



# External Review of Workplace Culture and Ethical Climate at World Food Programme

Final submission for Joint Executive Board/WFP Management Working Group on Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Abuse of Power and Discrimination

Presented September 2019



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## Contents

Executive Summary .....	2
Introduction .....	4
Methodology .....	6
Data Collection Approach .....	6
Safe and Harmonious Workplace Survey .....	7
Safe and Harmonious Workplace Virtual Focus Groups .....	8
One-on-One Interviews .....	9
Findings .....	14
WFP's culture and ethical climate .....	14
Leadership at WFP .....	22
Abusive behaviour .....	26
Abuse of authority .....	28
Harassment.....	34
Discrimination .....	38
Sexual harassment .....	44
Retaliation.....	50
Reporting.....	56
Recommended areas of focus .....	64



# Executive Summary

As a result of the 2018 GSS and recommendations of the Ethics Office through its last three annual reports, WFP launched a tender in November 2018 for an independent consulting firm to conduct a “deeper dive” survey of WFP’s workplace culture and ethical climate. Willis Towers Watson (WTW) was selected.

In April 2019, at the request of the Joint Working Group on Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Abuse of Power and Discrimination (JWG), the scope of the work was expanded. In addition to the survey, one-on-one interviews and focus groups were included in the scope. The JWG is a joint body comprising WFP Executive Board and WFP management representatives to review issues of abusive behavior and under reporting within WFP and recommend corrective actions. The external review results will feed in to the JWG’s work and inform its recommendations.

WFP employees had the opportunity to participate in the review via the online Safe and Harmonious Workplace Survey, a number of virtual focus groups and one-on-one interviews, all of which were voluntary. All three initiatives had good levels of participation, indicating employees were motivated to share their perspective as well as giving the findings robustness and representation of employee experiences across the organisation.

The story of the employee at WFP (as analysed through this external review) has two aspects. The first is one of strong cross-cultural collaboration, with immense pride regarding the work that the organisation does as well as the positive contribution it makes to people’s lives. This dedication to the cause is a strong motivator for people to remain with the organisation. The second aspect however, is the experience of WFP as a hierarchical, and task-oriented organisation. This combination of factors is depicted by participants as resulting in an environment dominated by leaders using the power and authority of their role to drive task completion rather than considering how the tasks are completed and inspiring their teams to perform.

While many perceive leaders as being committed to taking action on improper behaviour and setting the right example, not all who participated in this review share this view. Those who indicate they have experienced or witnessed abusive

behaviour identify senior leaders and managers/ supervisors as the main perpetrators of this abuse. Leadership was also indicated by focus group participants as the most important area for improvement at WFP. This indicates that employees are expecting a lot more from their leaders than commitment to taking action and setting the right example. Areas such as fairness and equality, especially in the talent acquisition and management process, transparency regarding decision making and greater consultation with employees are also all considered as lacking. Employees are expecting leaders to walk the talk and demonstrate their commitment to taking action on these issues by making clear and tangible changes.

This report presents some startling results concerning the experience of abusive behaviour, with a considerable number of survey respondents reporting they have either personally experienced or witnessed at least one type of abusive behaviour during their time at WFP. The abusive behaviour was indicated to occur on WFP premises in the vast majority of cases. Demographic breakdowns indicate that abusive behaviour was experienced/witnessed more amongst respondents working in HQ than in the field, particularly in cases of harassment and sexual harassment. More respondents who work in Resource Management and



OS Operations Services report experiencing or witnessing abusive behaviour than other areas of the organisation. Women are also more likely to experience or witness abusive behaviour compared to men.

Of the five types of abusive behaviour considered in this exercise (harassment, sexual harassment, abuse of authority, discrimination and retaliation), abuse of authority was the most referenced form of misconduct with 35% of survey respondents (2,848 people) claiming to have experienced or witnessed it. The main form of abuse of authority involves unjustified preferential treatment of certain colleagues. Employees perceive this type of abuse of authority as leaders demonstrating favouritism. They observe this most predominately in the talent acquisition and management processes including recruitment, performance evaluation, promotion, reassignment and contract renewal.

The second most referenced form of abusive behaviour was harassment, with 29% of survey respondents (2,365 people) indicating they had experienced/witnessed harassment while working at WFP. Harassment was also a key topic raised by interviewees and includes overt and covert harassment, usually perpetrated by senior leaders or managers/supervisors. However, colleague harassment was also reported. Overt harassment refers to generally aggressive behaviour such as shouting and yelling, making jokes at the expense of others, ongoing criticism, and putting people down in front of peers. Covert harassment includes more subtle forms of bullying and making people feel excluded from the team.

Survey findings also indicate that discrimination is widely experienced across respondents, with 23% (1,855 people) of respondents indicating they experienced or witnessed discrimination. Discrimination based on contract type was the most common form of discrimination in the survey, and also raised as an issue in almost every interview. Consultants and those of short term contracts are perceived as being most at risk of experiencing abuse due to the lack of job security. Discrimination based on nationality/ethnic origin and race as well as gender were also reported by large numbers of survey respondents.

Sexual harassment was reported as occurring the least of the five types of abusive behaviour explored, with 8% of respondents (641 people) indicating they have experienced or witnessed sexual harassment at WFP. Women indicate they have experienced or witnessed sexual harassment significantly more than men (13% of women vs. 5% of men). The most common form of sexual harassment mentioned was suggestive sexual comments or jokes, which speaks to the type of inappropriate interactions that are indicated as occurring within WFP.

Employees shared that retaliation is indeed an element of the culture at WFP, with 12% of survey respondents (950 people) indicating they have experienced or witnessed retaliation. Retaliation is experienced in three main ways, including retaliation that impacts an employee's work or career prospects, retaliation through exclusion and retaliation through harassment. Fear of retaliation was also selected as the primary reason for not reporting other forms of abusive behaviour.

Finally, reporting was a topic employees had strong opinions on, with most sharing that there is a lot of improvement required in this area. Survey results indicate that the majority of abusive behaviour goes unreported, with reporting rates ranging from 17-36% depending on the type of abuse. To encourage more people to report, employees need to be confident the process is completely confidential and in the leaders' commitment that appropriate action will be taken if abuse is substantiated. Currently, the perceived lack of accountability and action taken to sanction perpetrators of abusive behaviour sends a message that reporting will not make a difference, and in some cases will be more detrimental to the reportee than the accused.

As outlined above, the findings of this external review have identified a number of cultural challenges within WFP that require systemic overhaul across leadership, talent management, HR policies and processes regarding the enforcement of behavioural standards as well as the approach to reporting and investigation of abusive behaviour. The key goals of the improvement effort needs to be to increase leadership effectiveness, create greater equity, fairness and transparency and most importantly more accountability regarding decisions and behaviour across all levels at WFP.

# Introduction

Following the results of its latest annual Global Staff Survey (GSS), the World Food Programme (WFP) identified the need to conduct an external review of its culture and ethical climate with a focus on harassment, sexual harassment, abuse of authority, discrimination and retaliation (collectively referred to as “abusive behaviour” – please find definitions of all type of abusive behaviors considered on page 5).

In the 2018 edition of WFP’s GSS, employees were asked about WFP’s standards of conduct. Amongst other questions, respondents were asked whether they had experienced or witnessed harassment, sexual harassment, or fraud/corruption on the job within the past year. The results are a cause for concern. Almost one in five respondents reported that they had either witnessed or experienced harassment, while 5% witnessed or experienced sexual harassment. Fraud or corruption was witnessed by 9%. Less than half (only 48%) agreed that it is safe to speak up at WFP. The GSS had an excellent overall participation rate of 85%, which indicates that these results are representative for the organisation<sup>1</sup>. Yet, these results stand in stark contrast to the low number of harassment reports received by WFP in 2018. In response to the open question “if you could change ONE thing at WFP to make it a great place to work, it would be” text analysis shows that “respect and ethics” was the most often-mentioned topic. Almost one in five respondents who left a comment (18%) talked about respect and ethics. The sentiment of these comments was generally negative (Figure 1).

The findings of the GSS raise a number of concerns. First, it is unclear how the discrepancy between GSS results and the number of reported cases received by WFP can be explained. Do employees refrain from reporting cases of abusive behaviour? And if so, what are the main reasons that employees do not report? Second, if employees experience abusive behaviours that go unreported, this implies that WFP has only limited visibility on the prevalence and characteristics of different types of abusive conduct. For example, what kind of abusive situations do employees experience or witness? Is the abuse perpetrated by WFP employees or externals? Does it take place at the workplace or elsewhere? Third, the GSS results raise the question of whether all employees are aware which behaviours constitute harassment and sexual harassment according to WFP. Anecdotal evidence from this

review suggests, across different cultures, the understanding of harassment and sexual harassment is not always aligned, and employees might have misinterpreted the GSS questions, leading them to report that they have experienced or witnessed abusive behaviour while, according to WFP’s guidelines, this is not the case.



Figure 1: Sentiment-coloured code cloud as analysed by VERA<sup>1</sup> for the open comments in answer to the GSS question “If you could change ONE thing at WFP to make it a great place to work, it would be:” The size of the word indicates how often the topic was mentioned, while a darker colour indicates a more negative sentiment in the responses on this topic.

## Most frequently mentioned themes in the 2018 GSS qualitative data

- Respect & Ethics 18% of comments
- Geographical aspects 17% of comments
- Career and Mobility 15% of comments

<sup>1</sup> In comparison, Willis Towers Watson’s Global International Organisations Norm 2019 shows that International Organisations on average achieve an 81% response rate in similar initiatives. The WTW Global International Organisations Norm 2019 contains data from 19,383 employees surveyed by WTW, working at 12 international organisations around the world.

