

Enabling Environment Guidelines

FOR THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM



United Nations




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The effectiveness of the United Nations and the success of our efforts depend on reaping the gains in efficiency and productivity that come from diversity and gender parity. These *Enabling Environment Guidelines for the United Nations System* will support our efforts to create a working environment that embraces equality, eradicates bias and is inclusive of all staff.

Achieving gender parity throughout the UN System is not just about numbers—though numbers are an important indicator of progress. Sustainable change depends on transforming our organizational culture so that it fosters a safe and respectful environment in which all have equal access to opportunities. These guidelines are an important contribution to creating and maintaining such a culture and constitute one of the key recommendations of my System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity, launched in September 2017. They include practical examples of ways to attract, retain and motivate highly talented staff that reflect the diversity of humanity, ranging from flexible working arrangements and family-friendly policies to creating and supporting a work environment free from discrimination, harassment and abuse of authority.

The United Nations is the principal international standard-setting institution and bears a special responsibility to lead by example and demonstrate the core values of equality, human rights and non-discrimination. Ultimately, that responsibility devolves to each one of us, from hiring managers to human resources personnel, and from junior staff to senior leadership. We all have a part to play in creating a fair, equal and respectful working environment.

I commend all the organizations and individuals that contributed to these guidelines. And I encourage all staff, at every level, to become familiar with the guidelines, draw from them, and use them to achieve our shared goals of gender parity and a more effective and inclusive modern organization that better serves the peoples of the world.

António Guterres
Secretary-General of the United Nations



According to Article 8 of its Charter: “The United Nations shall place no restrictions on the eligibility of men and women to participate in any capacity and under conditions of equality in its principal and subsidiary organs.”¹

With the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development committing to “leave no one behind” and the ongoing reform process striving to improve efficiencies, the UN is being propelled to make a transformational change and determine ways to maximize the full potential of its personnel. Achieving a gender-balanced, diverse and inclusive workforce has been identified as a key element of this process.²

Following the recommendation entailed in the Secretary-General’s System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity,³ the present guidelines have been developed by UN Women, in coordination with the Human Resources Network of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), and the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM).*

These guidelines will focus on three thematic areas to increase inclusivity and diversity within the UN, as follows:



Flexible working arrangements are mutually beneficial arrangements between personnel and their managers in which both parties agree on when, where and how work is executed. They can greatly benefit the workplace through increased efficiency, reduced absenteeism, increased well-being, business continuity and decreased operating costs.



Family-friendly policies are those that further enable staff to effectively balance personal, family (i.e. having a child, caring for an ageing relative or self-care during life-changing events) and professional commitments as needed throughout the span of their career. Strong family-friendly policies are central to organizational competitiveness as an employer and its ability to function efficiently. Family-friendly policies are for all staff alike, not only for women. Addressing the needs and changing expectations of men in particular—e.g. through equal parental leave—is just as important. Equal participation is a key enabler of gender equality beyond the workplace and helps to encourage greater gender equality at home and in society at large.



Common **standards of conduct** are a prerequisite for a safe, discrimination-free and supportive workplace. These standards include guiding principles that encourage value-based behavior to reduce misconduct, abuse of power and harassment.

* As of 1 January 2019, The Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) has been renamed the Office of Human Resources (OHR).

The recommendations included in these guidelines should enable all UN entities to make progress on a better work environment, independent of where they currently stand.

Creating a positive workplace culture involves all levels of the organization. This effort may begin with the senior leaders, but it must come from every individual to create a truly inclusive and respectful environment.



For the organization:

An enabling environment should not rely solely on the discretion of individual managers. Formalize standards and processes and track, monitor and report on implementation. Reward and showcase good examples and practices.



For senior leaders:

Be a role model. Demonstrate and actively support desired behaviors and change.



For managers:

Support new ways of working and adapt your leadership style to accommodate this. Openly address existing concerns to find sustainable solutions.



For personnel:

Be transparent about your needs and work jointly with managers and colleagues on how to achieve job outcomes. Recognize concerns and address them proactively.



