



18 April 2019

UNFPA management response

to

Report of the Ethics Office 2018

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Agenda item 12

Reports of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS Ethics Offices

Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS
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UNFPA management response to the report of the Ethics Office 2018

1. The management of UNFPA acknowledges with appreciation the work of the UNFPA Ethics Office, and the accomplishment of its mandated activities for 2018. Management commends the Ethics Office for its continuing work to promote a culture of integrity, and encourage ethical behaviour among all UNFPA personnel.
2. In particular, we would like to commend the Ethics Adviser for responding to 397 requests from across the organization regarding ethical issues in 2018.
3. Further, we would like to share our appreciation for the work of the Ethics Office, which increased in the area of providing advice and guidance outside headquarters, especially in the Latin America and Caribbean region, where advice increased by 65 percent and East and Southern Africa, where advice nearly doubled from 2017. This increase demonstrates an increased level of appreciation for the role of the Ethics office and the available tools staff members have to tackle ethical matters.
4. Management notes the Ethics Office's role in preserving and protecting the integrity of UNFPA through the financial disclosure programme. Overall, 511 disclosures were completed and 493 reviewed fully, while 50 cases were independently sampled. Management notes with some concern that 14 out of 50 sampled cases were not fully and accurately completed. Management notes that the Ethics team is working with staff to ensure full compliance to the requirements of financial disclosure. We will continue working with the Ethics Office to address this issue.
5. Moreover, management has recognized the work of the Ethics Office in supporting the organization with guidance on ethics standard setting throughout UNFPA, including the extensive review of the Policy on Protection against Retaliation.
6. Management notes that the office received three direct retaliation and four indirect retaliation related inquiries. Management also notes that a significant effort has gone towards reviewing the merits of the allegations and areas of concern. Management notes that in one of the cases, the Ethics Office found *prima facie* evidence of retaliation and referred the matter to OAIIS for investigation, which is still pending. Management finds this to be a sign that the policy and the safeguards that have been put in place are effective in addressing the issue. We commend the Ethics office on this follow-through, and management will continue to work with the Ethics Office to raise awareness and encourage the use of these services.
7. Management also notes with great appreciation the increase in training, education and outreach activities, which assisted in reinforcing the core values and principles of the United Nations and the international civil service, as well as increased knowledge of ethics-related policies. Management also positively notes that the online training programme 'Ethics and Integrity at UNFPA' had French and Spanish versions developed in 2018, which will assist in reaching more multilingual staff members in 2019.

8. Furthermore, management commends the Ethics Office with the positive results achieved in the recent 2018 Global Staff Survey. These results showed gains, compared to the 2016 survey, in the areas of awareness of the Ethics Office and its service, knowledge on how to report misconduct – and lastly, an increase in the belief that staff would be protected from retaliation for reporting wrongdoing.

9. The Ethics Office's strong collaboration within the Ethics Panel of the United Nations (EPUN) and the Ethics Network of Multilateral Organizations (ENMO) is well noted, and management commends the Ethics Adviser for successfully completing her one-year term as Chair of the ENMO Standing Membership Committee.

10. Management also takes note of the recommendations to strengthen further the UNFPA Ethics Office, including by reviewing its resources, and will take this into account in any future budget decisions, noting the value that the Ethics Office adds to the mandate of UNFPA.

11. As in previous years, UNFPA compliments the Ethics Office on continuing to strengthen the services that it provides under its mandated areas of work, and will continue to provide strong support to its work. Management looks forward to further discussing the recommendations made by the Ethics Adviser and to a continuing fruitful collaboration to foster a culture of ethics and integrity in UNFPA.