<sup>2</sup> VERA is a software programme with the ability to analyse multilingual written comments in 40 languages developed in collaboration with Inria (the French research institute for digital sciences). Its codification process relies on a dedicated knowledge-based lexicon specifically developed for employee research. This lexicon is able to detect words and understand the concepts they denote based on their context of occurrence.

To address the above concerns, WFP commissioned Willis Towers Watson (WTW) to perform an independent external review of WFP's culture and ethical climate. The first goal of this review was to gain more insight into employee perceptions of WFP's general culture and ethical climate, and how these perceptions differ from WFP's desired state. The second purpose was to quantify more accurately the prevalence of harassment, sexual harassment, abuse of authority, discrimination and retaliation in WFP, and to better understand which types of behaviours occur and how employees experience them. The third goal was to understand how the process for reporting abusive behaviour is perceived, to gain insight in employees' reasons to refrain from reporting, and to identify how the process can be improved.

The external review is comprised of three components. First, a survey was designed to delve more deeply into WFP's workplace culture and in particular issues of abusive behaviour. Second, a number of virtual focus groups were organized where employees could have an online dialogue about WFP's culture and abusive behaviour with a WTW moderator. Finally, employees who had experienced or witnessed abusive behaviour could get in touch directly with WTW for a one-on-one interview to share their experience. The survey, focus groups, and one-on-one interviews were open for the voluntary participation of all eligible<sup>1</sup> WFP employees. It was made clear to employees that all three were fully confidential, and completely anonymous in the case of the focus groups, meaning that WFP is not able to identify who participated or to trace back the responses of individual employees.

In this report, WTW will outline the main results of this external review of workplace culture and ethical climate at WFP. The report starts with a more detailed description of the three methods that were used to gather employee feedback (survey, focus groups and interviews). Subsequently, the main findings are reported, starting with a general description of employee perceptions around WFP's culture and ethical climate, followed by a deep dive in the various abusive behaviours that were examined as well as the reporting process. The report concludes with recommended areas of focus and actions to improve.

<sup>1</sup> Please refer to the "Methods" section of this report for the eligibility criteria.

## ABUSIVE BEHAVIOUR DEFINED

### HARASSMENT

"any improper conduct that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offense or humiliation to another person".

### SEXUAL HARASSMENT

"any unwelcome sexual advance, verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, be it an act of sexual violence or any other behaviour of a sexual nature, that might reasonably cause offense or humiliation to another person".

### ABUSE OF AUTHORITY

"the improper use of a position of influence, power or authority against another WFP employee. This is particularly serious when a WFP employee uses his or her influence, power or authority to improperly influence the career or employment conditions of another WFP employee, such as their appointment, assignment, contract renewal, professional development or promotion. Abuse of authority may also include conduct that creates a hostile or offensive work environment, such as the use of intimidation, threats, blackmail or coercion."

### DISCRIMINATION

"any unfair treatment or arbitrary distinction in the workplace, based on a person's race, sex, gender, religion, belief, nationality, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, age, language, social origin, or other status".

### RETALIATION

"any direct or indirect detrimental action recommended, threatened or taken towards an individual who, in good faith, has reported misconduct or cooperated with a duly authorized investigation, audit or proactive integrity review (in practicality)."

# Methodology

## Data Collection Approach

Perceptions and experiences of WFP employees presented in this report were captured using three different methods of data collection, all running within the same timeframe: the Safe and Harmonious Workplace Survey, Safe and Harmonious Workplace virtual focus groups and one-on-one Interviews. All three were announced to WFP employees in an all-staff town hall on 27 June, followed by an all-staff email sent out by the Ethics Office and posters visible at main WFP locations (Figure 2). Outlined below is a detailed description of the approach taken to each of the methods.

It is important to note that an investigation of the experiences shared by employees was not part of this

review, as such key themes presented are based only on the feedback, experiences, perceptions and opinions of employees as opposed to substantiated cases of abusive behaviour. Further, despite offering three different data collection approaches, not all employees participated. As stated, the results presented reflect the experiences and perceptions of those that participated. It is not possible to say if these are consistent with those that did not participate. Nevertheless, the absolute scores of reported abusive behavior are significant enough to be considered with great care. To encourage greater participation in future research on this topic, it is critical that WFP takes the feedback provided seriously and takes steps to improve the culture of abusive behaviour at WFP. Regarding the analysis methods used, for the Quantitative data the following steps were taken:

- 1) Following the close of the Safe and Harmonious Workplace Survey, the data was processed for all questions asked of respondents via WTW's Employee Engagement Software
- 2) For questions with a favourable response scale, the survey data was reported based on the Total Favourable score, which combines the two most favourable scale-point responses (typically 'Agree' and 'Tend to Agree' depending on the scale used)
- 3) Responses to questions were then reviewed for demographic differences e.g. Tenure, Grade etc. and in some cases some cross-tabulations (see WFP's culture and ethical climate and Leadership at WFP sections)
- 4) Responses were tested for statistical significance (indicated with asterisks throughout the report). These are meaningful differences, where we can be 95% confident that the result did not occur by chance. The cut-off for significance varies according to the size of the groups being compared - small groups requiring a bigger difference for the result to be significant.

### For the Qualitative data:

- 1) Open comments from all three methods of data collection were considered



Figure 2: poster announcing the External Review to all WFP Employees.

- 2) Respondent open-comment responses submitted via the Safe and Harmonious Workplace Survey (approx. 12,000 comments) were analysed by VERA software (see footnote on page 4)
- 3) The open comments cited throughout the report were selected by VERA as representative based on its proprietary algorithm. Further comments were chosen from all three methods of data collection to illustrate a point made by the Quantitative Research
- 4) Analysis of responses received during the Virtual Focus Groups were conducted via a platform called Remesh (see next page for more detail on this platform).

### Safe and Harmonious Workplace Survey

The Safe and Harmonious Workplace Survey was designed to efficiently gather quantitative opinion data from a large and representative group of WFP employees. Hence, the core part of the survey consisted of a range of statements to which employees could indicate their level of agreement. A definition of 'WFP senior management' was provided to respondents at the beginning of the survey and on the relevant pages where the questions referenced this term. The definition was as follows: "WFP senior management' refers to Regional Directors, Deputy Regional Directors, Country Directors, Deputy Country Directors, HQ Divisional Directors, and any other WFP employees at level D-1 and above." Definitions for 'other managers' and 'supervisors' were not included, but were referred to 'as those in positions of leadership' through introductory text that also appeared on the page where the questions referenced these terms. In addition, a number of open comment questions were asked where employees could elaborate on their responses and provide WFP with actionable recommendations.

This topical survey was designed to measure a wide range of opinions around WFP's culture and ethical climate. First, all respondents were presented with a set of general questions about WFP's culture, including the behaviour of managers, leaders and teams, as well as the likelihood that a range of unethical behaviours would occur at WFP. Subsequently, the survey zoomed in on harassment,



sexual harassment, abuse of authority, discrimination, and retaliation, each time providing a clear definition of which behaviours are classified as abusive in line with WFPs Standard of Conduct. For each type of abusive behaviour, only respondents who indicated they had either witnessed or experienced this type of behaviour during their time with WFP, were asked to provide further details, i.e., what did they experience/witness, who was the main perpetrator, where did it take place, and how did they experience the reporting process. One of the limitations of the survey design that needs to be kept in mind is that one of the key questions that was asked for each area of abusive behaviour was 'During your time at WFP, have ever experienced OR witnessed [type of abusive behaviour]. By asking this as a combined question it means that we are not able to explore the results of those that experienced abusive behaviour separately to those that witnessed it. Another possible limitation of this review is that time bound questions were not used. This means it is not possible to determine when the abusive behaviour was experienced or witnessed. It was a deliberate decision by WFP not to make the questions time bound as they were interested to understand all experienced/witnessed abusive behaviour'.

This may have implications for the results, in that respondents could have been referring to historical events. However, findings from all three methods of data collection as a whole indicate that the topic is still relevant today.

The survey closed with a set of general questions, asked to all respondents, about reporting abusive behaviour at WFP. Finally, all respondents were asked for concrete recommendations on how to improve reporting at WFP, and ensure a safe and harmonious workplace in the future, via two open questions.

The survey was precoded<sup>1</sup> with HRIS information received by WFP HR for 17,599 employees who had joined the organisation before 30 April 2019<sup>2</sup>. It was open between 15 and 28 July 2019 in English, French, Arabic and Spanish. Employees with e-mail addresses were invited to participate through an invitation and several reminder e-mails, while employees without e-mail could obtain their individual password from their local representative. 46% of WFP employees participated in the survey<sup>3</sup> (N=8,137; Figure 3). This is considered a good response rate for a topical survey focused on sensitive areas, and well above<sup>4</sup> the statistics necessary to conduct meaningful, relevant analysis.

## Safe and Harmonious Workplace Virtual Focus Groups

A virtual focus group platform was used to give large groups of employees the opportunity to anonymously share their experience of WFP's culture and abusive behaviour at WFP. The virtual focus group technology has the capacity to interactively collect quantitative and qualitative data through a mix of open comment and polling questions and provides an open and transparent experience that mirrors that of face-to-face focus groups. In addition, although a discussion guide is prepared in advance, the interactive nature of the session means the moderator is in a dialogue with the participants allowing the session to be guided by the responses of the group. The technology allows the moderator to drill into topics that arise from the group to ask clarifying questions and explore important topics in more detail.

