



# Sub-working group on improved reporting

## Narrative report on the results of the 2022 survey of CEB entities on **Improved Reporting of Sexual Harassment in the UN System**

September 2023

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### BACKGROUND

1. In the framework of the “CEB Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment” (the Task Force), WFP and UNICEF are co-chairing a technical sub-group on improved reporting of sexual harassment. The sub-group is tasked with conducting an annual survey of CEB entities on reporting of sexual harassment (the survey).
2. This report sets out: (i) the structure and purpose of the survey, (ii) the main findings, and (iii) the recommended next steps, based on self-reported aggregated data across all participating entities.<sup>1</sup>
3. This report has been shared with all participating entities and the CEB Task Force who may then decide to share externally. Accompanying the narrative report is the annexed questionnaire and its methodology and accompanying power point presentation.

### STRUCTURE AND PURPOSE

4. In total, the survey contained 50 questions on the entities’ policies and practices on sexual harassment as of the end of 2022. The survey was divided into three main sections: (i) policy, (ii) investigations, and (iii) disciplinary matters.
5. The purpose of the survey is to allow the Task Force to: (i) identify progress in the UN System’s wide efforts to eradicate sexual harassment, (ii) identify risk indicators to allow for more focused prevention initiatives, and (iii) identify areas in which entities can strengthen how they address sexual harassment.

### MAIN FINDINGS

6. Twenty-nine (29) UN entities responded to the survey, representing a workforce of over

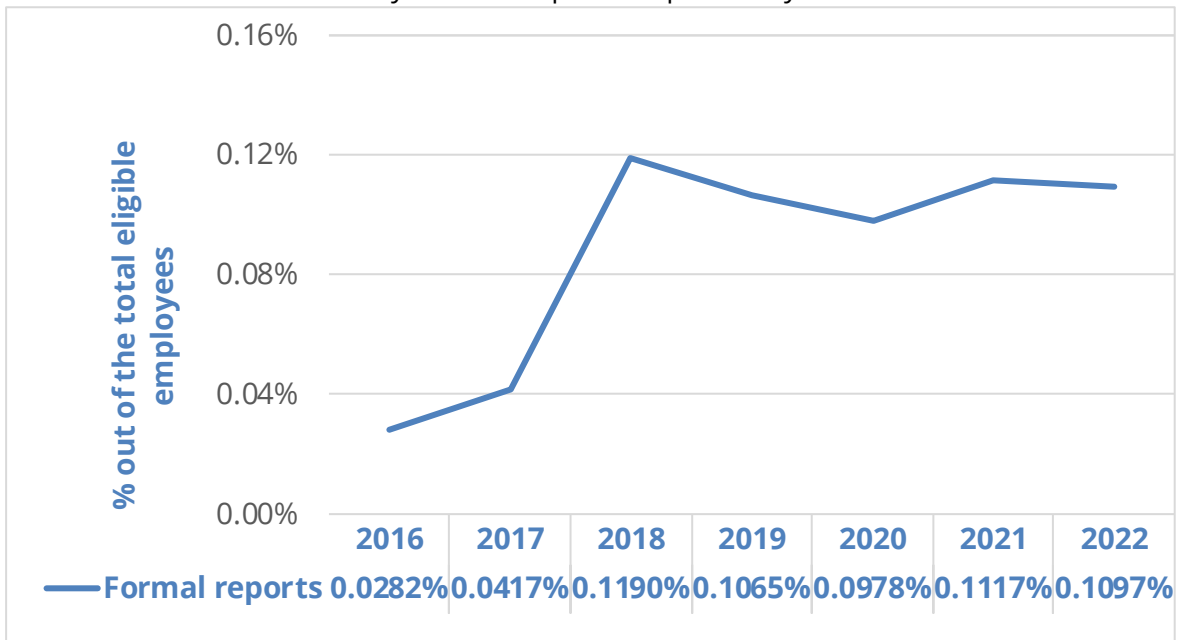
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<sup>1</sup> FAO, IAEA, ICAO, IFAD, ILO, IMO, IOM, ITU, UNEP, UN Secretariat, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFCCC, UNFPA, UN-HABITAT, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNOPS, UNRWA, UNWOMEN, UNWTO, UPU, WFP, WHO, WIPO, World Bank and WTO.

300,000 employees<sup>2</sup> and the collected data yielded a 96% average response rate. The findings focus on (i) a snapshot of 2022 reflecting progress made and risk indicators, and (ii) areas to strengthen, based on aggregated data.