CREATING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT



The United Nations is founded on principles of equal participation and has the core values of professionalism, respect for diversity and integrity. We strive to create an inclusive culture in which differences are recognized and valued. The UN is seeking proactive ways to foster a diverse, harmonious workplace, to give each person the opportunity to contribute their skills, experiences and perspectives, which is a prerequisite to serve the diverse populations it is mandated to serve. This means in particular:



CHAMPIONING WORKFORCE DIVERSITY

Individuals are valued regardless of race, ethnicity, age, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, disability, national or social origin.



LEVERAGING DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES

The diverse thinking, skills, experience and working styles of everyone at the United Nations are appreciated and encouraged.



BUILDING A FLEXIBLE ORGANIZATION WITH FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICIES

Opportunities for work arrangements that accommodate the diverse needs of people at different career and life stages are provided.

This effort may begin with the senior leaders, but it must come from every individual to create a truly inclusive and respectful environment. The *Enabling Environment Guidelines for the UN System* builds on the priorities of Flexible Working Arrangements, Family-Friendly Policies, and Standards of Conduct—all of which enable a harmonious and diverse workplace.

01 WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY



Workplace flexibility is a mutually beneficial arrangement between personnel and their managers, in which both parties agree on when, where and how work is executed.

General Assembly resolutions⁴ have requested efforts to “enhance the understanding and implementation of the principles of work-life balance and a flexible workforce across the Secretariat”. The Secretary-General’s Bulletin on FWAs encourages managers and staff to “rethink the manner in which the work is currently performed and how it could be done in different and better ways for all concerned by using flexible working arrangements”.⁵

Within the UN System, several forms of Flexible Working Arrangements (FWAs) are already in place. The most common forms include: telecommuting, staggered working hours, compressed work weeks, and scheduled breaks for external learning activities. FWAs are granted at the discretion of managers.

When shifting to a more flexible working environment, it is important to be mindful of the current workplace culture around FWAs. For personnel, there is a fear of how managers

will perceive their performance and dedication if they are not physically present, and how this may subsequently impact their career trajectory. For managers, there is concern around how to supervise personnel working remotely and whether it could negatively influence teamwork and outputs. These beliefs affect behaviors and need to be addressed as part of the implementation process.

Increasing flexibility in how work gets done not only benefits the individual but creates measurable outcomes for the organization. Today, offering flexible work arrangements has become a prerequisite to attract new talent and retain experienced staff, especially as needs might change during their career. Working in an environment that supports such needs increases well-being, reduces stress and results in lower absenteeism.⁶

At the same time, implementing FWAs aligns with the UN’s broader organizational restructuring in modernizing the Organization to respond to the needs of today’s workforce. Among other measures, the UN has introduced hot-desking and open-plan offices to reduce building space and office costs at

its Headquarters, as well as to bring about a more social and collaborative environment. Along with flexible space, flexible location should be encouraged as well by allowing staff to work from home or remotely. These changes would also be beneficial for personnel with disabilities.

It is important to draw clear parameters for FWA usage to ensure that its application is implemented in a fair and consistent manner. Failure to do so may create unrealistic expectations from staff and managers or result in an imbalanced usage that could unfairly burden team members present in the office. As applicable to the guidelines overall, the recommended measures need to be contextualized throughout the UN System, including the field.

Additionally, part-time employment allows existing staff to adjust their work schedules to less than full-time work. While part-time employment does not constitute an FWA—because compensation and benefits packages, including health insurance and leave entitlements, are impacted accordingly—it generally provides flexibility for staff—

specific circumstances. Furthermore, all UN organizations offer special leave without pay (SLWOP) to staff on fixed, permanent and continuous appointments.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRESS

ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE

For the organization

- Be mindful of current workplace culture around flexible working arrangements and support personnel and managers in gaining confidence with a new way of work.
- Speak positively about FWAs not only as a way to balance work and life, but as a way to be more effective and deliver better results.
- Disseminate good practices widely to help guide others and showcase benefits.
- Encourage senior management at the global, regional, national and local levels to vocalize support for FWAs at all stages of planning and implementation, to foster their success and cultural entrenchment.
- Vacancy announcements should indicate, to the extent possible, required office presence time and/or possibilities for FWAs.
- Stipulate that the response to requests for FWAs should as a default be positive, bearing in mind job requirements.

As a manager

- Use FWAs when appropriate, modelling good practice.
- Discuss possibilities for using FWAs within your team so that everyone works jointly

to reach arrangements that work for the whole team.