During a virtual focus group, the moderator asks a question to all participants. This can be a closed question, such as a demographic question, to which all participants can select their answer. Alternatively, the moderator can ask an open question. In this case, all participants have some time to type their answer. Subsequently, participants are presented with pairs of others' responses, and decide for each pair which response they agree with most. Based on these decisions, the focus group software calculates for each response how "popular" it is, meaning that it was often chosen by other participants as the one they most agreed with, as well as what the "consensus" around this response was, meaning that many others agreed with it, rather than some agreeing and some disagreeing. Popularity and consensus are both expressed by a number ranging between 0 and 100. These numbers can be interpreted as the mean and standard deviation of participants' perception of the response, respectively.

All employees can enter their responses at the same time, this means that all 136 participants in the English focus group can participate and be heard enabling the collection of vast amounts of data in a short space of time.

All WFP employees with access to e-mail (N=17,178 employees have a WFP e-mail address) were invited to participate in the virtual focus groups and were encouraged to share their experience of direct or witnessed harassment, sexual harassment, abuse of authority, discrimination or retaliation at the WFP. Participants were

<sup>1</sup> Each employee invited to participate was uploaded in the respondent database with pre-populated demographic information e.g. age, tenure etc., as provided by WFP HR, for the purposes of group analysis.

<sup>2</sup> Due to a miscommunication, unfortunately consultants who had their mandatory service break on 30 April were not invited to participate in the survey. Consultants who were on their service break at this time and indicated their willingness to participate were invited to the focus groups or one-on-one interviews, as appropriate.

<sup>4</sup> Only a 2% sample is required (n=376 responses) for a population of 17,599 employees in order to have a representative view of the Overall organisation.

able to access the session via a generic link that was included in an e-mail invitation.

In total, three 60-minute focus groups were delivered in three different languages (English, Spanish, French) on 23 and 25 July 2019. The focus groups were moderated by trained Willis Towers Watson consultants and were fully anonymous, i.e., it was not possible for either WFP or WTW to identify participants. In total, 136 people participated in the English focus group, 35 in the French focus group and 20 in the Spanish. Participants came from across the organization (Figure 3). Questions were not compulsory, and there was a time limit to respond, which differed depending on the complexity of the question asked.

### One-on-One Interviews

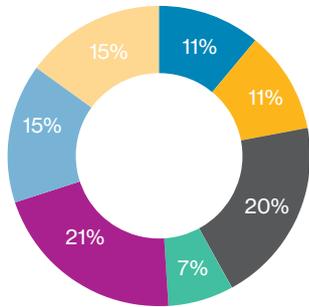
All WFP employees (n=17,599) were invited to participate in One-on-One interviews via the global announcement made on 27 June 2019. Employees could voluntarily sign up for an interview if they had experienced or witnessed harassment, sexual harassment, abuse of authority, discrimination or retaliation at the workplace. To participate, employees could contact Willis Towers Watson directly through e-mail. Participants engaged in 30-45 minute interviews with independent consultants from WTW with degrees in Psychology. An interview script was developed and followed for each interview to ensure consistency in approach.

In total, 95 individuals requested an interview and 78 interviews were conducted. 17 people who requested interviews either did not arrive at the agreed time or did not respond to emails offering interview times. The names and identifying information of participants has been kept confidential. The participants were from across the organisation, however the largest representation was from HQ, with 41% of interview requests coming from HQ whereas only 11% of WFP employees work at the headquarters (Figure 3). The interviews took place between 15 July and 6 August 2019.



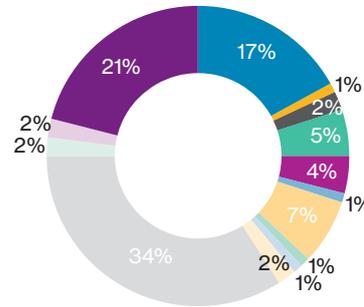
# Survey descriptives

FIGURE 3:  
Description of the participants of the Safe and Harmonious Workplace Survey (N=8,137)



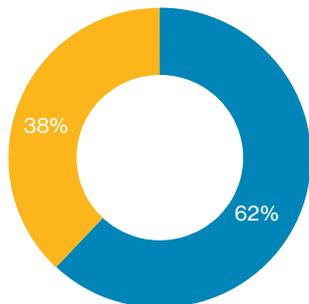
### REGION

- HQ & WFP Offices (N=913)
- RBJ (N=925)
- RBC (N=1,593)
- RBP (N=555)
- RBN (N=1,742)
- RBB (N=1,196)
- RBD (N=1,200)



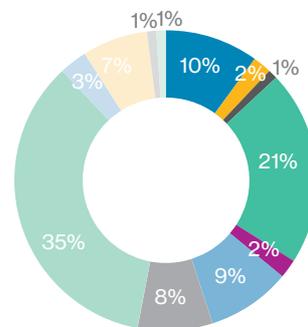
### FUNCTIONAL AREA

- Administration (N=1,393)
- Communications (N=109)
- Field Operations Man. (N=162)
- Finance (N=409)
- Human Resources (N=290)
- Information Man. & Reporting (N=50)
- Information Technologies (N=577)
- Legal (N=22)
- Nutrition (N=67)
- Oversight Service (N=41)
- Partnerships (N=153)
- Programme & Policy (N=2,772)
- Resource Man. (N=175)
- Security (N=163)
- Supply Chain (N=1,709)
- Other/No information/Group size <20 (N=45)



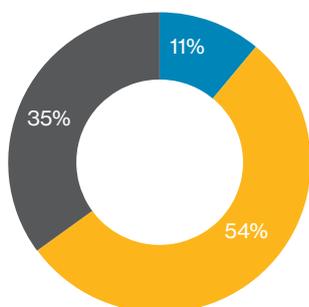
### GENDER

- Female (N=5,049)
- Male (N=3,088)



### EMPLOYEE CATEGORY

- Consultants (N=779)
- General Service (N=169)
- Gen. Service (Short-Term) (N=50)
- General Service Field (N=1,733)
- Int. Prof. Staff (Short-Term) (N=127)
- International Professional Staff (N=735)
- Junior Prof. Officers (N=28)
- National Prof. Officers (N=664)
- Service Contract Holders GS (N=2,855)
- Service Contract Holders Prof. (N=236)
- Special Service Agreement Field GS (N=574)
- Special Service Agreement Field Prof. (N=71)
- UN Volunteers (N=59)
- WFP Volunteers (N=24)
- Interns (N=33)

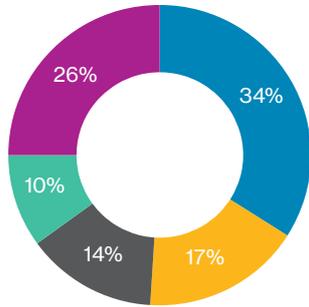


### AGE

- 18-30 (N=923)
- 30-45 (N=4,373)
- 45+ (N=2,841)

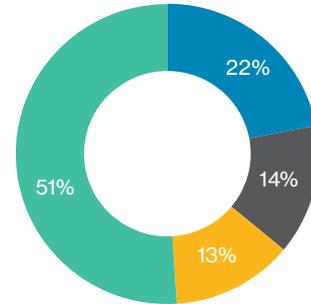
# VFG descriptives

FIGURE 3:  
Description of the participants of the Safe and Harmonious Workplace Virtual Focus Groups (N=191)



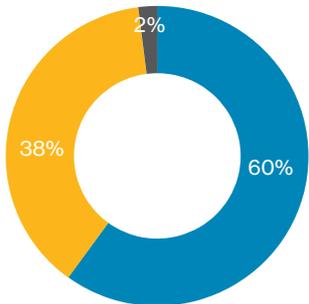
### REGION

- HQ & WFP Offices (N=64)
- RBD (N=33)
- RBC (N=26)
- RBB (N=19)
- Other/No information/Group size <20 (N=49)



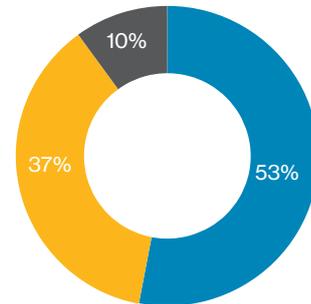
### FUNCTIONAL AREA

- Programme & Policy (N=42)
- Supply Chain (N=27)
- Administration (N=25)
- Other/No information/Group size <20 (N=97)



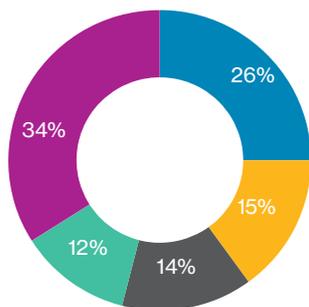
### GENDER

- Female (N=114)
- Male (N=73)
- Other/No information/Group size <20 (N=4)



### AGE

- 30-45 (N=101)
- 45+ (N=71)
- Other/No information/Group size <20 (N=19)

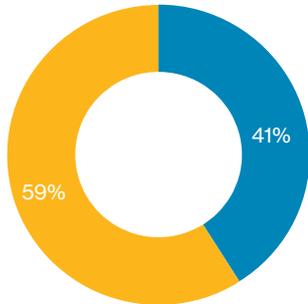


### EMPLOYEE CATEGORY

- International Professional Staff (N=49)
- General Service (N=29)
- National Professional Officers (N=26)
- Service Contract Holders GS (N=22)
- Other/No information/Group size <20 (N=65)

