31 October 2017

Dear colleagues,

Today we write to reiterate our personal commitment to eliminating sexual harassment from our organization.

The United Nations has a clear policy on sexual harassment and a process to investigate allegations in a fair and confidential manner, with firm sanctions at the organization’s disposal.

However, this in itself is not enough. 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.

We should therefore reflect on our everyday behaviour and what we can do better as staff and as managers. Key to this is understanding that harassment covers a wide range of actions; that this includes unpleasant and inappropriate comments or suggestive remarks; and that colleagues who receive such remarks may be offended, humiliated or discouraged, even if they don’t say so. Many staff, both victims and witnesses, accept this as an everyday reality. But this should not be so.

Let’s support colleagues who are harassed and let’s call out harassment where we see it. Staff representatives and the staff at the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Service, as well as the Ethics Office and the Staff Counsellor’s Office, can assist and advise in full confidence on informal resolution or on how to make a formal complaint. Links to all these resources are below.

All United Nations Staff Members
Harassment in any type or form offends the very principles of what we stand for as an Organization and undermines the core values of integrity, competence, and professionalism expected of all. Together we must fight it. Join us in making that change.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

António Guterres
United Nations Secretary-General

Charuwan Tintukasiri
ESCAP Staff Association

Stephen Towler
Field Staff Union

Georges Younes
Staff Council of ESCWA

Joseph Baricako
Staff Council of ECA

Ricardo Jordan
Staff Council of ECLAC

Guy Avognon
Staff Council of UNHCR

Fraser Mcilwraith
UN Criminal Tribunals Staff Union

Dimitri Samaras
UNDP/UNOPS/UNFPA/UNWOMEN Staff Council

Scholastica Madowo
UNICEF Global Staff Association
Ian Richards  
UNOG Staff Coordinating Council

Bibi Sherifa Khan  
UN Staff Union (New York)

James Ohayo  
UN Staff Union Nairobi

Irka Kuleshnyk  
UN Staff Union Vienna

Tin Htun Zaw Phyoe  
UN University Staff Council

Links to Staff regulations:  
OIOS: https://oios.un.org/page?slug=reporting-wrongdoing  
Staff Counsellor’s Office: https://hr.un.org/page/how-contact-your-staff-counsellor