- Recognize good performance and productivity, not time spent in the office.
- Provide clear guidance on the rules and expectations of FWA usage, particularly regarding an output timeline. Provide feedback throughout the timeline.
- Prevent overconnectivity. Limit phone calls after working hours to emergency situations and be mindful when sending email communications after normal working hours.
- Explicitly allow flexibility for staff who need to connect to personnel in other time zones.

As an individual

- Be reachable and responsive when working remotely.
- Provide clear contact information for colleagues so they can reach you while working remotely, as if you were only a few desks away.
- Provide clear indications of work plans and availability.
- Strengthen communication and connection by updating manager and/or colleagues on progress and results achieved, as needed.

GOOD PRACTICES

The International Trade Centre (ITC) has launched a revised work-life balance system, with a new e-system for the request, approval and monitoring of FWA options. This includes a time-bound approval process for FWAs: supporters and approvers need to respond to an FWA request within five working days. If no action is taken in this timeframe, a default positive response will be sent by the system.

ITC also offers 50 and 80 per cent part-time staff the benefits granted to full-time staff members, pro rata,⁷ including maternity leave at 50 or 80 per cent of the salary and allowance payable to full-time staff members. Part-time staff are eligible for full medical insurance with a subsidy 50 or 80 per cent of that given to those working full-time. Since 2018, these part-time work options may also be combined with FWAs in compliance with ITC business and working hours.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has included the approval process for both regular and ad hoc teleworking in its Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system allowing it to produce data on teleworking trends, which are regularly monitored.

The Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) has developed several support materials on FWAs for both managers and staff to ensure successful implementation. These include guidelines, worksheets, reports and statistics to assist the process of

preparing, requesting and implementing FWAs for all staff and managers.⁸

The UN Human Resources Portal provides Tools for Collaboration that enable staff to access resources for supporting FWAs and virtual collaboration.⁹ These web-based platforms, including enterprise social networking and collaboration, a web-based document repository and messaging services, ease the use of FWAs for both staff and managers, especially for staff who opt for telecommuting.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has developed a *Leader's Guide on Flexible Working Arrangements* to help them understand and manage FWAs more effectively, and the organization often includes sessions on FWA management as part of manager trainings.

Staff members of **the International Finance Corporation (IFC)** interested in working remotely—either from home or from other IFC offices rather than where they are based—can do so during the summer months of July and August, with managerial approval. This gives staff the option to work from their home countries for several weeks during school holidays and connect with their children and extended families. It is also a good option for those who may have a spouse or an ageing relative living elsewhere.

The **Civil Service Job Share Finder** platform in the UK¹⁰ helps civil servants find and manage information so that they can make compatible job-share matches with other civil servants. Since having been launched in September 2018, more than 2,340 civil servants have registered on the site to date, with 76 colleagues—including 58 senior female civil servants—successfully finding job share partners. Since its release, other civil servant user groups who could benefit from job sharing have been identified. For example, those with caring responsibilities, those looking to take partial/phased retirement, those with disabilities and those looking to job share for ‘job carving’ advantages.

A practice by the **Diversity Council Australia**, “Men Get Flexible!”,¹¹ supports the present realities of dual-earner families. When men are engaged in organizational change for enhancing flexibility, the objectives of diversity and gender equality are simultaneously supported.

The **United Nations Office of Geneva (UNOG)** has created a [video](#) about “*Flexible Working Arrangements*” to showcase the options for FWA usage¹².





02

FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICIES



Family-friendly policies are those that further enable staff to effectively balance personal, family and professional commitments as needed throughout the span of their career. They are central to an employer's organizational competitiveness and ability to function efficiently. Such policies have been shown to be strong drivers of employee engagement and often constitute a make-or-break point in terms of retention and career progression for staff. Organizations that provide staff with sufficient support to balance their professional and personal lives are more likely to attract a wider range of qualified candidates and have staff with higher levels of organizational commitment, job satisfaction and, on average, more productive and present work practices.

