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Update on IFAD's efforts against hate speech,  
racism and other forms of discrimination

Addendum

Management response to Member States' comments

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Technical questions:

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Comments from the Netherlands	Management response
<p>The Netherlands would like to commend the Fund for its continuous efforts to enforce the United Nations Secretary-General's Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech. Nonetheless, as the results of the survey of national staff has shown, there are still improvements required. On pillar 2, internal communication, it is important as described in the action plan, to monitor the understanding and views of personnel with respect to hate speech, racism and discrimination. The Netherlands would like to propose that in these surveys, a question is added that requests information from the participants on what has or has not worked for them to improve their views on speech, racism and discrimination. With this information, the Fund can further improve its action plan.</p>	<p>IFAD thanks the Netherlands for its comments and takes note of the suggestion made with respect to future surveys. IFAD confirms that its approach and implementation of its action plan to address hate speech, racism and discrimination are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they include feedback received and align with best practices across the United Nations system.</p>
<p>With respect to pillar 3, leadership, it is important that first and foremost, a safe working environment is ensured. If employees do not feel safe, they will also not feel the freedom to share concerns with their respective managers. We would like to ask the Fund how and what actions will be taken to improve on this.</p>	<p>IFAD fully recognizes the importance of promoting and fostering a safe working environment for all its personnel. To this end, actions have been included in the plan to provide trainings to managers on how to address hate speech, racism and discrimination and have discussions with their teams on this thematic (see actions 3.1 and 3.2). The Ethics Office and several workstreams in IFAD such as the diversity, equity and inclusion working group and the workplace culture task force contribute to raising awareness on a safe working environment.</p> <p>The recent creation of an e-mail account by the task force against hate speech, racism and discrimination dedicated to receiving comments and feedback from IFAD's workforce, and the development of guidance notes will also contribute to raising awareness on how to address hate speech, racism and discrimination.</p>

<p>Furthermore, given the decentralization process, it is important to also ensure that hate speech, racism and discrimination will not be tolerated in its operations and funded activities. How will the Fund include this in the action plan? Could, similar to SEAH, other information sharing platforms be explored, such as the use of WhatsApp messages? The Netherlands would like to sincerely thank IFAD for sharing further information on the above issues and would like to reiterate its interest in and appreciation for the work undertaken thus far on hate speech, racism and other forms of discrimination.</p>	<p>As included in the plan, IFAD foresees increasing awareness of hate speech, racism and discrimination in relation to its operations and activities. Concerns can be brought to the attention of the task force through its dedicated e-mail address or through other internal reporting confidential helplines managed by the Ethics Office, such as the WhatsApp-enabled mobile phone or the Office of Audit and Oversight.</p> <p>IFAD thanks the Netherlands for its valuable comments and reiterates its commitment to the fight against hate speech, racism and discrimination in IFAD and in its funded activities and operations.</p>
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Comments from Canada	Management response
<p>We welcome IFAD's update describing how the Fund is making strides to address hate speech, racism and other forms of discrimination.</p> <p>The introduction spends a significant amount of time discussing the findings of the survey that was conducted and how it impacted/changed IFAD's plans to address hate speech, racism and other forms of discrimination in the organization. Findings in the survey demonstrate that 22% of respondents felt that they were not treated equally due to national origin (57%), followed by gender (50%), age (34%) and ethnicity (30%). Action 3.1 specifically speaks to educating managers on how to address hate speech, racism and discrimination in the workplace, however, the plan could benefit from broadening the training for everyone on topics such as unconscious bias, privilege, bystander intervention, etc.</p>	<p>Included in pillar 4 on education and awareness-raising is the creation of educational materials specifically on unconscious biases, including the development of self-assessment tools to examine one's own unconscious biases.</p> <p>While unconscious bias is a topic currently integrated into various trainings and awareness-raising events delivered by the Ethics Office, the Human Resources Division is envisaging talks and training sessions in 2023, based on the budget available. Further, a wide range of e-learning solutions on the subject are already available on the LinkedIn platform, integrated into IFAD's learning management system.</p>

Comments from Canada	Management response
<p>Though action 1.6 mentions a review of IFAD policy and procedures to appropriately address hate speech, racism and discrimination, it does not outright address the fact that 35.7% who responded said that they had witnessed colleagues being treated in a demeaning or humiliating manner by other colleagues, and also reported that the main reason for this was abuse of authority. How does IFAD intend to address the need for updates to the process for reporting acts of racism, harassment and violence and re-emphasizing what zero tolerance to abuse of power means?</p>	<p>IFAD condemns all forms of harassment and abuse of authority internally and in relation to its activities and operations. Under the helm of IFAD leadership, various workstreams such as the task force against hate speech, racism and discrimination, and the diversity, equity and inclusion working group are contributing to the promotion of a respectful workplace culture.</p> <p>Reporting channels are available to report concerns including confidential helplines managed by the Ethics Office such as the WhatsApp-enabled mobile and the Office of Audit and Oversight. A specific e-mail address has also been established by the task force against hate speech, racism and discrimination to gather IFAD-wide feedback and suggestions on the action plan and its implementation.</p>