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

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Useful references: Update on IFAD’s efforts against hate speech, racism and other forms of discrimination ([EB 2022/135/R.3](#))

Action: The Executive Board is invited to review the update.

Technical questions:

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

I. Introduction

1. In response to the United Nations Secretary-General's Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech, at the request of the Office of the President and Vice-President, a multi-divisional task force co-led by the Global Communications and Advocacy Division (COM) and the Ethics Office (ETH) was established.
2. The task force developed a corporate plan of action for IFAD based on the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech. The plan was endorsed by Management and shared with the Executive Board at its 132nd session.
3. Included in the corporate action plan as well as in the Twelfth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources (IFAD12) matrix of commitments and monitorable actions is the development of an IFAD-wide survey to assess and address the root causes and drivers of hate speech, discrimination and racism, and report key findings to the Board.
4. The survey was included as part of the corporate action plan developed by the Task Force on Hate Speech, Racism and Discrimination, co-led by ETH and COM. An IFAD-wide survey was conducted in November 2021 and the overall survey results with key findings and some recommended follow-up actions were presented to Senior Management in February 2022. The key survey results were also shared with the Executive Board at its 135th session in the Update on IFAD's Efforts against Hate Speech, Racism and Other Forms of Discrimination and feedback was gathered.
5. A principal outcome of the survey was to revise the action plan on hate speech, racism and discrimination to address the vulnerabilities identified in the survey findings. The hate speech task force met in June 2022 to review the findings and propose amendments to the action plan. The revised plan is attached (see the annex) and the proposed amendments are highlighted in bold.
6. The survey highlighted the following issues: national staff responded generally more negatively to the questions on racism and discrimination and 22 per cent of respondents did not feel that people in IFAD were treated equally. The main cause for the unequal treatment mentioned is national origin (57 per cent), followed by gender (50 per cent), age (34 per cent) and ethnicity (30 per cent). In all, 13 per cent of respondents had witnessed colleagues being treated in a demeaning or humiliating manner by other colleagues in the 12 months preceding the survey. The main reason provided (35.7 per cent) was abuse of authority, followed by gender.
7. A number of actions have been added/revised to address these areas of improvement. For example, the task force acknowledged the continuing need to inform staff and post information on the intranet on initiatives to combat hate speech, racism and discrimination. Information/blogs were posted on the intranet including a blog on the results of the survey (13 June 2022) and the launch event for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Framework for Enabling Intercultural Dialogue. This practice needs to be implemented on a continuous basis. Also, attention is given in the plan to the need to revert to multiple channels of communication to reach out to IFAD's workforce and, to this end, the task force leads also liaise with the diversity equity inclusion advocate coordinator to ensure that relevant information can also be communicated through this channel. The revised plan foresees the need to raise awareness on hate speech, racism and discrimination in all duty stations – this is particularly important given the responses from national staff.

8. The plan includes awareness-raising activities to be undertaken by managers with their teams. To this end, capacity-building activities for managers are included. It was also proposed by the task force to add to the action plan the intention to publish a guidance note in 2023 on hate speech, racism and discrimination, as well as the key issue of intersectionality, to provide concrete examples and guidance to IFAD personnel on how to handle incidents or instances of these issues.
9. Many activities in the action plan have been completed since the last update, including the dissemination of key findings of the survey to IFAD personnel (action 2.4) and the creation of an e-mail account through which the task force can receive comments and feedback (action 2.5). Other actions are ongoing, including communications to staff through the intranet on the progress of implementation of the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action (such as announcements of relevant events and blogs). Additionally, the task force decided to solicit the participation of new members, with special attention to securing participation from field-based IFAD staff.
10. The revised action plan responds to the expectation that the plan be reviewed and amended to address areas of vulnerability highlighted by the survey findings, in particular on the topic of racism and discrimination. Sharing the revised action plan with the Executive Board will give assurance to the Board of IFAD's commitment to progress with IFAD's efforts against hate speech, racism and discrimination.
11. These issues are highly prominent in the public eye and constantly evolving, and IFAD needs to be seen to be responsive to current debates and to the survey findings. IFAD will continue to devote serious attention to these issues throughout its work.