Policies focused on parental leave have been the main policies addressing family needs, but employers are increasingly facing other care demands and responsibilities as well, such as related to an ageing parent or a sick sibling. Also, consideration of the wide range of disabilities should be accounted for, including psychosocial and intellectual impairments, which are often less recognized. Finally, the supportive nature of these policies should not come at the expense of personnel who do not have children, elder or dependent care issues.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRESS

ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE

As an organization

- Consider developing a proposal for implementing a standardized paid parental leave policy of six months, including cost estimates, funding proposals, risks if not executed and potential benefits to increasing retention and improving diversity. Inter-agency knowledge-sharing and joint advocacy are recommended to strengthen proposals for change.
- A system-wide review of parental leave entitlements by the International Civil Service Commission may be considered to facilitate consistency in application.
- Revise existing policies as appropriate to indicate that “parental leave” applies to adoption, surrogacy and emergency or foster care and recognize such parents’ equal need to bond with their children. Eliminate ‘primary caregiver’ language, which reflects the assumption that families will have one main caregiver supported by a partner with few or no caregiving responsibilities.
- Consider establishing a reserve fund and explore other sustainable funding sources/options to provide adequate resources for hiring replacement personnel for backstopping parental leaves and other extended staff leave periods.

- Ensure a breastfeeding/bottle-feeding policy is in place.
- Consider providing parental leave to personnel on select types of long-term consultancy contracts.
- Ensure senior leaders express support for non-discriminatory parental leave policies and act as role models by taking their full parental leave.
- Gender and diversity information in preparatory materials should be made for all duty stations and made widely available for all personnel to aid in their consideration of mobility opportunities.
- Provide support, to the extent possible, in areas such as housing, schooling and medical facilities, to arriving staff and families as a common UN service.
- Expand opportunities for recognized partner employment and facilitate mobility of dual UN career couples.

As a manager

- Be supportive of new parents, caregivers and individuals whose personal circumstances might create specific needs.
- Inform yourself about details and expectations of parental leave benefits and policy offerings.

- Ask expecting and new parents what support they need, including during their transition back to work.
- Ensure that a breastfeeding/bottle-feeding policy is in place, if possible with a designated lactation space.
- Support options for employees to telework on an extended basis if their spouse/partner has relocated.

As an individual

- Seek information regarding family-friendly policies and support provided via online sources, your manager and the Gender Focal Point in your organization.
- Parental leave should be requested at least 10 weeks before delivery, or at the earliest possible time, so the organization can begin coverage and handover procedures.
- Before and shortly after the return to work, discuss arrangements with your supervisor.
- Inform yourself of barriers that might exist in a potential duty station due to your personal circumstances. Address any concerns you might have with your supervisor.

GOOD PRACTICES

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO) were the first entities to augment their maternity leaves to six months, citing a need to align these with their recommendation on exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of a child's life. In addition, in January 2018, UNICEF announced its extension of leave for non-gestational parents (fathers, adoptive parents and parents through surrogacy) to four months.

UNAIDS, the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the World Food Programme (WFP) have also supplemented the standard 16 weeks of maternity leave with eight weeks of special leave with pay, to bring it to six months. In December 2017, WFP extended its leave entitlement for non-birth parents to 10 weeks and extended maternity leave to its consultants and short-term staff.

In May 2018, UNAIDS announced that "the introduction of a single parental leave policy will be pursued to apply equally to all staff, irrespective of gender identity and mode of becoming a parent, which additionally provides pre- and post-delivery leave for the birth parent".

In addition to enhancing its parental leave, UNHCR has extended the possibility of reduced working hours at 75 per cent (while being remunerated at 100 per cent) to

Adoption and Surrogacy Leave until the child is 1 year of age, or a year from the date of the child's arrival in the staff member's home.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Special Leave Policy provides that "special leave with full pay or partial pay is granted with a specific lien on the post the staff member held prior to going on special leave". A lien against a specific post can be exceptionally extended for a maximum period of two years subject to approval of the Resident Representative or the Director of the Unit.

As a separate leave entitlement from the uncertified sick/family emergency leave standard across the UN System, **WFP** allows staff up to a maximum of five days in any leave year period to attend to the needs of child(ren) whose disability is recognized by the Programme.¹³

Rather than after placements have been made, the **WFP's** mandatory mobility policy takes personal circumstances into account during the application phase and provides consultations with the medical office to flag health conditions of staff and/or their dependents, including spouses, which may limit their mobility. Personal circumstances include health condition of the staff member and/or of recognized dependents, the need for appropriate school facilities and status as a single parent. Opportunities are provided for staff to appeal assignments.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Day Nursery provides care for children between the ages of 12 months and 3 years for all personnel. Additionally, the Children's Club provides care for children between the ages of 3 and 8 once a week and during the school holidays.