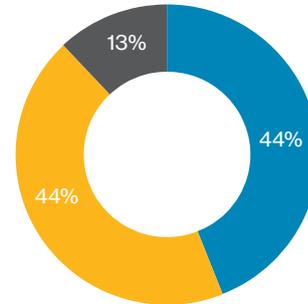
# Interview descriptives

FIGURE 3:  
Description of the participants of the One-on-One Interviews (N=78)



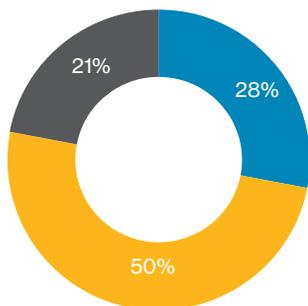
## REGION

- HQ & WFP Offices (N=32)
- Other/No information/Group size <20 (N=46)



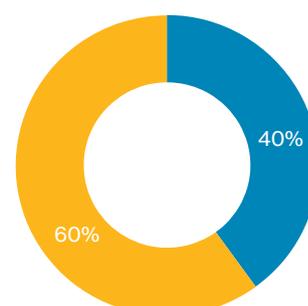
## GENDER

- Female (N=34)
- Male (N=34)
- Other/No information/Group size <20 (N=10)



## AGE

- 30-45 (N=22)
- 45+ (N=39)
- Other/No information/Group size <20 (N=16)



## EMPLOYEE CATEGORY

- International Professional Staff (N=31)
- Other/No information/Group size <20 (N=47)



# Findings

The following section outlines the combined findings across the three data collection approaches (survey, virtual focus groups, and one-on-one interviews). Due to the wealth of data collected, the findings have been categorised by topic to present a coherent story of the key themes. These key themes have been largely informed by the results of the Safe and Harmonious Workplace Survey as this reflects the largest number of employees. The virtual focus groups and the one-on-one interviews have been used to bring the survey results to life and describe how the views of respondents captured in the survey are experienced on a day to day basis.

This section starts with a brief overview of employee perceptions around the culture and ethical climate of WFP as well as perceptions of leadership, followed by a high-level summary of the results regarding abusive behaviour, including the identification of some hotspots within the organisation. The five types of abusive behaviour of interest to WFP will then be explored in detail, followed by a deep-dive into employee perceptions of the reporting approach.

## WFP's culture and ethical climate

Eight in ten survey respondents indicated that they believe WFP is doing a good job educating employees about the culture and values. This is a great result and interview feedback indicates employees see there has been progress in these areas. However, employee comments made in the one-on-one interviews also suggest employees are now looking for WFP to translate these messages into practice and for the lived experience of the culture to be more aligned with the espoused culture and values. The following results show current perceptions of the culture, which can inform the gaps to the desired WFP culture.

When asked about the three adjectives that best describe the current organisational culture at WFP, respondents in the Safe and Harmonious Workplace Survey were most likely to choose task-oriented (54%; Figure 4), hierarchical (39%) and people-oriented or collaborative (33%). Respondents were less likely to describe WFP as egalitarian (9%), secretive (16%), fair (17%) or siloed (18%). These descriptions are supplemented by the virtual focus groups, where participants were asked to list aspects of WFP's culture that they experience as being most positive. Focus group participants appreciated WFP's international environment and cultural diversity, the purpose and impact of their work, as well as the can-do approach, agility and loyalty that characterize WFP's missions. Aspects that focus group participants would like to see improved include leadership, inequality between different employee groups, transparency, accountability and communication.<sup>1</sup>

These results suggest that WFP is characterized by a culture where employees with diverse backgrounds stand together behind the shared mission, and collaborate to do what is necessary to provide the best possible humanitarian outcomes. Yet, the importance of the work itself drives a focus on tasks at the expense of a focus on people (the 'what' rather than the 'how')<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, while employees appreciate the collaborative culture, the organization operates in a strictly hierarchical manner, creating power imbalances between different employee groups.

Research indicates<sup>3</sup> that the top two characteristics that put employees and companies at risk of misconduct are:

- Poor leadership that fails to model ethical behavior and to hold employees accountable for misconduct.
- A focus on performance without concern for how it is achieved.

Data collected as part of this review suggests both of these risk factors are part of the culture at WFP.

<sup>1</sup> In the Safe and Harmonious Workplace Survey, respondents were provided a pre-defined list of adjectives to select from, whilst in the virtual focus groups, the participants chose their own. The virtual focus group technology then grouped together words of similar theme to identify the top comments.

<sup>2</sup> Please see <https://www.willistowerswatson.com/en-US/Insights/2019/03/how-schindler-group-elevated-performance-in-its-corporate-culture-for-a-WTW-case-study-of-how-Schindler-Group-evolved-to-a-broader-measure-of-performance-emphasizing-the-how-rather-than-the-what>.

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.ethics.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Global\\_Business\\_Ethics\\_Survey\\_2018\\_Q4\\_Final.pdf](https://www.ethics.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Global_Business_Ethics_Survey_2018_Q4_Final.pdf)

All cultural elements highlighted as being in need of improvement will be referenced to throughout the report, as we dive into the employee experience of abusive behaviour at WFP.

Looking at WFP's ethical climate in more detail, the survey asked respondents about their experiences with unethical behaviour, as well as how likely, in their opinion, a wide range of abusive behaviours are to occur at WFP. The results indicate that employees think there is considerable work to do to build a respectful and harmonious workplace (Figures 5-10).

As can be seen in Figure 5, a sizeable proportion of survey respondents have sometimes or more frequently felt they were not given the praise they deserved (59%), were excluded from work-related meetings (51%), or were given little or no feedback on their work (50%). Looking more closely at abusive behaviour, when asked about the harassment by colleagues (Figure 6), although respondents think that it is unlikely that it comes to physical violence, they do find that colleagues engage in less severe abusive behaviour such as gossiping, bullying and isolation of their peers. Sexual harassment (Figure 7) is generally considered unlikely, however, one in ten respondents think it likely that they or their colleagues receive suggestive comments or unwarranted questions of a sexual nature.

The proportion of respondents who think various forms of discrimination are likely to occur at WFP is concerning (Figure 8). Especially discrimination by contract type (40%), nationality/ethnicity (25%) and race or language (23%) are perceived likely to occur at WFP. Also abuse of authority (Figure 9) is thought to be widespread, with 37% of respondents indicating that they think it is likely that a supervisor may give unjustified preferential treatment to certain colleagues. A quarter considers it likely that supervisors may negatively interfere with the duties or career opportunities of their subordinates. Various forms of retaliation are considered likely to occur by around one in four participants (Figure 10), especially in relation to negative effects on someone's career and negative responses from the direct supervisor.

When looking across the regions, HQ respondents' experiences and perceptions of WFP's culture and ethical climate are less favourable compared to other regions. The exception is discrimination by race and nationality/ethnic origin where the RBN region responded significantly less favourably than all other regions.

These results align with the issues and challenges that will be discussed in the sections on abusive behaviour and reinforce some of the significant challenges and important areas for improvement at WFP which is consistent to the UNAIDS report that also found perceptions of those in HQ to be less favourable than in the field<sup>1</sup>.

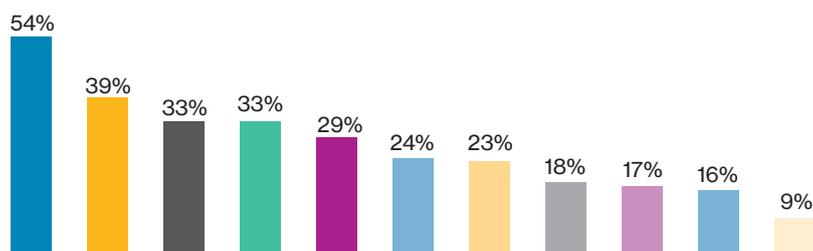


FIGURE 4: % of survey respondents who choose each characteristics as one of the three most descriptive of the organisational culture at WFP (N=8,137 respondents)

- Task-oriented
- Hierarchical
- Collaborative
- People-oriented
- Transparent
- Friendly
- Competitive
- Siloed
- Fair
- Secretive
- Egalitarian



## Positive characteristics put forward by focus group participants

<p><b>International Environment Multiculturalism</b> (Popularity 87, Consensus 76)</p>	<p><b>Purpose of the Organisation</b> (Popularity 83, Consensus 56)</p>	<p><b>Cultural Diversity / Multiculturalism</b> (Popularity 76, Consensus 74)</p>	<p><b>The direct impact of the work</b> (Popularity 76, Consensus 70)</p>
<p><b>Creative</b> (Popularity 68, Consensus 92)</p>	<p><b>Agility in crisis</b> (Popularity 66, Consensus 86)</p>	<p><b>Noble mandate</b> (Popularity 72, Consensus 97)</p>	<p><b>Employee Loyalty</b> (Popularity 68, Consensus 83)</p>

<sup>1</sup> Report of the independent expert panel on prevention of and response to harassment including sexual harassment; bullying and abuse of power at UN AIDS secretariat.

