POLICY STATEMENT

Health Development Initiative (hereinafter HDI) is committed to providing a safe environment for all free from sexual exploitation and abuse. **HDI will operate a zero tolerance policy for any form of sexual exploitation and abuse in the workplace and in the course of work, treat all incidents seriously and promptly investigate all allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse.**

All complaints of sexual exploitation and abuse will be taken seriously and treated with respect and in confidence. No one will be victimised for making such a complaint.

1. **Definition**

HDI subscribes to the definition provided by the United Nations which defines sexual exploitation as any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.¹ HDI also subscribes to the definition of the United Nations related to sexual abuse as the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.²

2. **Scope**

This policy applies to any person working with HDI regardless of gender, sexual orientation, position, working relationship with HDI, seniority, marital status or any other status. This policy protects employees, interns /fellows, contractors and beneficiaries of HDI programmes.

3. **Preventive measures**

HDI shall organize a mandatory training for new Staff, interns or fellows as part of induction.

Each year, HDI shall organize at least one refresher training on sexual exploitation and abuse to its employee, interns or fellows. HDI shall also sensitize its employees, interns, fellows and beneficiaries of HDI’s programmes on the prohibition of sexual exploitation and abuse and existing reporting mechanisms.

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¹ United Nations Secretary General’s *Bulletin on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse* (ST/SGB/2003/13). This Bulletin was published on 9 October 2003.
² Idem
All HDI’s employees, interns or fellows and contractors must familiarise themselves with this policy on sexual exploitation and abuse and seek guidance or further clarification from the disciplinary committee in case of doubt or confusion.

4. **Disciplinary committee**

A disciplinary committee is hereby established with the mandate of handling all allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse and advise HDI accordingly on other preventive measures. The disciplinary committee shall be comprised of 2 HDI member Staff elected by their peers and the Legal Advisor.

The disciplinary committee may also invite an independent expert in the following circumstances:

- When a member of the committee has recused himself or herself to avoid a conflict of interest such as being a close friend of the alleged harasser or the alleged victim
- A member of the disciplinary committee is himself or herself is a subject to an investigation for committing sexual exploitation or abuse.

The disciplinary committee shall develop its rules and procedure to handle sexual exploitation and abuse allegations.

5. **Reporting sexual exploitation and abuse**

Any HDI Staff, intern /fellow or contractor who has experienced sexual exploitation or abuse is encouraged to either report to the disciplinary committee or to the Police. In case, the victim opts to report to the Police, he or she may inform HDI about it.

Any HDI Staff, intern /fellow or contractor who witnesses an incident of sexual exploitation and abuse or has other kinds of evidence must report the incident to the disciplinary committee.

The reporting might be made in oral or in writing. However the recording of the reporting must be in written and signed by the victim or witness who reported the incident in all circumstances.
6. **Support to victim of sexual exploitation and abuse**

HDI will provide any possible support to the victim of sexual exploitation and abuse who has reported the incident to the police until the matter is resolved by providing existing evidence it may have in its possession. The victim must be informed on the outcome of the internal investigation carried against his or her harasser.

7. **Protection against retaliation**

HDI will support employees, interns or fellows who were either victims of sexual exploitation and abuse or have reported as witnesses a case of sexual exploitation and abuse and will not take any adverse action against them.

8. **Sanctions and disciplinary measures**

After internal or external investigation, anyone who has been found to have committed either sexual exploitation or sexual abuse or both under the terms of this policy is liable to dismissal without notice.

The following sanctions will be applied to those who condone sexual exploitation and abuse by either failing to report the incident or assist the alleged perpetrator (harasser) in concealing evidence or threatening the victim /survivor:

- verbal or written warning
- adverse performance evaluation
- suspension
- dismissal

HDI will terminate employee, intern /fellow or contractor’s contract who is found guilty in a court of law for committing sexual exploitation and abuse against his or her colleague, intern or fellow, contractor or beneficiaries of HDI programmes, even if HDI has not conducted its own investigation.

9. **Implementation and dissemination**
All HDI employees, interns /fellows and contractors shall receive a soft copy of this policy via email and will be required to acknowledge its receipt. This policy is part and parcel of any contractual agreement between HDI and employees, interns /fellows and contractors.