UNHCR provides country-specific "Preparatory Information for UNHCR in High-Risk Duty Stations" for staff considering applying to or will be/have recently been deployed to high-risk duty stations to support personnel in making well-informed decisions when preparing for a mission. Diversity and gender-specific information is also provided, informing staff of laws that may be particularly challenging for staff of certain sexual orientations or genders. Regarding disability, access is also discussed, and additional resources are provided for staff with further questions on this topic.

UN-GLOBE has issued proposals to address and mitigate LGBTIQ+-specific concerns and risks related to the mobility required of many UN jobs. The complete mobility proposals and additional mobility-related recommendations included in "UN-GLOBE's Recommendations for Inclusive Workplaces for Trans and Gender Non-conforming Staff" are available on their website (<http://www.unglobe.org/>), along with useful references and resources.

The UN Secretariat has released a "Guide to Employment of UN Secretariat Staff Members",¹⁴ which provides answers to FAQs on work permits and job opportunities and provides additional resources in context-specific guidance for several duty stations including Addis Ababa, Abidjan, Arusha, Bangkok, Beirut, Brindisi, Geneva, Nairobi, New York, Santiago and Vienna.

Local Expatriate Spouse Associations (LESA) exist in several duty stations, such as NYLESA in New York (<http://www.nylesa.org>) and UNKLESA in Nairobi (<http://www.unklesa.org/>). LESAs support the integration and employment of spouses and partners of UN staff, are a valuable channel for information-sharing and provide a community of support to help ease transitions for families to a new duty station.



03 STANDARDS OF CONDUCT



As a global, standard-setting institution, the UN should be an example of an inclusive international actor that welcomes differences and diversity. A secure and harmonious workplace at which employees feel safe, respected and valued is a necessity for a highly engaged workforce with everyone contributing to their fullest potential. It is the only way for the UN to be a role model for what it stands for and to deliver on its mission. Standards of conduct also need to be understood in the broadest sense of the term as establishing minimum standards for an inclusive workplace, e.g. including reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities.

UN personnel are required to adhere to the Standards of Conduct for International Civil Service.¹⁵ These standards include guiding principles that encourage value-based behavior to reduce misconduct and abuse of power. As stated in the “Secretary-General’s Bulletin on Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, Including Sexual Harassment, and Abuse of Authority” (ST/SGB/2008/5), the Organization has the duty to take all appropriate measures towards ensuring a harmonious work environment, and to

protect its staff from exposure to any form of prohibited conduct, through preventive measures and the provision of effective remedies when prevention has failed.¹⁶

All must play their part in creating a workplace of respect and accountability. Organizations must cultivate a workplace culture where misconduct is not tolerated and where targets of harassment are treated fairly and compassionately and protected against retaliation. Senior management must communicate, model and enforce these standards in order to establish them as norms and ingrain them in our culture. Individuals in their daily practices should treat co-workers with respect and commit to speaking up when witness to unacceptable behavior.

An example of misconduct and abuse of power is sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation, interfere with work, or be made a condition of employment or which creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.¹⁷ The UN practices a

“Harassment of any kind offends the principles of what we stand for as an organization and undermines our core values and our work.”

Secretary-General António Guterres

zero-tolerance approach towards sexual harassment. As Secretary-General António Guterres has emphasized, sexual harassment has no place in the United Nations System. Consequently, the Secretary-General has taken steps to boost support for victims, to enhance the protection of whistle-blowers and to improve reporting and investigation of allegations.

The Investigations Division of the Office of Internal Oversight Services takes responsibility for investigating all complaints of sexual harassment, and implements a streamlined, fast-tracked procedure to receive, process and address complaints. A specialized team focusing on the investigations of sexual harassment was created in 2018. By the end of 2018, more than 16,000 staff had taken a new mandatory training course on sexual harassment.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRESS

ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE

As an organization

- Ensure diligent and swift handling of reported incidents of all forms of harassment and abuse of power.
- Regularly inform UN personnel of the efforts being undertaken, making clear what kind of behavior is expected from all personnel and reinforce the message that perpetrators will be held accountable.
- Encourage staff to stand up against bias and discriminatory attitudes and practices, including sexist jokes, racist and ableist remarks and stereotypes.
- Provide clear and accessible resources to guide personnel in preventing, recognizing and reporting misconduct. Provide extra training to those serving in roles where they will be supporting individuals who report misconduct.