### i) Snapshot of 2022

7. The snapshot is focused on how incidents of sexual harassment were reported, an overview on the affected individuals and perpetrators, as well as an indication of the type of sexual harassment alleged to have been perpetrated.
8. **Number of formal reports:** Formal reports can trigger an investigation and, where allegations are substantiated, result in sanctions against the perpetrator. In 2022, entities received a combined total of 329 formal reports of sexual harassment (0.1097% out of the total employees eligible to make formal reports, which means that out of 912 employees, 1 employee filed a sexual harassment report). While this represents an increase in the overall number of reports received, as the total number of employees has also increased, this means that the data remains relatively stable compared to previous years.



9. The data shows that these 329 formal reports were received by 22 of the responding entities, and that 6 of the entities received 76% of all formal reports. This means that 7 entities received no reports of sexual harassment<sup>3</sup> and that 6 entities received 20 or more reports with a combined 251 reports.
10. **Informal reporting:** The survey also requested data on informal reports of sexual harassment, *i.e.*, those which do not trigger an investigation but are addressed by internal functions such as management and Human Resources. The data showed that just under 50% of the entities keep consistent records of such reports. In 2022, the entities received 210 informal reports, up from 168 in 2021, which reflects an increase in the total number of employees covered in the 2022 survey. The data also showed that these 210 reports were received by 12 entities, and that of those, 3 entities received 165 informal reports, or 79% of all such reports.

<sup>2</sup> An increase from 28 participating entities representing a workforce of  $\approx$  250,000 in 2021. This should be taken into account when comparing absolute numbers.

<sup>3</sup> A decrease from 12 entities in 2021.

11. **Affected individuals:** Despite anonymous reports being permitted by 24 entities, the majority of formal reports continued to be from affected individuals and bystanders (72%) representing an increase in such reports from 2021. Internal referrals from a function or body within the entity such as Human Resources increased in absolute numbers (from 34 in 2021 to 42 in 2022) but decreased as a percentage of reports received (14% in 2022 from 20% in 2021).
12. The data confirms that sexual harassment is a gender issue and one related to power differentials. The affected individual was female in 95% of cases and the alleged offender was male in 97% of cases. In the majority of cases, the alleged offender was more senior than the affected individual (57%), although this represents a decrease from 75% in 2021, and in 20% of reports received, the affected individual was an external person. Moreover, one fifth of cases under investigation had more than one affected individual.
13. **Type of sexual harassment:** Just under two thirds of the entities reported the office environment as one of the most frequent situations where sexual harassment took place (64%) with most incidents (79%) occurring in the field (missions, country offices and sub-offices, where operational entities normally carry out their core operations). This percentage is disproportionate to the geographical distribution of personnel within the entities (average of 69% of personnel are in the field).
14. The most common type of reported sexual harassment was attempted or actual sexual assault other than rape (54% of entities reported having cases of this type). This is a significant increase from 2021 (35%). The number of entities that reported having cases of verbal sexual harassment declined from 57% in 2021 to 46% in 2022. In addition, 3 entities reported cases of rape in 2022 (no cases in 2021).

## ii) Areas for strengthening

15. While progress has been made by entities in incorporating the principles of the UN System Model Policy on Sexual Harassment (the Model Policy), there remains scope for advancement and system wide harmonization around actioning policies.
16. **Retaliation.** 18 formal reports of retaliation were received by the responding entities (12 in 2021). 10 *prima facie* cases of retaliation were established, which is a significant increase from the one such case in 2021.
17. **Protective measures:** Although protective measures for affected individuals are broadly available, most entities could not report on the number of implemented measures among the investigated cases. This could mean that protective measures are not being generally used, or that the collection of data in connection with their implementation could be improved. In addition, not all entities provided protective measures when a report was made informally (6 entities provide them when a report is made formally only).
18. **Investigation intake and referrals:** Of the 329 formal reports received in 2022, 90 (27%) were closed following intake.<sup>4</sup> 178 cases (54%) resulted in a formal investigation.<sup>5</sup> The reasons for not initiating investigations included that (i) the affected individual did not want to proceed, (ii) the facts did not meet the threshold for an investigation, (iii) the facts were not deemed to constitute sexual harassment even if proven, (iv) not enough information/evidence due to the report being anonymous or (v) not enough information/evidence due to the passage of time.

