



#NOspaceForSexualHarrassment

Throughout its history, the feminist movement has highlighted and condemned violence and discriminatory practices against women. Over time, this call was taken up by various international organisations, cooperation bodies, and states, who included the prevention and punishment of sexual harassment – as an expression of gender-based violence – into their agenda around the guarantee and protection of fundamental rights.

At its International Labour Conference in 1985, International Labour Organization (ILO) pointed out that sexual harassment is:

“... a violation of the rights of male and female workers... it constitutes a problem of safety, health and discrimination; that is, an unacceptable employment situation and a serious form of violence.”

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) is committed to fulfilling all human rights. Our work is based on the core values of social democracy – freedom, justice and solidarity. We work in the spirit of these values and ideals so that we can live in a society that treats all people with dignity and respect. We do not tolerate any form of abuse and we reject any type of violence or discrimination.

We recognise sexual harassment as an expression of gender-based violence. And as such we aim to prevent and address sexual harassment through policies and strategies that take into account the effect of power, privilege, class, race and gender on those who are violated and those who perpetuate violations.

The sexual harassment policy is an extension of this commitment.

The objectives of the policy

The policy has the following objectives:

- a. To promote an environment free from gender-based discrimination and violence, by encouraging the dignified treatment of all people in FES.
- b. To prevent discrimination, gender-based violence and sexual harassment incidents in the workplace and in the spaces we occupy.
- c. To define the procedure for investigating gender-based violence, abuse and sexual harassment cases that involve FES' workers and/or members of partner organisations, as well as the people who participate in activities organised by FES.

- d. To build a comprehensive policy regarding spaces and activities free from sexual harassment for FES South Africa and the Trade Union Competence Centre for Sub-Saharan Africa.

Principles underpinning the policy

The following principles underpin the sexual harassment policy:

- **Prevention:** FES will disseminate information and train FES staff about gender-based violence and sexual harassment so as to prevent any incident of violence. This includes, for example, discriminatory comments or sexist jokes / pranks. We seek to create a zero-tolerance culture towards harassment and sexual abuse in all FES departments and activities.
 - a. FES does not downplay gender-based violence and sexual harassment. Therefore, we are putting permanent measures in place to prevent situations of violence during FES activities.
 - b. FES staff will have access to training on gender-based violence.
 - FES will adopt a gender mainstreaming perspective to promote gender equality in all our activities and partnerships.
 - FES staff and its cooperating partners must actively commit to preventing gender-based violence and sexual harassment.
 - FES staff and partners will be encouraged to continue to discuss the topic of sexual harassment in training sessions as well as in team meetings to reinforce the zero-tolerance policy against sexual harassment.

Gender equality: FES fosters and promotes the participation of women and non-binary persons in all spaces and activities, and opposes any gender-based discrimination that may occur in FES activities.

Diversity and inclusion: FES will defend gender equality, as well as the right to diversity and inclusivity. All participants will be protected from any form of abuse during FES activities and projects.

Confidentiality and respect: FES will ensure that the identity of any person lodging a complaint is protected. Similarly, we will respect the will of this person in terms of the actions they might decide to take – taking into account the seriousness of the situation. FES will also protect any other information the person wants to keep confidential.

Speed of the process: Sexual harassment cases applicable to this policy do not expire and the complaint will be taken seriously, regardless of the time that has passed since it was lodged. However, once a complaint is lodged, FES will follow a meticulous procedure. The investigation will be conducted as speedily as possible.

Non-revictimisation: FES will prevent the person who was the victim of sexual harassment from being revictimised while the case is being investigated. In addition, we will avoid unnecessary requests to narrate the facts again, as well as public exposure of the identity of the person who lodged the complaint, report or information.