



World Health  
Organization

# CODE OF CONDUCT

## To Prevent Harassment, including Sexual Harassment, at WHO events

### PURPOSE

WHO is committed to enabling events at which everyone can participate in an inclusive, respectful and safe environment. WHO events are guided by the highest ethical and professional standards, and all participants are expected to behave with integrity and respect towards all participants attending or involved with any WHO event.

### APPLICABILITY

The Code of Conduct applies to any WHO event, which shall include meetings, conferences and symposia, assemblies, receptions, scientific and technical events, expert meetings, workshops, exhibits, side events and any other forum organized, hosted or sponsored in whole or part by WHO wherever it takes place, and any event or gathering that takes place on WHO premises whether or not WHO is organizing, hosting or sponsoring.

The Code of Conduct applies to all participants at a WHO event, including all persons attending or involved in any capacity in WHO event.

Any other entity responsible for a WHO event commits to implementing the Code of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct is not legal or prescriptive in nature. It supplements, and does not affect, the application of other relevant policies, regulations, rules and laws, including laws regulating the premises in which the WHO event takes place and any applicable host country agreements.

### PROHIBITED CONDUCT

Harassment is any behaviour that is directed at another person and has the effect of offending, humiliating or intimidating that person; and the person engaging in the behaviour knows or reasonably ought to know would offend, humiliate or intimidate that other person. Harassment in any form because of gender, gender expression, gender identity, race, religion or belief, nationality, ethnic or social origin, age, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, language or any other reason is prohibited at WHO events.

Sexual harassment is a specific type of prohibited conduct. Sexual harassment is any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation. Sexual harassment may involve any conduct of a verbal, nonverbal or physical nature, including written and electronic communications, and may occur between persons of the same or different genders.

Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

Making derogatory or demeaning comments about someone's sexual orientation or gender identity

Name-calling or using slurs with a gender/sexual connotation

Making sexual comments about appearance, clothing or body parts

Making comments about or rating a person's attractiveness

Asking for sexual favours or repeatedly asking a person for dates

Staring in a sexually suggestive manner

Unwelcome touching, including pinching, patting, rubbing or purposefully brushing up against a person

Making inappropriate sexual gestures, such as pelvic thrusts

Sharing sexual or lewd anecdotes or jokes

Sending sexually suggestive communications in any format

Sharing or displaying sexually inappropriate images or videos in any format

Attempted or actual sexual assault, including rape

## COMPLAINT PROCESS

A participant who feels that they have been harassed at a WHO event may report the matter to the organizer of the WHO event or relevant security authority, and a participant who witnesses such harassment should make such a report. The organizer of the WHO event will be expected to take appropriate action in accordance with its applicable policies, regulations and rules.

Examples of appropriate action may include, but are not limited to:

Requesting the offender to immediately stop the offending behavior



Suspending or terminating the offender's access to the WHO event or refusing registration at future WHO events, or both



Conveying the complaint to any investigative or disciplinary authority with jurisdiction over the person accused of harassment



Conveying a report to the employer or entity with jurisdiction over the person accused of harassment for appropriate follow-up action



The victim of alleged harassment may also seek help from other relevant authorities, such as the police, bearing in mind the applicable legal framework. A participant should never knowingly make a false or misleading claim about prohibited conduct.

## PROHIBITION OF RETALIATION

Threats, intimidation or any other form of retaliation against a participant who has made a complaint or provided information in support of a complaint are prohibited. WHO or other entity responsible for a WHO event will take any reasonable appropriate action needed to prevent and respond to retaliation, in accordance with its applicable policy, regulations and rules.



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