As a manager

- Show zero tolerance for misconduct and step in if it occurs. Keep yourself informed of resources and support available to prevent, recognize and act upon it.
- Demonstrate inclusive behavior; be an engaged and objective listener (making sure not to speculate); create space for different people to speak; and select diverse participants for development opportunities.

- Remain attentive as to how colleagues interact. Act promptly and treat the issue as a priority if conflict, or the potential for it, has been reported by personnel.
- Encourage personnel to avail themselves of any programmes on working effectively in diverse and multicultural environments.

As an individual

- Familiarize yourself with relevant policies, such as ST/SGB/2008/5 on the Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, Including Sexual Harassment and Abuse of Authority; and the UN System Model Policy on Sexual Harassment.
- Stand up against harassment and misconduct of any kind and support others. Use opportunities provided to develop the necessary skills and confidence to intervene as a bystander.
- Address conflicts constructively as they arise. If comfortable doing so without fear of harm or retribution, communicate directly with people involved in the conflict and take action to prevent recurring issues.
- Ensure interpersonal behavior is respectful towards others.
- Notify the Organization of misconduct through formal or informal reporting mechanisms. Where applicable, these could include your Ombudsman, Ethics

Office, Office of Investigation and Oversight Services (OIOS), Gender Focal Point, HR, senior management or other existing routes, as appropriate. Understand the scope, benefits and limitations of each, including that not all can offer strict confidentiality and that protection against retaliation is often only available to those reporting formally.

GOOD PRACTICES

UN for All has developed learning modules that cover basic human rights principles and how they translate into diversity and inclusion practices in the workplace. They also raise awareness about sexual orientation and gender identity, disabilities, mental health and substance abuse. To date, more than 8,000 UN System personnel in around 80 countries have participated in the training.¹⁸

To address the issue of sexual harassment system-wide, the **United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB)** established the CEB Task Force for Addressing Sexual Harassment within the Organizations of the UN System in 2017. The Task Force identified harmonization of sexual harassment policy, improvements in sexual harassment reporting and data collection, strengthening investigative capacity, and enhanced awareness-raising, outreach and communication as priority areas for system-

wide action. To date, the Task Force has developed and approved a set of concrete, system-wide measures to coherently address the issue of sexual harassment. These include a CEB Statement on Addressing Sexual Harassment within the Organizations of the UN System, a UN System Model Policy on Sexual Harassment, the sexual harassment screening database “ClearCheck,” and a Guide for Managers: Prevention of and Response to Sexual Harassment in the Workplace.¹⁹

Through a two-year participatory process led by the Deputy High Commissioner, the **United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)** developed the Dignity@Work Policy and Action Plan. The OHCHR policy, approved by the High Commissioner in November 2017, reaffirms that “with respect to all its places of work, OHCHR has a policy of zero tolerance for abuse of authority, discrimination and harassment – including sexual harassment.”²⁰ It is premised on the organization’s duty of care towards personnel and combines efforts to address prohibited conduct effectively with measures to establish a dialogue that builds the trust of personnel and capacity of managers. Through a strong framework for accountability, especially of managers, short-term and long-term measures are enforced in three areas: generating information on the prevalence and incidence of prohibited conduct within OHCHR, preventive measures and corrective measures.

United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) has launched the “Say no to sexism” initiative to counter casual sexism at UN Geneva.²¹ The term “casual sexism” denotes behavior or attitudes that foster stereotypes based on gender and perpetuate unequal treatment of others, usually women, and those perceived not to conform to gendered expectations of behavior, such as women perceived to be too masculine, or men perceived to be too feminine. Casual sexism feeds into a culture and a mindset in which de facto discrimination becomes part of everyday life and is accepted and tolerated, which in turn facilitates harassment and abuse. The initiative not only consists of awareness-raising and outreach activities, but also empowers staff to counter casual sexism and speak out against these harmful actions. The initiative has received widespread positive feedback, with staff reporting increased awareness and highlighting its utility in promoting discussion around this important issue.

