



# Sub-working group on improved reporting

## Narrative report on the results of the 2024 survey of CEB entities on **Improved Reporting of Sexual Harassment in the UN System**

November 2025

### BACKGROUND

1. In the framework of the UN Executive Group to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Harassment (the Executive Group), 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 UN Executive Group to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Harassment.

### 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 2024. 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 Executive Group 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.
6. Some questions have been partially modified this year to allow the survey to track the implementation of the Results Framework's indicators of good practice in preventing and responding to sexual harassment which was endorsed by the CEB entities in January 2024.

### MAIN FINDINGS

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

7. Twenty-eight (28) entities responded to the survey,<sup>2</sup> representing a workforce of 310,000 employees. The findings focus on (i) a snapshot of 2024 reflecting progress made and risk indicators, and (ii) areas to strengthen, based on aggregated data.

### i) Snapshot of 2024

8. 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.

9. **Number of formal reports:**

Formal reports can trigger an investigation and, where allegations are substantiated, result in sanctions against the perpetrator. In 2024, responding entities received a combined total of 490 formal reports (compared to 427 in 2023) of sexual harassment (0.158% out of the total employees eligible to make formal reports, which means

Frequency of formal reports  
% of eligible employees



that out of 632 employees, 1 employee filed a sexual harassment report). This represents an increase both in the overall number of reports received as well as proportionally to the eligible workforce compared to previous years (1 out of 719 employees filed a report in 2023).

10. The data shows that these 490 formal reports were received by 21 of the responding entities. 3 entities received no reports of sexual harassment<sup>3</sup> and 5 entities received 50 or more reports with a combined 320 reports corresponding to 65% of all formal reports in the UN system.
11. **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. While not all entities track informal reports, the data indicate that a similar number of entities maintain such records (15 compared to 14 in 2023). In 2024, the entities received 183 informal reports, down from 207 in 2023. The data also showed that these 183 reports were received by 12 entities, and that of those, 3 entities received 145 informal reports, or 79% of all such reports.
12. **Affected individuals:** The majority of formal reports continued to be from affected individuals and bystanders (73%). There is an increase in reports from internal referrals from a function or body within the entity such as Human Resources to the investigative body (from 14% in 2023 to 22% in 2024).
13. The data once again confirms that sexual harassment is a gender issue and one related to power differentials. The affected individual was female in 91% of cases and the alleged offender was male in 96% of cases. In the majority of cases, the alleged offender was more senior than the affected individual (50%), although this represents a slight decrease

<sup>2</sup> An increase from 27 in 2023 – see footnote 1 for the list of participating entities in 2024.

<sup>3</sup> A decrease from 6 entities in 2023.

from 55% in 2023, and in 10% of reports received, the affected individual was an external person (down from 13% in 2023). Moreover, as in 2023, one fifth of cases under investigation had more than one affected individual.

14. **Type of sexual harassment:** The majority of responding organisations reported the office environment as one of the most frequent situations where sexual harassment took place (77%), with most incidents continuing to occur in the field (75%) where operational entities normally carry out their core operations. This percentage is slightly disproportionate to the geographical distribution of personnel within the entities (an average of 64% of personnel are in the field).
15. Entities were asked to indicate the types of sexual harassment reported to their organisations. The two most indicated types were attempted or actual sexual assault other than rape and verbal sexual harassment (both 48% of the entities). There is a continuous increase of entities receiving reports involving online sexual harassment from 23% in 2023 to 29% in 2024. In addition, 2 entities reported having received at least one report involving rape in 2024 (against 1 in 2023).

## ii) Areas for strengthening

16. 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:
17. **Timeliness:** Most entities (96%) prioritized sexual harassment reports during the intake process and, overall, intake decisions are being taken more quickly with 93% of the entities taking on average up to 2 months for decisions (compared to 84% in 2023). However, 42% of the entities are still taking longer than 1 month on average for intake decisions (compared to 48% in 2023). Similarly to last year, 37% of investigations were completed in less than six months (compared to 39% in 2023) and 35% of the investigations took more than 12 months to be completed (compared to 2023, 30%).
18. The number of disciplinary processes which took less than six months to complete decreased from 49% in 2023 to 30% in 2024 but more disciplinary processes took longer than 12 months to be completed (32% in 2024 compared to 15% in 2023). The main challenges to timely completion of these processes included complexity and volume of material, understaffing, excessive number of matters being reviewed at the same time.
19. **Accountability - investigation:** Of the 490 formal reports received in 2024, 190 (39%) were closed following intake (an increase from 148 (35%) in 2023). 194 cases (40%) resulted in a formal investigation (a significant decrease from 50% in 2023). 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, and (iii) not enough information/evidence due to the report being anonymous or due to the passage of time.
20. There was a significant increase in the matters which did not result in an investigation which were referred within the entities to be addressed by a different function (from 34 in 2023 to 56 in 2024). The number of investigations completed increased slightly from 191 in 2023 to 198 in 2024. The number of completed investigations with facts being established decreased in absolute numbers (107 in 2023 to 93 in 2024) and as a percentage of the number of reports completed (from 54% in 2023 to 46% in 2024).
21. **Accountability - disciplinary:** There was a decrease in the absolute number of disciplinary matters completed in 2024 (from 59 in 2023 to 49 in 2024), and the percentage of such cases