IFAD action plan to address hate speech, racism and discrimination (2022–2023) (revised)

	<i>Action</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Expected/observable results</i>	<i>Implementation timeline</i>
Pillar 1 – Policy				
1.1	President to send a letter to inform the United Nations Secretary-General of IFAD's plan to act on his request and describe actions to date.		Prepare and send letter.	Completed
1.2	Directors of COM and ETH to prepare and send a letter to the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide and forward IFAD's action plan.		Prepare and send letter.	Completed
1.3	President to share the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech and inform staff that an interdepartmental task force led by COM and ETH has been established to develop IFAD's own action plan.		Prepare and post a President's blog on the intranet.	Completed
1.4	Inform Member States of the Secretary-General's request and IFAD's plan through the Member States Interactive Platform.		Post a message on the Member States Interactive Platform.	Completed
1.5	Regularly report and update task force actions and action plan deliverables to Management and the Executive Board.		Updates prepared and shared with Management and the Executive Board.	Continuous
1.6	Ensure that IFAD policy and procedures appropriately address hate speech, racism and discrimination in order to foster an inclusive IFAD working environment.		Conduct a desk review of human resources procedures and other relevant rules and procedures and propose amendments to Management where appropriate.	2023

Pillar 2 – Internal communication				
2.1	Inform IFAD personnel on the United Nations strategy and IFAD planned actions to counter hate speech, racism and discrimination.		Post information on the intranet and explore other channels of communication.	Continuous
2.2	Ensure IFAD personnel can access relevant information on hate speech, racism and discrimination at all times, and provide an avenue for staff to voice their views on the implementation of strategic action plan.		Create a repository of education material for personnel, with a function where staff can provide comments.	2022–2023
2.3	Create a baseline to gather information from across IFAD on the prevalence and source of hate speech racism and discrimination in relation to IFAD and the working environment.		Development of an IFAD-wide survey to assess and address the root causes and drivers of hate speech, racism and discrimination.	Completed
2.4	Assess and address the root sources and causes of hate speech, racism and discrimination as identified by survey results.		Review and analyse survey results and, where appropriate, propose amendments to the action plan.	Completed
			Share survey key findings internally with IFAD personnel.	Completed
2.5	Encourage all IFAD personnel to report hate speech, racism and discrimination observed on public digital platforms in relation to IFAD operations and activities.		Create an e-mail account dedicated to the prevention of hate speech, racism and discrimination to receive comments and feedback.	Completed
			Collect data on areas of concern consider options for action.	2022–2023
2.6	Monitor the understanding and views of personnel with respect to hate speech, racism and discrimination.		Conduct regular internal pulse surveys.	2023
Pillar 3 – Leadership				
3.1	Educate managers on how to address hate speech, racism and discrimination in the workplace.		Develop specific training for managers on how to address hate speech racism and discrimination.	2023
3.2	Managers to raise awareness of hate speech, racism and discrimination in departmental/divisional workplaces in all duty stations.		Management to lead and have discussions with staff during departmental/divisional meetings on hate speech, racism, discrimination with the support of the task force where appropriate.	2022–2023

Pillar 4 – Education and awareness raising				
4.1	Increase knowledge and awareness of hate speech, racism and discrimination in IFAD and in relation to IFAD activities and operations.		Creation of digital information and educational materials for IFAD, based on United Nations products.	2022–2023
			Organize and deliver a hate speech, racism and discrimination awareness event.	2023
			Develop and publish guidance note on hate speech, intersectionality, racism and discrimination with concrete examples and information on how to handle such situations including reporting mechanisms.	2023
4.2	Increase awareness on unconscious biases.		Explore the possibility of providing personnel with self-assessment tools to examine their own biases.	2022–2023
4.3	In consultation with relevant department/divisions, develop and/or enhance mechanisms to support IFAD victims of hate speech, racism and discrimination.		Review existing support mechanisms and, where appropriate, propose improvements.	2023