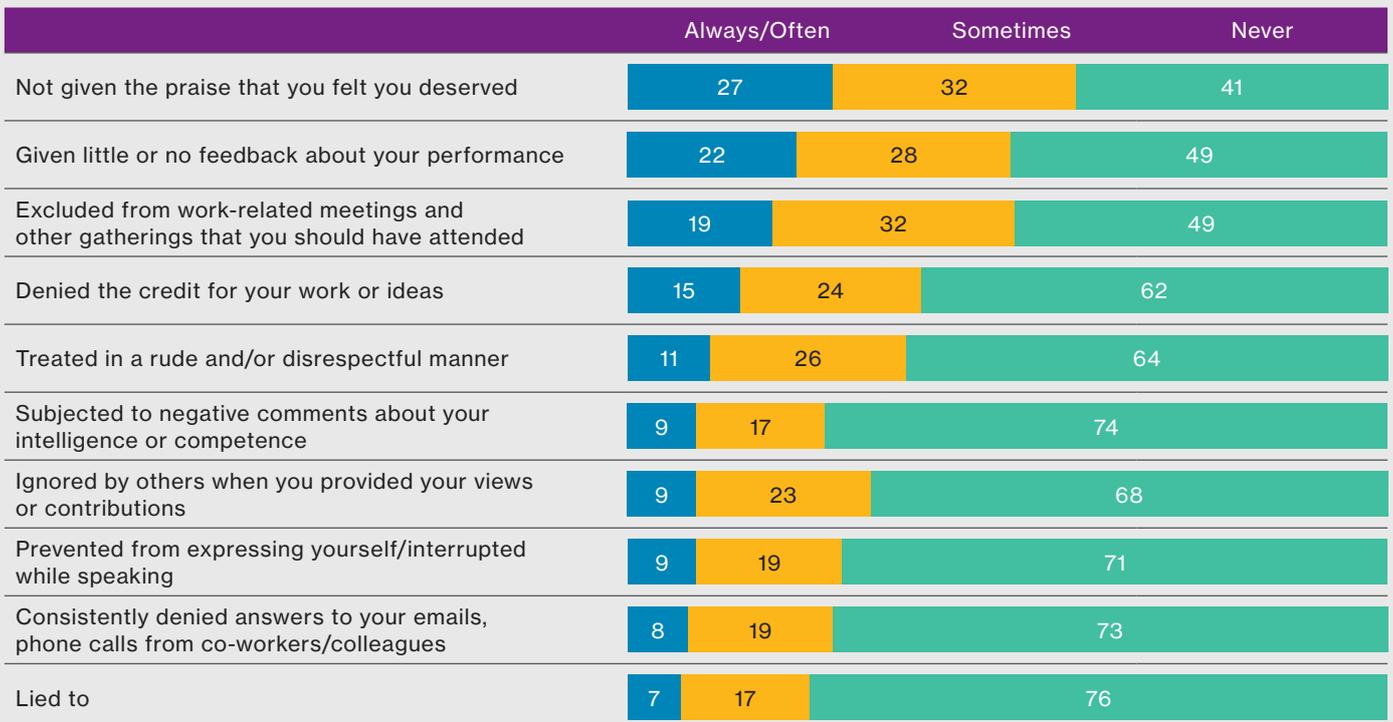


## Cultural elements focus group participants would most like to be improved<sup>1</sup>

<b>Leadership</b> (Popularity 77, Consensus 59)	<b>Equity, equality and fairness</b> (Popularity 77, Consensus 80)	<b>Respect for each other</b> (Popularity 77, Consensus 74)	<b>Respect for lower grade categories, abuse of power</b> (Popularity 74, Consensus 95)
<b>Promotion on merit</b> (Popularity 72, Consensus 95)	<b>Communication</b> (Popularity 71, Consensus 91)	<b>Accountability</b> (Popularity 70, Consensus 94)	<b>Transparency</b> (Popularity 70, Consensus 76)
<b>Inequality between local and international workers</b> (Popularity 89, Consensus 95)	<b>Gender equality</b> (Popularity 77, Consensus 80)	<b>Culture based on merit</b> (Popularity 64, Consensus 67)	<b>Global development opportunities for all employees</b> (Popularity 77, Consensus 96)

FIGURE 5:

% of responses to the survey question “please indicate how often, during your time working for WFP, you felt that you were:” (N=8,137)



<sup>1</sup>As described in the Methods section, all focus groups participants were first asked a question, and subsequently could rank the answers that were given by other participants. The “popularity” measure indicates to what extent focus group participants gave this statement a high ranking, while the “consensus” measure indicates to what extent the ranking of this statement varies between respondents. In other words, the higher the popularity the more participants agreed with this topic, and the higher the consensus the more respondents were unified in their agreement. Both popularity and consensus are expressed in a number that ranges between 0 and 100.

FIGURE 6:

% of responses to the survey question "In your opinion, how often do one or more WFP colleagues engage in any of the following behaviours related to your WFP work?" (N=8,137)

	Always/Often	Sometimes	Never
Spreading malicious rumours (gossip)	15	20	65
Persistently making critical or demeaning remarks in front of others or 'behind a person's back'	12	18	69
Isolation or exclusion of someone in the workplace	11	23	66
Shouting and aggressive behaviour	9	24	67
Repeated use of offensive gestures and/or words	7	15	78
Unwanted comments and/or questioning about a person's social, cultural or racial background or religion	5	10	85
Unwanted comments on the way you or colleagues appear or dress	4	12	84
Using e-mails/instant messaging/telephone to send abusive, threatening or insulting words and/or images to, or about, another employee or other employees	3	6	91
Physical violence (e.g. hitting, pushing, slapping, throwing objects, attacking another person)	1	2	97

FIGURE 7:

% of responses to the survey question "In your opinion, how likely are you or other WFP colleagues to experience the following behaviour from a colleague:" (N=8,137)

	Likely/ Somewhat likely	Unlikely/ Somewhat unlikely	Don't know
Suggestive comments or jokes about sex or with a sexual meaning	12	74	15
Unwarranted questioning or remarks about marital status, sexual orientation, sexual interests, sexual history or sexual activities	11	76	13
Repeated requests for "a date" or to engage in a (sexual) relationship	6	80	14
Unwanted receipt of images or verbal/written messages of a sexual nature	3	84	13
Unwanted touching or kissing	5	83	13
Promise of benefits in return for engaging in sexual acts	4	83	14
Threat of negative consequences for declining sexual advances	3	82	14
Rape, attempted rape or other sexual assault	2	87	12

FIGURE 8:

% of responses to the survey question “In your opinion, how likely is it that a WFP colleague may treat other WFP colleagues unfairly based on each of the following:” (N=8,137)

	Likely/ Somewhat likely	Unlikely/ Somewhat unlikely	Don't know
Contract type	40	50	9
Nationality/ethnic origin	25	65	10
Race	23	67	10
Language	23	65	11
Sex	22	67	11
Gender identity	20	66	14
Age	19	69	12
Religion/belief	15	73	13
Sexual orientation	14	69	17
Disability	8	77	15

FIGURE 9:

% of responses to the survey question “In your opinion, how likely is it that a WFP manager or supervisor may:” (N=8,137)

	Likely/ Somewhat likely	Unlikely/ Somewhat unlikely	Don't know
Give unjustified preferential treatment to certain colleagues	37	52	11
Intentionally block or interfere with promotion or career opportunities, for unjustifiable reasons	26	59	14
Regularly exclude you or your colleague(s) from work or assign insignificant tasks	25	64	11
Change the duties or responsibilities of colleagues without reason	23	67	11
Practice excessive supervision, over-monitor performance with malicious intent, persistently and unjustifiably criticizing your work and/or deliberately assign unachievable tasks	22	67	11
Regularly ‘put down’ or single you or your colleague(s) out and treat you/colleagues differently, typically in a demeaning or humiliating way, and other forms of isolation in the working environment	20	68	12
Put pressure on (or intimidate) you or your colleague(s) in order to deter you/colleagues from exercising their right to make a complaint, or raise concerns, about conduct or ethical issues	19	67	14
Request that you or colleague(s) regularly undertake personal services or favours, not related to official duties	13	77	11

FIGURE 10:

% of responses to the survey question “In your opinion, how likely is it that each of the following occurs in WFP, if you report a misconduct/wrongdoing or cooperate with a duly authorized audit, investigation or proactive integrity review?” (N=8,137)

	Likely/ Somewhat likely	Unlikely/ Somewhat unlikely	Don't know
Intentional blocking or interference with your promotion or career opportunities	27	53	20
Fear of reprisal or isolation from your manager/supervisor	26	56	17
Exclusion from meetings and/or communications concerning the tasks assigned to you	25	57	18
Negative performance evaluations	25	57	18
Critical remarks from your direct supervisor	25	58	17
Contract change or non-renewal/termination of your contract	24	57	20
Excessive supervision, over-monitoring your performance, assignment to unachievable tasks	24	57	19
Fear of reprisal or isolation from your colleagues/peers	23	59	18
Change of your duties, responsibilities or role without reason	22	60	18
Reassignment or transfer to another office/location	21	57	22
Downsizing of your post	20	58	22
Regularly being 'put down' or singled out and treated differently, typically in a demeaning way	20	60	20
Interference with performance of your duties, setting unreasonable deadlines/unachievable tasks	20	60	20
Humiliating, taunting, badmouthing or embarrassing you in front of your colleagues, peers or others	17	63	19
Fear of reprisal or isolation from your community	14	67	20

A characteristic of strong leadership is the embedding of culture and values within the organisation. Eight in ten survey respondents overall, agree that WFP is doing a good job educating employees about culture and values. When we look deeper into the results, however, we see that those who have experienced or witnessed abusive behaviour are less favourable about how well WFP is doing in educating employees about culture and values compared to those who haven't experienced abusive behaviour.

- 89% of respondents who have not experienced or witnessed harassment believe WFP is doing a good job educating employees about culture and values compared to just 70% of respondents who have experienced or witnessed harassment.
- 90% of respondents who have not experienced or witnessed abuse of authority believe WFP is doing a good job educating employees about culture and values compared to just 71% of respondents who have experienced or witnessed abuse of authority.
- 87% of respondents who have not experienced or witnessed

discrimination believe WFP is doing a good job educating employees about culture and values compared to just 69% of respondents who have experienced or witnessed discrimination.