which resulted in disciplinary or administrative measures being imposed also significantly decreased from 78% to 67%. In addition, the data showed that when disciplinary matters result in sanctions, more resulted in separation or a disciplinary review following separation than sanctions whereby the perpetrator remained in the entity. 63% of the personnel who were found to have engaged in sexual harassment following a disciplinary process were separated from service (81% in 2023) and 37% of the measures imposed were demotion, written censure or suspension without pay.

22. **Accountability - ClearCheck, referrals to national authorities and retaliation:** All entities participated in ClearCheck in 2024. Of these 28 entities, 15 entities also opted in to including individuals who left the entity with pending allegations of sexual harassment. No sexual harassment matters were referred to local authorities in 2024 (7 in 2023). 19 formal reports of retaliation were received by the responding entities (16 in 2023) and 9 *prima facie* cases of retaliation were established, which is an increase compared to 6 in 2023.
23. **Victim-centered approach - protective measures and support:** Although most entities have available a range of support options and protective measures for affected individuals, the survey was not able to collect consistent data on implemented protective measures. This may be due to lack of systematic record-keeping and the fact that the implementation of such measures is not centralized within the entities. In addition, not all entities provide protective measures when a report was made informally (4 entities only provide them when a report is made formally). Finally, entities diverge in when and how they communicate with affected individuals about the status and outcome of the investigation and disciplinary processes.
24. **Further UN System alignment - background checks:** On Clear Check, 93% of the entities are consistently screening all new staff but only 61% are screening new non-staff personnel. A very low number of entities periodically screen existing staff and non-staff personnel through Clear Check (respectively 7% and 4%). Moreover, most entities ask candidates during recruitment to disclose if they have been subject to disciplinary or administrative measures for misconduct (82%) as well as if they are currently under investigation or a disciplinary process (75%), though fewer entities ask if candidates have resigned during an investigation or disciplinary process (68%). Finally, the use of the Interpol Wanted Persons List is still very limited among the entities.
25. **Further UN System alignment - 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. The data also showed that the large majority, but not all entities: removed deadlines for reporting; allowed anonymous reporting; and allowed for investigations to be initiated in the absence of a report, all of which creates potential reporting barriers. In addition, entities were not aligned on their policy obligations on personnel to report sexual harassment formally and informally.
26. Finally, while almost all entities established general contractual provisions on zero tolerance for sexual harassment, only 46% of the entities establish specific contractual requirements in relation to addressing sexual harassment that may lead to termination of their agreements with vendors and cooperating partners.
27. **Further UN System alignment - awareness:** Most entities provide specific training to prevent sexual harassment, but there are significant differences in the types of training available. While 43% of entities share disciplinary practice reports internally and externally, 36% only share such reports internally, and 21% of entities do not share disciplinary

practice reports with personnel.

## NEXT STEPS: RECOMMENDATIONS

### 28. Achievement of Survey Objectives:

The 2024 UNEG Annual Survey successfully met its primary objective: collecting consistent and comparable data across all UN entities on sexual harassment. This provides a robust evidence base for informed decision-making and accountability.

### 29. Driving System-Wide and Entity-Level Action

The survey results are not an end in themselves; they are intended to catalyse concrete action by both the UN system and individual organisations. Translating these insights into measurable improvements is now the priority.

### 30. Enhanced Reporting and Benchmarking

To support entities in acting on their results:

- Entities have received a comprehensive presentation of the survey findings.
- Individual benchmarked reports will be produced and shared with each organisation, enabling them to track progress and address gaps effectively.

### 31. Alignment with the Results Framework:

The “Results Framework” endorsed by CEB entities in January 2024 remains a key reference point. It provides clear indicators of good practice for preventing and responding to sexual harassment, allowing agencies to benchmark their performance and strengthen accountability.