UN Women and International Labour Organization (ILO) have published a brief, “Ending Violence and Harassment Against Women in the World of Work.”²² The brief discusses 10 important steps for organizations to take to eliminate violence and harassment in the workplace and contribute to positive and respectful working environments. Emerging good practices from around the world are also provided to share success stories and encourage adoption of impactful initiatives. UN Women has also published “[Towards an end to sexual harassment: The urgency and nature of change in the era of #MeToo](#)” intended to support policy makers, employers and activists. It includes “Core elements of effective sexual harassment policy and procedure” as well as examples of UN Women’s specific work against sexual harassment in a range of contexts.

The UN Secretariat provides personnel with a 24-hour helpline called “Speak up” that allows staff to speak confidentially with an impartial and trained individual. By providing personnel with information on protection, support and reporting mechanisms, the helpline serves

to empower personnel in making informed decisions on action. The helpline can be reached via phone at +1 (917) 367-8910 or by email: speakup@un.org.


United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) offers capacity-building opportunities, including barbershop sessions for men to discuss and learn more about the importance of changing organizational culture, and improved training for field staff on responding to security incidents of sexual assault and harassment.

With its Policy on the Employment of Persons with Disabilities, **the World Health Organization (WHO)** commits itself to providing equality of access to employment. In order to safeguard the rights of persons with disabilities to be treated with dignity and respect and to enjoy equal terms of conditions of employment, the policy discusses topics such as: rights protection, reasonable accommodation, selection and recruitment, career development and learning opportunities, the working environment, continuous efforts and confidentiality of information.

The International Office for Migration (IOM) has Respectful Workplace Focal Points (RWFP) in regional offices and some large country offices. The RWFPs are nominated by their colleagues to act as neutral, first-line responders for IOM and are trained in conflict prevention and conflict management. Their role is to offer consultations at the local and regional level, facilitating dialogue between those involved in a workplace problem. However, RWFPs are not independent ombudspersons and do not conduct mediation, informal fact-finding on cases or any other follow-up.

The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) has conducted a mandatory conflict management programme since 2014, which contributes to better understanding and respect for diversity and inclusion at the workplace. The programme provides practical tools and opportunities for staff at all levels to deal with difficult situations.





The *Enabling Environment Guidelines for the UN System* were developed following a consultative and participatory system-wide approach. Together with the Human Resources Network of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), and the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM), UN Women explored key challenges and good practices from across the UN System to help build an enabling environment.

More information on how to create a more diverse, inclusive and respectful work environment can be found in the **Supplementary Guidance on the Enabling Environment Guidelines**, in support of the Secretary-General's System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity, available on the UN Women website (<http://www.unwomen.org/>). The supplementary guidance provides

a comprehensive overview of solutions deployed within and outside the United Nations and practical advice on how to further diversify and contextualize the efforts for fostering an enabling environment. It also includes additional sections on recruitment, talent management and change management.

Additionally, the Gender Focal Point(s) within your organization can serve as a valuable resource for information and discussing gender parity related issues.

- ¹ United Nations (1945). Charter of the United Nations. Available at: <http://www.un.org/en/charter-united-nations/>.
- ² United Nations General Assembly (2017). Shifting the Management Paradigm in the United Nations: Ensuring a Better Future for All. 27 September. A/72/492, para. 24 and 27c; United to Reform. Available at <https://reform.un.org/>.
- ³ Executive Office of the Secretary-General (2017). System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity. p. 34.
- ⁴ United Nations General Assembly (2013). Human resources management. 12 April. A/RES/67/255, para. 30., United Nations General Assembly (2010). Human resources management. 24 December. A/RES/67/255, para. 47.
- ⁵ United Nations Secretariat (2003). Secretary-General's Bulletin: Flexible Working Arrangements. ST/SGB/2003/4, preamble.
- ⁶ Thompson, J. and E. Truch (2013). The Flex Factor: Realising the Value of Flexible Working. Available at: <https://www.thersa.org/discover/publications-and-articles/reports/the-flex-factor-realising-the-value-of-flexible-working/Download>. Accessed 13 August 2018.
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- ⁸ United Nations Secretariat (2015c). Flexible Working Arrangements for a modern and productive workforce. HR Portal.
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