Striving for a healthy society

ANTI-SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

30 JUNE 2018
POLICY STATEMENT

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

Any person found to have sexually harassed another will face disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from employment. All complaints of sexual harassment 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 harassment as any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favour, verbal or physical conduct or gesture of a sexual nature, or any other behaviour of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation to another, when such conduct interferes with work, is made a condition of employment or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.\(^1\) Though it can typically involve a pattern of behaviour, it can take the form of a single incident. Sexual harassment may occur between persons of the opposite or same sex. Both males and females can be either the victims or the offenders.\(^2\)

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 and contractors anyone interacting with HDI.

3. **Preventive measures**

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

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\(^1\) United Nations Secretary General Bulletin Prohibition of discrimination, harassment, including sexual Harassment and abuse of authority (ST/SGB/2008/5). This Bulletin was published on 11 February 2008

\(^2\) Idem
Each year, HDI shall organize at least one refresher training on sexual harassment to its employee, interns or fellows. HDI shall also sensitize its employees, interns or fellows on the prohibition of sexual harassment and existing reporting mechanisms.

All HDI employees, interns or fellows must familiarise themselves with this policy on sexual harassment 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 sexual harassment allegations and advise HDI 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
- The committee member is himself or herself is a subject to an investigation for committing sexual harassment.

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

5. Reporting sexual harassment

Any HDI Staff, intern /fellow or contractor who has experienced sexual harassment is encouraged to either report to the disciplinary committee or to the Police if it is a serious case such as sexual assault. In case, the victim /survivor opts to report to the Police, he or she may inform HDI about it.

When possible the victim may ask the perpetrator to stop sexually harassing him or her.

Any HDI Staff, intern /fellow or contractor who witnesses an incident of sexual harassment or has other kinds of evidence should report 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/survivor or witness who reported the incident in all circumstances.

6. Support to victim/survivor of sexual harassment

HDI will provide any possible support to the victim of sexual harassment such as counselling. HDI will provide any possible support to the victim/survivor of sexual assault who has reported assault to the police until the matter is resolved by providing existing evidence it may have in its possession. The victim/survivor 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 sexually harassed or have reported as witnesses a case of sexual harassment 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 sexually harassed another person under the terms of this policy is liable to any of the following sanctions:

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

The above sanctions will also be applied to those who condone sexual harassment by either failing to report the incident or assist the alleged perpetrator (harasser) in concealing evidence or threatening the victim/survivor.

The nature of the sanctions will depend on the gravity and extent of the harassment. Certain serious cases, including physical violence such as sexual assault, will lead to the immediate dismissal of the perpetrator (harasser) as this is considered a serious misconduct.
HDI will terminate employees, interns /fellows or contractors’ contract who are found guilty in a court of law for sexually assaulting another employee, intern /fellow or contractor, 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.