



**DP/FPA/2020/CRP.7**

9 April 2020

**UNFPA MANAGEMENT RESPONSE**

to

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

**Ethics Office**

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

**Agenda item 4: UNFPA – Ethics**

Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS

Annual session 2020

1 June – 5 June 2020

New York

1. The management welcomes the new Ethics Adviser to UNFPA and wishes to acknowledge the work of the UNFPA Ethics Office and the successful execution 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. Furthermore, we would like to express our appreciation for the work of the Ethics Office, which has included the provision of guidance and advice to staff, personnel and management; the administration of the financial disclosure programme; and standards development, training and education. We note 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 role of the Ethics Office in preserving and protecting the integrity of UNFPA through the financial disclosure programme. In total, 515 disclosures were completed and 509 reviewed fully (the discrepancy is due to the fact that six staff members left the organization before completing the form). Of these, 47 cases were independently assessed. Management notes, with some concern, that 10 out of the 47 sampled cases were not fully and accurately completed; however, we are pleased that no conflict of interest was ultimately found. Management notes that the ethics team is working with staff to ensure full compliance with the requirements of financial disclosure and supports the recommendation to review the financial disclosure programme in 2020 to determine whether it is fit for purpose. We will continue working with the Ethics Office on this matter.
5. Management further commends the Ethics Adviser for her involvement in the organization-wide Culture Change initiative and in facilitating cross-regional change management workshops with staff and personnel in Kenya and Dubai. This is an integral part of efforts to shape the organizational culture and create an environment that promotes adherence to the values and standards of UNFPA.
6. Moreover, management recognizes the work of the Ethics Office in supporting the organization with guidance on ethics standard-setting throughout UNFPA; this 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 three direct retaliation and six indirect retaliation-related inquiries. Management also notes that 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 the alleged retaliation. It is noted, however, that the second complaint resulted in recommendations for protective measures and referral of the matter for further 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 of retaliation. We commend the Ethics Office on its follow-up and will continue to work with the Ethics Office to raise awareness and encourage the use of these services.

8. Management also greatly appreciates the focus on training, education and outreach activities, which has helped to reinforce the core values and principles of the United Nations and the international civil service, as well as disseminate knowledge of ethics-related policies. We also note that the completion rate for the online training programme, 'Ethics and Integrity at the United Nations Population Fund', increased from 21 per cent to 50 per cent, and encourage further promotion of this training programme to staff and personnel.
  9. The Ethics Office's close collaboration with the other members of 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 on reviewing workloads and resource needs, and on identifying opportunities for the Ethics Office to partner with other United Nations Common System and UNFPA offices for training and outreach, rather than requesting 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 within UNFPA.
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