

11 April 2018

Dear Mr Secretary-General,

Further to your letter dated 2 March 2018 to all Members of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, on the issue of combating sexual harassment and your report issued in February 2017 entitled "Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse: A New Approach ", I would like to update you on the concrete steps being taken by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to further strengthen its rules, procedures and processes to better address sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA).

IFAD's Ethics Office promotes and upholds the highest ethical standards of the organization and manages a mandatory annual declaration process that requires staff to confirm their commitment to abide by the IFAD Code of Conduct. Training on the Code of Conduct and the anti-harassment awareness programme is also mandatory.

In July 2017, important steps were taken to introduce SEA as a specific form of misconduct in our Human Resources Procedures and to adopt comprehensive whistleblowing procedures to protect individuals reporting such suspected misconduct from retaliation. Those affected by misconduct can avail themselves of support from resource persons including the Ethics Officer, human resources officers, supervisors/managers, the Staff Counsellor, a psychologist and a staff representative of the Executive Committee of the IFAD Staff Association.

Should a staff member become aware of a potential act of sexual harassment and/or SEA, or have reason to suspect that such acts have been or are being committed either at IFAD or in connection with an IFAD-funded or IFAD-managed activity or operation, they have a duty to report their concern to the Ethics Office or the Office of Audit and Oversight using the confidential hotlines and reporting channels available on the IFAD intranet and IFAD website.

In the field, IFAD Country Offices and hubs will have senior focal points trained by the Ethics Office to receive allegations of sexual harassment and/or SEA in relation to IFAD-funded projects in IFAD's official languages and in the local language if necessary.

IFAD ensures that allegations of sexual harassment and SEA receive an immediate response and credible allegations are promptly addressed by investigators trained in such sensitive matters. Staff and all persons working for IFAD have a duty to cooperate unreservedly with the Ethics Office and the investigation functions.

His Excellency
António Guterres
Secretary-General
United Nations
New York

In January 2018, I established a Multidivisional Task Force led by the Director of Ethics. The task force is composed of representatives of the Office of the General Counsel, Human Resources Division, Office of Audit and Oversight, Communications Division and Programme Management Department and is mandated to review institutional and operational processes, policies and procedures and formulate recommendations to improve IFAD's prevention and response to sexual harassment and SEA.

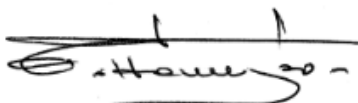
As a first step, the Task Force has prepared a Sexual Harassment/SEA Policy which consolidates and defines the obligations of IFAD, its staff and its partners and sets out the applicable rules, procedures and approach with respect to sexual harassment and SEA. This includes performing rigorous SEA risk assessments for all projects funded by IFAD and ensuring that SEA risk assessments are also a part of the supervision missions we conduct on project activities being implemented by our partners. Consistent with IFAD's transparency efforts, the Sexual Harassment/SEA Policy will be published on IFAD's Member States Interactive Platform.

IFAD's zero-tolerance of sexual harassment and SEA will be reflected in its agreements and contracts. Recipients of IFAD funding will also be required to include similar provisions in the contracts issued to their own personnel and suppliers where these are funded by IFAD. I strongly believe that IFAD's growing presence in the field will also contribute to our efforts to support governments in our joint commitment to protect the most vulnerable rural poor populations.

Our outreach and communication efforts will be reinforced through appropriate tools and channels. I have informed IFAD staff that sexual harassment and SEA are not tolerated by our organization and have answered questions from staff about IFAD's approach and its prevention and response measures. In this regard, a paper will also be submitted to the IFAD Executive Board at its April 2018 session to provide information on the steps being taken to further strengthen IFAD's approach.

As President of this organization, I have a responsibility to my staff and to IFAD's stakeholders and partners to ensure that there is no place in our organization for any form of harassment, including sexual harassment and SEA, either at our duty stations or associated with our investments.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Hounbo", with a horizontal line drawn through it.

Gilbert F. Hounbo