
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 2023/OR/16](#))

Action: The Executive Board is invited to review the update on IFAD's efforts against hate speech, racism and discrimination.

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

I. Introduction

1. The fight against hate speech, racism and discrimination is a top priority for IFAD and for the United Nations system as a whole. IFAD's Task Force on Hate Speech, Racism and Discrimination was created in 2021 and started its work by conducting the first-ever survey of IFAD personnel's views and experience of the issues.
2. In 2024, with these concerns still high on the global agenda, a follow-up survey was launched to gather updated information from across the IFAD community. This update outlines top-level findings and the way forward.

II. Response rates and comparisons

3. The 2024 survey had a response rate of 36 per cent, which was lower than the original 2021 survey. However, because the second survey was sent to more personnel, the number of respondents was similar in both cases – 632 in 2024 and 637 in 2021. The 2024 results are compared with those of the 2021 survey and the 2022 Global Staff Survey (GSS) and are benchmarked against 14 international organizations chosen by IFAD.

III. The results of the 2024 survey

4. The key results of the 2024 survey show significant improvements.
 - 71 per cent of respondents feel that people in IFAD are treated equally – a big improvement since the 2022 GSS (+22 per cent) and since the 2021 survey (+14 per cent).
 - 79 per cent of respondents believe IFAD is committed to diversity and inclusion and values the different perspectives, knowledge and approaches of all personnel – a significant improvement since 2022 (+16 per cent) and since 2021 (+6 per cent).
 - 79 per cent of respondents feel assessments of their performance are fair and unbiased – an increase of 7 per cent since 2021 and similar to the benchmark median.
 - 73 per cent of respondents feel that assignments in their workplace are fairly distributed among colleagues, irrespective of their racial identity, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin – similar to 2021.
 - 8 per cent of respondents reported witnessing colleagues treating other colleagues in a demeaning or humiliating manner over the previous 12 months – a decrease from 13 per cent in 2021.
 - 7 per cent of respondents reported being treated in a demeaning or humiliating manner by colleagues in the last 12 months – a decrease from 11 per cent in 2021.
 - 81 per cent of respondents would report witnessing a situation of discrimination based on race/ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability or age – similar to 2021.
 - 78 per cent of respondents would know whom to contact to report an incident of hate speech at IFAD – similar to 2021.

5. In comparison to the 2021 survey and as a reflection of IFAD's increasingly decentralized operations, it was noted that responses to the 2024 survey varied among different demographics and categories of staff.
 - **Contract type.** Across the topics addressed in the survey, Junior Professional Officers responded most positively (11 percentage points above the average), while national officers responded most negatively (12 percentage points below the average).
 - **Location.** Home-based staff answered more positively (5 percentage points above the average).
 - **Age.** Staff aged under 25 answered more negatively (6 percentage points below the average).
 - **Racial identity.** Those identifying as of European origin/descent answered more positively (6 percentage points above the average), while those identifying as South Asian answered more negatively (11 percentage points below the average).
6. Two further areas were flagged for attention.
 - There was an increase in the number of people reporting having experienced hate speech in the course of their work for IFAD (6 per cent of respondents in 2024 as compared with 2 per cent in 2021). Acts of hate speech were reported as primarily being committed verbally by IFAD colleagues, often on the basis of personal factors, including national origin and age.
 - There was an increase in the number of respondents who reported feeling that their authority as supervisors had been undermined because of their racial identity, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin (14 per cent of respondents in 2024 versus 6 per cent in 2021).

IV. IFAD's overall position as shown in the 2024 survey

7. According to the findings of the 2024 survey, IFAD's position overall was in line with comparator organizations. In comparison to the 2021 survey and the 2022 GSS, responses to the 2024 survey showed positive changes in some areas, no change in others, and no areas of significant deterioration. This indicates good progress while leaving scope for ongoing improvement.
8. In comparison to the benchmark median, three questions have similar responses and no questions are ahead or behind by 5 per cent or more. In comparison to the 2021 survey, responses to six questions have improved by 5 per cent or more, nine questions have similar responses, and no questions have responses that have fallen by 5 per cent or more. In comparison with the 2022 GSS, responses to two questions have improved by 5 per cent or more, and no questions showed similar or falling responses.

V. The way forward

9. The results of the 2024 survey have informed the review and completion of IFAD's action plan to address hate speech, racism and discrimination. At IFAD, measures are now in place to create an environment where everyone feels safe to express their views and collaborate to make IFAD a better institution. IFAD has reinforced its policies and procedures to remind all personnel of their obligation to uphold the Fund's core values. Relevant information and resources are regularly shared on the IFAD intranet to combat hate speech, racism and discrimination. Staff feedback has been gathered through two surveys – an initial one in 2021 that helped shape key actions and a follow-up survey in 2024 that yielded very positive results. Furthermore, the Ethics Office consistently advises managers on how to foster a workplace free from hate speech, racism and discrimination, and has disseminated guidance and practical resources across the organization.