

## **IFAD President's written statement outlines policy for prevention of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse**

Since taking office as President of IFAD in April 2017, I have remained committed to fortifying and furthering the impact of our investments in rural people. Under my leadership, IFAD has fully mainstreamed women's empowerment throughout its portfolio of work. Our focus on the 1.7 billion women and girls who live in rural areas of developing countries, demonstrates our devotion to building a world where everyone has equal opportunity to thrive and where harassment, violence and abuse are not tolerated.

At IFAD, we recognize staff as our most valuable asset and we are committed to establishing a productive, creative and safe work environment to achieve our objectives. IFAD has an important obligation to protect its staff, but also to serve the interests of millions of rural people we seek to support through our mandate. We cannot and will not allow anything to hinder IFAD's work to reach those people who are the most marginalized, who live in extreme poverty and hunger.

IFAD does not tolerate any form of harassment within the workplace or associated with the work performed on its behalf at headquarters or in the field. This includes any form of harassment, including sexual harassment in the workplace, or sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) towards beneficiaries in the context of IFAD's operations.

Most recently, IFAD has introduced a policy on preventing and responding to SEA, which underscores our fundamental principles and core values of integrity, respect, professionalism and focus on results, which are reflected in the organization's Code of Conduct.

The policy outlines IFAD's no-tolerance stance for sexual harassment, SEA and any other forms of misconduct; defines the obligations of IFAD staff and individuals hired by IFAD under a non-staff contract, including vendors and suppliers; and provides an approach in preventing and responding to sexual harassment and SEA.

This policy takes into account the processes that other organizations and international financial institutions have in place on SEA, as well as the release of the UN Secretary-General's report in February 2017 entitled "Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse: A New Approach (A/71/818)", when IFAD took immediate steps to embody in its disciplinary framework a specific misconduct of SEA using the UN definition.

In addition, in July 2017, IFAD introduced whistle-blowing protection procedures against retaliation. These procedures aim to further encourage those who have concerns or suspicions of misconduct involving IFAD to report them.

In January 2018, I established an internal multidivisional SEA task force to review and make recommendations to strengthen institutional and operational processes, policies and procedures to improve IFAD's prevention and response to sexual harassment and SEA. The task force is led by the Director of Ethics and composed of staff from across IFAD.

In my own message to staff on 4 March 2018, I reminded them of our no tolerance stance at IFAD, including SEA prevention. I also outlined how to report allegations of misconduct, the approach IFAD has to protect staff from retaliation, support for victims and the disciplinary proceedings.

We remain committed to promoting an inclusive environment, where every person is valued and respected, and will continue to work with all staff to create a safe and dynamic workplace that is vital in delivering our support to millions of rural people.