- 84% of respondents who have not experienced or witnessed sexual harassment believe WFP is doing a good job educating employees about culture and values compared to just 66% of respondents who have experienced or witnessed sexual harassment.

These results indicate people who have not experienced abusive behaviour are more likely to perceive the organisation as doing a good job educating employees about culture and values, while employees who have experienced abusive behaviours report there is still a considerable amount of work to do in this area.

This result highlights the considerable effect that abusive behaviour has on the experience of culture across the organisation. There is a clear opportunity for WFP to provide a more consistent experience of a positive, respectful and harmonious culture. This is illustrated by the following representative comments from survey respondents:

Further, employees who disagree with the statement that WFP is doing a good job educating employees about culture and values are:



#### Illustrative comments from individual respondents

“There is no information provided to employees when arriving to WFP about culture and values in the organization. It should be a mandatory training for all employees including organizational values, the four P’s, expectations of conduct, etc.”

“There is no proper on-boarding process for newcomers, there is no ‘learning journey’ program for consultants...”

“The culture of an office in the country changes every time (every four years) when there is a change in the IP leadership positions (CD & DCD positions). This brings a lot of discomfort in employees...”

“...Promoting wrong people that do not inspire the rest of the organization. We perceive what the organization’s culture and values are by experiencing day-to-day work situations where managers behave wrongly.”

‘...even if WFP educates employees about its culture and values, it does not do a good job of enforcing that such behaviour is followed, and that bad behaviour is punished/reprimanded. WFP needs stronger consequences for people who are accused of behaving inappropriately towards colleagues.’

“No promotion of respect towards all employees by people in leadership positions and no mechanism of addressing wrong behaviour despite flagging and complaining.”



# Leadership at WFP

To better understand WFP's culture and the context in which abusive behaviour takes place, this section presents a deep dive into leadership at WFP. Many stories shared by employees involve the significant role that WFP's leaders play in their experience of abusive behaviour. Therefore, the findings on leadership at WFP provide further context to understand results on abusive behaviour that are presented in the next sections.

Seven in ten survey respondents agree that WFP senior management, as well as other managers and supervisors, show commitment to addressing improper conduct and set an example of respectful and positive behaviour. This is a positive result, and consistent with industry norms (WTW Global International Organisations Norm<sup>1</sup> 2019, shows 77% of respondents agree that leadership decisions are consistent with the organization's core values), although does also indicate there is still work to do. Indeed, amongst HQ respondents, agreement is significantly lower, with around six in ten answering favourably regarding the commitment by senior managers, other managers and supervisors, and only just over half about the same setting an example of respectful and positive behaviour. Notably however, respondents from other regions registered more favourable responses on this topic. Leadership was identified as the number one element of the culture that focus group participants would like to see improved. This suggests that, although a large proportion of employees feel leaders have an intention to address improper conduct and set the right example, there are still challenges associated with leadership and the action of leaders at WFP. Research conducted by the Ethics & Compliance Initiative (ECI)<sup>2</sup> indicates that companies where leaders fail to model ethical behaviour or hold employees accountable, have higher rates of reported misconduct. This reinforces the important role leaders have in setting the tone regarding abusive behaviour at WFP.

When asked to describe the leadership style of Senior Leaders, the characteristics most often mentioned by focus group participants portray WFP as hierarchical, and suggest a repressive, authoritarian leadership style. Moreover, it is suggested that leaders aim to further their own self-interest rather than the mission of WFP, and

## Illustrative comments from individual respondents

“It’s a Yes Sir style. You have to agree with what they say and never dare to say no. abuse of power is widely spread. No-one is doing anything about it”

“They only care for their own and their favourites’ advancement”

“Too old style. Still too involved in their business that they forgot the purpose of all. They use their power for their own reasons”



## Words that focus groups participants used to describe leadership at WFP (N=191 participants)<sup>3</sup>

<p><b>Top-Down</b> (Popularity 84, consensus 74)</p>	<p><b>Patriarchal.</b> <b>Do what I tell you to do!</b> (Popularity 82, consensus 81)</p>	<p><b>Not inclusive, hierarchical</b> (Popularity 82, consensus 81)</p>	<p><b>Authoritative</b> (Popularity 72, consensus 70)</p>
<p><b>Cowboys. They have their own 'groups' of people.</b> (Popularity 83, consensus 88)</p>	<p><b>A big gap between senior management and rest of the workforce</b> (Popularity 77, consensus 98)</p>	<p><b>A lot of top-down decision making</b> (Popularity 75, consensus 97)</p>	<p><b>Self-protective</b> (Popularity 71, consensus 84)</p>

<sup>1</sup> The WTW Global International Organisations Norm contains data from 19,383 employees surveyed by WTW, working at 12 international organisations around the world.

<sup>2</sup> Global Business Ethics Survey (GBES) conducted by the Ethics & Compliance Initiative (ECI)

<sup>3</sup> As described in the Methods section, all focus groups participants were first asked a question, and subsequently could rank the answers that were given by other participants. The “popularity” measure indicates to what extent focus group participants gave this statement a high ranking, while the “consensus” measure indicates to what extent the ranking of this statement varies between respondents. In other words, the higher the popularity the more participants agreed with this topic, and the higher the consensus the more respondents were unified in their agreement. Both popularity and consensus are expressed in a number that ranges between 0 and 100.

abuse their power to further themselves and their favourites. These sentiments were also expressed during one-on-one interviews and are elaborated on in the open comments that focus group participants shared.

Interestingly, the words used to describe leadership at WFP closely align with the description of leadership included in the UNICEF report of the independent task force on workplace gender-discrimination, sexual harassment, harassment and abuse of authority<sup>1</sup>. This is cause for concern as it is leadership that sets the tone for the organisation and indicates WFP has significant work to do to improve the leadership style and reduce the reputation risk associated with the current leadership approach.

As was the case with Senior Leadership, when asked to characterize WFP’s managers and immediate supervisors, focus group participants expressed that they perceive managers as ‘top-down’. Moreover, participants express their concerns about managers’ communication and managerial skills. Task-oriented, technical experts are sometimes placed in managerial positions without being properly trained to have a managerial role. Yet, perceptions around direct managers show more nuance than Senior Leadership perceptions, with some participants expressing that direct managers are more interested in employee well-being. There seems to be substantial diversity between managers, with many managers genuinely doing their best for their team. Such findings are to be expected – indeed employee data gathered through opinion surveys conducted by Willis Towers Watson indicate that employees tend to rate aspects of their immediate working experience, e.g., relationship with their supervisor, higher than those that they are more distanced from, e.g., leadership.

The perceptions of the quality of leadership across both senior managers and managers/supervisors suggests more consideration is needed when discerning if an employee is a good fit with the requirements of a leader at WFP. One of the key challenges that we see in companies similar to WFP, is that people that perform well from an operational or delivery perspective are often promoted into leadership roles. This means the leadership pipeline is based on technical experts. Leadership however requires a completely different skill set than operational delivery such that technical expertise is rarely a good predictor of leadership capability. This

**Illustrative comments from individual respondents**

“Similar to senior managers. The senior managers get buddies in place who are photocopies of them, mafia style”

“Some are caring for others’ career and empowering, some very traditional and self-serving”

“Depends on the individual manager. Some are good, while others are just there.”

“Aloof-- whatever CD says goes-- no one challenges the top brass”

 **Words that focus groups participants used to describe direct managers at WFP (N=191 participants)**

<b>Inconsistent</b> (Popularity 88, consensus 96)	<b>Person-oriented rather than performance-oriented</b> (Popularity 79, consensus 87)	<b>Uninterested in career development of their supervisees</b> (Popularity 76, consensus 89)	<b>Lack of managerial skills, focus on technical skills</b> (Popularity 75, consensus 81)	<b>Top-down, and authoritative</b> (Popularity 71, consensus 77)
<b>Confused</b> (Popularity 80, consensus 78)	<b>Top-down, not inclusive, not open to feedback</b> (Popularity 77, consensus 92)	<b>Lost, caught in between and some they just follow their bosses</b> (Popularity 76, consensus 97)	<b>Lack of leadership and vision</b> (Popularity 71, consensus 91)	<b>More responsible, more caring than high level</b> (Popularity 68, consensus 91)

<sup>1</sup> Footnote: [https://www.unicef.org/sites/default/files/2019-06/Independent-Task-Force\\_report\\_EN.PDF](https://www.unicef.org/sites/default/files/2019-06/Independent-Task-Force_report_EN.PDF).

means that a range of characteristics, beyond operational expertise, need to be considered when selecting people to move into leadership positions and alternative progression opportunities created for technical experts.

As referenced above, seven in ten survey respondents agree that WFP senior management shows commitment to addressing improper behaviour. When we dig deeper, we see that this result differs dramatically between employee groups. More specifically, people who report having experienced/ witnessed abusive behaviour are significantly less positive about WFP senior management's commitment to addressing improper behaviour. These results indicate a clear link between perception of leadership and experience of abusive behaviour:

- 84% of respondents who have not experienced harassment perceive senior management as being committed to addressing improper behaviour compared to just 59% of respondents who have experienced harassment.
- 86% of respondents who have not experienced abuse of authority perceive senior management as being committed to addressing improper behaviour compared to just 61% of respondents who have experienced abuse of authority.
- 83% of respondents who have not experienced discrimination perceive senior management as being committed to addressing improper behaviour compared to just 60% of respondents who have experienced discrimination.
- 78% of respondents who have not experienced sexual harassment perceive senior management as being committed to addressing improper behaviour compared to just 60% of respondents who have experienced sexual harassment.