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<sup>4</sup> A decrease from 110 (38%) in 2021.

<sup>5</sup> An increase from 42% in 2021.

19. There was a decrease in the matters which did not result in an investigation which were referred within the entities to be addressed by a different function.<sup>6</sup> In addition, most entities prioritized sexual harassment reports during the intake process. The number of investigations completed increased significantly from 85 in 2021 to 146 in 2022 (which can be correlated with an increase in formal investigations). The number of completed investigations with facts being established increased in absolute numbers (from 51 in 2021 to 69 in 2022) but dropped as a percentage of the number of reports received (from 60% in 2021 to 47% in 2022).
20. **Accountability:** There was a decrease in the absolute number of disciplinary matters completed in 2022 (from 52 in 2021 to 44 in 2022), and the percentage of such cases which resulted in disciplinary or administrative measures being imposed remained stable at 59% in 2022.
21. In addition, the data showed that when disciplinary matters results in sanctions, more resulted in separation or a disciplinary review following separation than sanctions whereby the perpetrator remained in the entity. 56% of the personnel who were found to have engaged in sexual harassment following a disciplinary process were separated from service (50% in 2021), in 28% a disciplinary review was completed (26% in 2021), and 16% of the measures imposed were demotion, fine, suspension or administrative measures (23% in 2021).
22. **ClearCheck participation:** 4 entities indicated that they do not participate in the ClearCheck Screening Tool, a system-wide screening database to avoid the hiring of individuals whose working relationship with a UN entity ended because of a confirmed sexual harassment. Of the 25 entities participating in ClearCheck, 13 entities also opted in for including individuals who left the entity with pending allegations of sexual harassment.
23. **Referrals to national authorities:** Referrals to local authorities for criminal investigation also continued to be limited, although increased from 2021 – 6 sexual harassment matters were referred in 2022.
24. **Timeliness:** In 2022, 52% of entities took longer than 1 month on average for intake decisions (compared to 39% in 2021). 61% of investigations were completed in less than six months, a significant increase from 32% in 2021. 20% of the investigations took more than 12 months to be completed (a decrease from 25% in 2021). The number of disciplinary processes which took less than six months to complete increased significantly from 31% in 2021 to 55% in 2022. 26% of the disciplinary processes took more than 12 months to be completed (a decrease from 40% in 2021). The main challenges to timely completion of these processes included (i) lack of resources/understaffing and (ii) complexity and volume of material to review.
25. **Further UN System alignment with Model Policy:** All entities allow reporting by all personnel against all categories of personnel but, despite progress, not all entities allow for reporting by and against any person, irrespective of whether they have an employment relationship with the entity.
26. The data also showed that not all entities: removed deadlines for reporting (improvement from 23 in 2021 to 27 entities in 2022); allowed anonymous reporting (24 entities in 2021 and 2022); allowed reporting by third parties (improvement from 24 in 2021 to 26 entities in 2022), and allowed for investigations to be initiated in the absence of a report (improvement from 15 in 2021 to 20 entities in 2022), all of which creates potential

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<sup>6</sup> A decrease from 30 in 2021 to 24 in 2022.

reporting barriers. Entities were not aligned on their policy obligations on personnel to report sexual harassment formally and informally.

27. Finally, while almost all entities established general contractual provisions on zero tolerance for sexual harassment or requiring highest ethical standards of conduct, 14 entities establish specific contractual requirements in relation to addressing sexual harassment that may lead to termination of their agreements with vendors and cooperating partners.
28. **Further UN System alignment – victim-centered approach:** Most entities provide a range of support options to affected individuals. However, entities diverge in when and how they communicate with affected individuals about the status and outcome of the investigation and disciplinary processes.
29. **Further UN System alignment – awareness:** Most entities provide specific training to prevent sexual harassment, but not all entities are aligned in the types of training available, and 6 entities do not share disciplinary practice reports with personnel.

## NEXT STEPS: RECOMMENDATIONS

30. In conducting the 2022 survey, the co-chairs have met the objective of collecting consistent information across all agencies.
31. For these results to lead to action by the UN system and individual agencies, as part of the Task Force’s workstream 3 on “Data and Results”, the “Results Framework” is being finalized, which sets out concrete forward-thinking indicators of good practice in preventing and responding to sexual harassment to address the areas for strengthening that were identified following an analysis of the results of the Annual Survey.