food Programme