



DP/FPA/2020/CRP.7

9 April 2020

UNFPA MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

to

Annual report of the UNFPA Ethics Office on activities in 2019 *

(**DP/FPA/2020/7**)

Agenda item 3: UNFPA – Ethics

Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS
Second regular session 2020
31 August – 4 September 2020
New York

* Reissued due to the COVID-19 impact on meetings

1. Management welcomes the new Ethics Adviser to UNFPA, and wishes to acknowledge with appreciation the work of the UNFPA Ethics Office, and the accomplishment of its mandated activities for 2019. 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 309 requests from across the organization regarding ethical issues in 2019.
3. Further, we would like to share our appreciation for the work of the Ethics Office, which has included providing guidance and advice to staff, personnel and management; the administration of the financial disclosure programme; standards development, training and education. We take note of the reported decrease in requests from advisory services from 257 in 2018 to 186 in 2019, and welcome the suggestion of further analysis and review by the Ethics Office to ascertain possible reasons for this downward trend.
4. Management notes the Ethics Office's role in preserving and protecting the integrity of UNFPA through the financial disclosure program. 515 disclosures were completed and 509 reviewed fully as 6 staff members separated from the organization before completing the form. 47 cases were independently sampled. Management notes with some concern that 10 out of 47 sampled cases were not fully and accurately completed, however are pleased that no conflict of interest was ultimately found. Management notes that the Ethics team is working with staff to ensure full compliance to the requirements of financial disclosure, and supports the suggestion of reviewing the programme in 2020 to determine whether it is fit for purpose. We will continue working with the Ethics Office to address this issue.
5. Management further commends the Ethics Adviser for her involvement in the organizational wide Culture Change initiative, and participation in facilitating cross-regional change management workshops with staff and personnel in Kenya and Dubai. We consider this involvement to be of great importance as the organization embarks on its journey to identify its organizational culture, while facilitating an enabling environment for adherence to UNFPA's values and standards.
6. Moreover, management recognizes the work of the Ethics Office in supporting the organization with guidance on ethics standard-setting throughout UNFPA, which included collaborating with UNFPA offices on 14 occasions to review, provide input and seek clarification on new and revised policies and procedures, as well as providing inputs to several other initiatives.
7. Management notes that the office received 3 direct retaliation and 6 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 the first complaint had insufficient evidence to refer the matter for investigation, and that the third complaint did not relate to alleged retaliation. It is noted however that the

second complaint resulted in recommendations for protective measures and further reference of the matter for investigation. 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 will continue to work with the Ethics office to raise awareness and encourage the use of these services.

8. Management also notes with great appreciation the focus on 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. We further positively note that compliance with the completion of the online training programme “Ethics and Integrity at the United Nations Population Fund” increased from a 21 per cent to a 50 per cent completion rate, and encourages further promotion of this training programme to staff and personnel.
 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 welcomed.
 10. Management also takes note of the focus of the Ethics Adviser to review workload and resources needed, identification of opportunities to partner with other UN Common System and UNFPA offices in training and outreach rather than to request additional resources as was previously requested by the Ethics Office.
 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.
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