The rates are similar with respect to commitment demonstrated by other managers and supervisors to addressing and responding to improper behaviour.

Those who have experienced abusive behaviour were also found to be less favourable about the example of respectful and positive behaviour set by WFP senior management, other managers and supervisors.

- 84% of respondents who have not experienced harassment are positive about the example of respectful and positive behaviour set by WFP senior management, other managers and supervisors compared to just 52% of respondents who have experienced harassment.
- 87% of respondents who have not experienced abuse of authority are positive about the example of respectful and positive behaviour set by WFP senior management, other managers and supervisors compared to just 52% of respondents who have experienced abuse of authority.
- 82% of respondents who have not experienced discrimination are positive about the example of respectful and positive behaviour set by WFP senior management, other managers and supervisors compared to just 52% of respondents who have experienced discrimination.
- 76% of respondents who have not experienced sexual harassment are positive about the example of respectful and positive behaviour set by WFP senior management, other managers and supervisors compared to just 52% of respondents who have experienced sexual harassment.

These results clearly indicate the negative impact that experiencing abusive behaviour has on employee perceptions of leaders. As employees see leaders as representative of the organisation, it is critical to levels of employee engagement and general employee enjoyment at work that they have positive regard for leaders at all levels. Further, research has found a strong link between leadership and prevalence of abusive behaviour such that employees who work in organisations with weak leadership cultures characterized by poor accountability and modeling of ethical behavior are 3.6 times more likely to observe abusive behaviour, 3.6 times more likely to observe discrimination and 2.1 times more likely to observe sexual harassment<sup>1</sup>.

The implications of abusive leadership can be devastating for the individual and their family as it has been found to lead to higher turnover, less favourable attitudes toward their job, the organisation and life in general, more work life conflict and greater psychological distress<sup>2</sup>.

From an organisational perspective the negative implications of abusive behaviour include reputation damage, lost productivity, greater turnover, and increased sick leave and work-related injuries. These implications are cause for concern and demonstrate the importance of WFP taking action<sup>3</sup>.

There is considerable work to do to reduce the occurrence of abusive behaviour, improve perceptions of leaders and improve the employee experience provided by WFP. By taking focused and committed action to address these leadership challenges, WFP will be taking a dramatic step toward creating a more harmonious and respectful workplace.

#### Illustrative comments from individual respondents

“Have better managers. Invest on the good ones and the ones with potential and take action for the ones that do not deserve that position. All managers should go through a psychological test before they are allowed a certain responsibility. Some can be extremely dangerous especially in COs and sub-offices where they might create their own ‘kingdoms’.”

“Leadership and people management skill development training should be offered to all supervisors and more importantly behavioural issues (etiquette and manners).”

“1) Hold managers accountable for their staff and for their own actions. 2) Understand that it no longer is acceptable to allow certain behaviour just because the person is a manager or because they are good at their job - too many things are being forgiven of managers, whereas it would never be allowed for the new generation or consultants to portray such behaviour, because, unlike the old guard, they would immediately be let go.”

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.ethics.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Global\\_Business\\_Ethics\\_Survey\\_2018\\_Q4\\_Final.pdf](https://www.ethics.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Global_Business_Ethics_Survey_2018_Q4_Final.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Estrin, C. B. (1996, March/April). Emotional abuse in the workplace. *Legal Assistant Today*, 1(2), 78-79. ABI/Inform (1998, June). CD-ROM. Information Access.

<sup>3</sup> Ebeid, F., Kaul, T., Neumann, K. and Shane, H., 2019. Workplace Abuse: Problems and Consequences. *International Business & Economics Research Journey* 2(6-75)

# Abusive behaviour

While the previous sections described the general culture, leadership and ethical climate of WFP, the following sections zoom in on the results regarding experience and witnessing of the five abusive behaviours (harassment, sexual harassment, abuse of authority, discrimination and retaliation).

Data from the Safe and Harmonious Workplace Survey reveals that between 8%-35% of survey respondents have either personally experienced or witnessed abusive behaviour in the workplace (Figure 11). As explained in the method section, all types of abusive behaviour were clearly defined in the survey before employees were asked whether they had witnessed or experienced them. Moreover, respondents who indicated that they had witnessed or experienced abusive behaviour were asked to further specify what they had witnessed/experienced from a list of behaviours taken from WFP's policies. There was also the option to select "other" and specify the behaviour in an open comment. A review of these open comments following respondents selecting they had witnessed or experienced "other" types of abusive behaviour suggests that indeed the behaviours experienced and witnessed are valid, i.e., there are almost no behaviours described that suggest that the respondent witnessed/experienced behaviour that WFP does not classify as abusive. Moreover, none of the 78 one-on-one interviews that WFP conducted with employees who had experienced or witnessed abusive behaviour had to be terminated due to the interview request being invalid. Therefore, we can have confidence the numbers presented in this report are driven by experiencing and witnessing actual abusive behaviour, rather than by (intercultural) misunderstanding of the definition of abusive behaviour.

One of the key findings of this review is that women experience or witness abusive behaviour significantly more

- Abuse of authority was the most referenced form of abusive behaviour. One in three employees who responded to the survey reported they have experienced or witnessed abuse of authority, during their time with WFP, with more than two in five cases involving 'unjustified preferential treatment of certain colleagues' (44% experienced, 49% witnessed).
- Other forms of abusive behaviour were also reported as widespread (see figure 11). For the vast majority of abusive behaviour, it is notable that the proportion of those who claim to have witnessed it versus those who personally experienced it, is higher.
- The most commonly referenced perpetrator was the direct supervisor/manager, except in cases of sexual harassment where a colleague was most often identified as the main responsible person. The vast majority of cases occurred on WFP premises e.g. office/field operations.
- Respondents who work in Resource Management and OS Operations Services experience or witness abusive behaviour more so than other areas of the organisation.
- For harassment and sexual harassment in particular, cases are experienced/witnessed twice as much amongst those who work at HQ, compared to out in the field.
- Furthermore, women experience/witness abusive behaviour more than men, specifically sexual harassment, as it is reported 2.5 times more amongst women.
- 62% of participants in the English virtual focus group and 38% of participants in the Spanish virtual focus group indicated that Abusive Behaviour is an element of the culture at WFP.

than men and this holds true across all types of abusive behaviour explored especially harassment and sexual harassment. This is a worrying finding and suggests that gender inequality exists at WFP. As you will see through the report, perceptions of those that participated indicate that women are not always treated equally to men and there is considerable work to do to improve in these areas.

Looking at the pattern of results across the various forms of abuse and the demographic indicators, there are a number of interesting findings evident in the survey data:

Compared to the GSS, the share of respondents who reported having experienced or witnessed abusive behaviour is higher in the current survey. For example, one in three respondents' reports having witnessed or experienced harassment in the current survey, versus one in five in the GSS. Likewise, eight percent has witnessed or experienced sexual harassment, compared to only five percent in the GSS. Whilst a direct comparison between the two cannot be made, this discrepancy may be explained on the basis that the current survey is a topical one. Questions in the current survey refer to the entire employment time with WFP, as opposed to the last year in the GSS. Another reason could be because of education efforts – employees are becoming more aware of when they are experiencing abusive behaviour.

