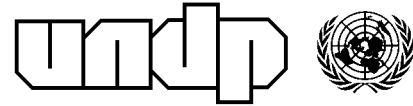


**United Nations Development Programme**

Sustainable human development



**UNDP/ADM/95/6**  
**16 January 1995**

To: All UNDP/UNFPA Staff

From: James Gustave Speth  
Administrator

Subject: **Sexual Harassment**

With the issue of circulars UNDP/ADM/93/26 of 18 May 1993 and UNDP/ADM/93/85 of 14 December 1993, UNDP/UNFPA established a firm policy that no form of sexually offensive behavior will be tolerated in the workplace or in connection with the work of UNDP/UNFPA. Such behaviour or conduct is contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and to the standards of conduct of an international civil servant. It also violates the most fundamental principles that underlie the people-centered work of sustainable human development: the concern for equality and equity among all men and women, for their physical integrity, as well as for their social well-being.

As we continue to make structural changes to enable UNDP to respond more effectively to the challenge of sustainable human development, it is critical that we recognize the importance of these same principles in the way we treat each other at work. It is therefore timely that I share with you my own views on sexual harassment in the workplace.

Sexual harassment can be a devastating experience for the individual, leaving scars of humiliation and personal violation for years. For the organization there is a cost in the form of reduced productivity, increased absenteeism and turnover and lowered staff morale. It diminishes both our capacity to be a model organization in the area of human resource management and how others perceive us as an organization, with potentially damaging consequences to our human and financial resources.

As international civil servants, each of us must be held accountable for maintaining the highest standards of behaviour towards our colleagues, bearing in mind how our conduct may be viewed by persons of different backgrounds and cultures. Managers must set personal examples in their own conduct. They are responsible for creating and maintaining a working environment free from sexual harassment. They must also be fully responsive to staff who come to them for advice on how to deal with sexual harassment problems. The UNDP Division of Personnel and the UNFPA Personnel Branch are available to provide advice and support as may be needed.

It is for me vital that UNDP/UNFPA's commitment to enforcing this policy should be beyond any doubt. I assure staff members that all formal and informal complaints will be reviewed with the utmost seriousness. The UNDP Division of Personnel, the UNFPA Personnel Branch, the Ombudsman Panel and the Grievance Panel on Sexual Harassment

will all work to ensure that the parties involved in sexual harassment complaints receive fair treatment in strict confidentiality, and that any staff member found to have engaged in such misconduct will be subject to disciplinary measures.

To ensure that the members of the Grievance Panel on Sexual Harassment are equipped to investigate cases in a sensitive and strictly confidential manner, the Division of Personnel has provided intensive specialized training to them. Members of the Ombudsman Panel have also received similar training. To facilitate resolution of informal complaints in our country offices, participants in the Operations Management Training Programme have been instructed in their role in dealing with cases of sexual harassment. The use of interpersonal communication skills as promoted through the Management Skills Programme (MSP) is essential in dealing with sexual harassment. In addition DOP is developing specific training materials to enhance staff awareness and managerial skills relevant for the implementation of UNDP/UNFPA policies to prevent sexual harassment.

I ask all staff members, especially in our country offices, to be fully conversant with these circulars on sexual harassment, and, in particular, to be aware of the various options and internal channels available to them for dealing with sexually offensive behaviour. These circulars will be issued in all four working languages of UNDP/UNFPA: English, French, Spanish and Arabic and re-circulated to all UNDP/UNFPA country offices and Headquarters locations. They may be reissued in local languages, where appropriate. Concurrently, I ask Resident Representatives to communicate to their staff their own personal commitment to the UNDP/UNFPA policy on sexual harassment.

In addition, to promote a better understanding of the UNDP/UNFPA sexual harassment policy and procedures, the Division of Personnel is preparing a brochure that can be used as a guide for all staff members. This brochure will be issued in English, French, Spanish and Arabic and distributed to all UNDP/UNFPA staff. It will also be made part of the general information package distributed to all new staff members.

As we move together toward achieving the goals of sustainable human development, let us also commit ourselves toward making UNDP/UNFPA a better, more productive and supportive working environment for all staff.