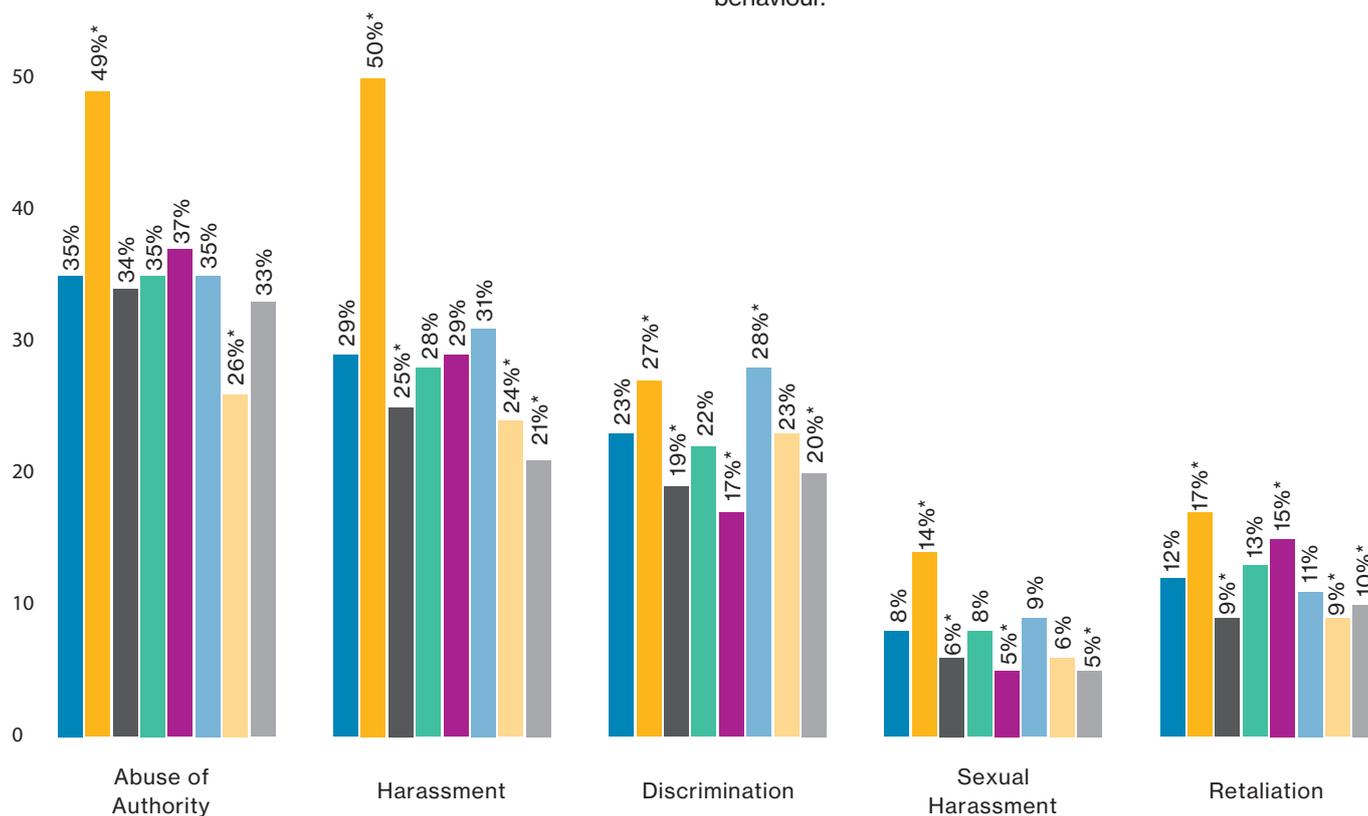


Figure 11: % of survey respondents who answered “Yes” to the question “During your time working for WFP, have you ever experienced OR witnessed ...?” by region (N=8,137 respondents)

- WFP Overall (N=8,137)
- HQ & WFP Offices (N=913)
- RBJ (N=925)
- RBC (N=1,593)
- RBP (N=555)
- RBN (N=1,742)
- RBB (N=1,196)
- RBD (N=1,200)

## Abuse of authority

Abuse of authority was the most frequently referenced form of abuse experienced or witnessed by survey respondents, with 35% of respondents (2,848 people) indicating they had experienced or witnessed abuse of authority. This sentiment echoes the results of the virtual focus groups and interviews in which abuse of authority was widely reported.

Abuse of authority is pervasive across the organisation, with HQ & WFP Offices having the largest number of people (49%) indicating they have either experienced or witnessed this form of abusive behaviour. This is significantly more than in other regions (Figure 11). The region with the fewest people reporting they have experienced or witnessed abuse of authority is RBB with 26%. Abuse of authority is experienced/witnessed by 31% of male survey respondents and 42% of female survey respondents. It is clear that this is a serious issue and requires immediate attention.

Abuse of authority at WFP takes various forms (Table 3) with 'Unjustified preferential treatment of certain colleagues' or favouritism being the most frequently referenced form. 45% of people who experienced abuse of authority indicated that it came in the form of favouritism, and 49% indicated they have witnessed favouritism as a form of abuse of authority.

Abuse of authority was also the most frequently reported type of abusive behaviour by interviewed participants. The experiences shared in the interviews bring the forms of abuse outlined below (Table 3) to life. Many of the stories shared focus on the impact that abuse of authority through favouritism can have

Abuse of authority is most often committed by people in leadership roles (Figure 12), with 50% of people who have experienced or witnessed abuse of authority indicating it is committed by Senior Managers and 68% reporting it is committed by a Direct Supervisor/Manager. It was however also reported that colleagues are abusing their authority (28%).

TABLE 3:  
percentage of different forms of abuse of authority experienced or witnessed (N=3,608 respondents)

Form of Abuse of authority	Experienced	Witnessed
Unjustified preferential treatment of colleagues	45%	49%
Excessive supervision/over-monitoring of performance	33%	37%
Intentional blocking or interference with promotion or career opportunities	31%	32%
Regular exclusion from work or assignment to insignificant tasks	28%	34%
Being 'put down'/singled out and other forms of isolation	25%	32%
Change of duties or responsibilities without reason	23%	30%
Intimidation/pressure deterring you from complaining about conduct/ethical issues	19%	17%
Request that you regularly undertake personal services or favours, not related to official duties	11%	21%
Other	8%	4%

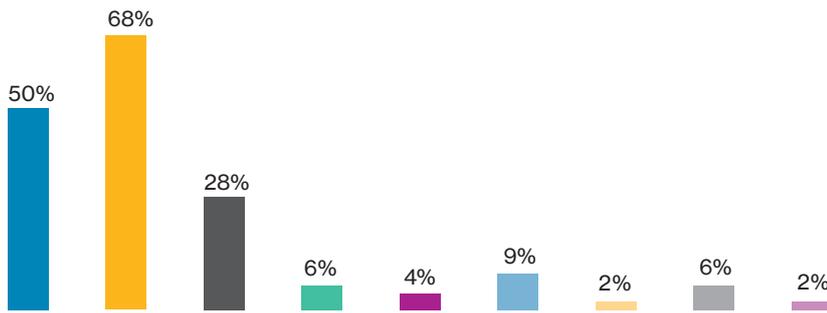


FIGURE 12:  
Main perpetrators of abuse of authority (% selected by N=3,264 respondents)

- Senior Manager
- Direct Supervisor/Manager
- Colleague/co-worker
- Subordinate
- Government official
- Someone else working for WFP
- Someone else not working for WFP
- Dont Know
- Other

on people's career, especially when perpetrated by people in leadership roles (both senior leaders and Direct Supervisors/Managers). Favouritism is perceived across the organisation in key talent management processes including selection, performance evaluation, promotion and reassignment decisions and, more predominately, contract renewal decisions. The apparent lack of transparency around how these decisions are made, the inconsistent application of policies and processes and the lack of accountability to demonstrate that decisions are fair and equitable means employees feel that they are at the mercy of individual or small groups of leaders that are perceived to be acting to drive their own agenda rather than for the good of the organisation.

Interviewees reported that at times people are handed a CV and told to hire someone without conducting a selection process at all. In addition, those people are often believed to be connected to someone in the organisation and awarding the position is a favour they are doing for someone, often with the promise of a return favour down the track. This reported approach to selection is perceived as an abuse of authority and leads employees to question the motives of leaders. It also compromises the credibility of those appointed, as people do not believe they have been rigorously assessed and determined to be the best candidate. In addition, employees are left questioning the feasibility of securing advertised positions for themselves due to the lack of transparency around the process and the reasons given for decisions. The perceived lack of rigour in the selection process results in employees feeling everything is simply at the discretion of leaders and the quality of your relationship with these leaders will have a significant impact on your career.

The performance evaluation process (PACE) is perceived to be another avenue for leaders to exert their power and abuse their authority. Employees report that due to the impact the performance evaluation has, it can - and is - being used by leaders as an avenue to enact favouritism. This is in the form of setting preferred people up for promotion through the over inflation of their performance or removing the opportunity for promotion by awarding less preferred people with unfavourable comments about their performance. Performance evaluation is not a simple topic with many organisations struggling to get this right. The Willis

**Illustrative comments from individual respondents**

“The problem starts at the top, senior managers –there is a culture of self-promotion of personal interest and favours. Merit, experience, and ability play no role in the system.”

“There seems to be a set of rules for senior management and their team, and another for those who are doing the work. Many of the senior management have gotten so used to abuse of their power that I am not sure if they are even aware of it. Examples are covering up for mistakes made for others knowingly, only giving promotion to a few selected staff with strong relations / connections to senior management. A passive aggressive way of management.”

Towers Watson Global Workforce Study 2016, found that only 52% of employees globally agreed that their performance was accurately evaluated in their most recent performance review. This indicates that WFP is not alone in this challenge.

The stories shared in the interviews provide further evidence of the dissatisfaction of both employees and leaders with the performance evaluation process. Some leaders shared that they are too afraid to provide an unsatisfactory rating in fear of being reported for abusive behaviour as a form of retaliation by the employee. In addition, the constant change in staffing means that the supervisor assessing performance can change frequently along with the expectations they have of employees. When this happens, it is clear that there is a need for the new supervisor to be briefed on the performance expectations that have been agreed upon by the employee and the existing supervisor to ensure consistency. If new expectations need to be introduced, these need to be clearly defined and agreed upon by both parties. While this may be happening in some situations, it is not in many others. Expectation management needs to become standard by making this a key part of transitioning a new leader into a team. It is unreasonable to expect leaders to lead effectively without a comprehensive briefing and for employees to adjust their behaviour and approach to work to meet expectations of a new leader unless these expectations have been clearly established. In order to have these conversations, all leaders need to be trained to have effective performance conversations – for these to be two-way conversations that build trust between the leader and the employee and promote transparent dialogue and a collaborative working relationship.

Similar to the selection process it is believed that, the promotion process lacks transparency and leaves employees feeling their career is in the hands of leaders that have the authority to make subjective decisions that favour some and not others, without consequences.

The strong link between the performance evaluation and one's eligibility for promotion means that an employee's chance of promotion can be derailed by one supervisor's agenda and the perception they have not met the supervisor's expectations, when often employees feel that these expectations are not clearly articulated and the individual is not given constructive feedback on how they can meet these expectations.

In addition, while there are standard timeframes indicated for people to reach competence at certain grades, it appears that these timeframes do not apply to everyone. While some people are waiting years for promotion without a clear explanation of what they need to do differently, others are able to move quickly through the job grades without meeting the minimum years of experience required. This inconsistency in the application of the promotion guidelines results in the perception of favouritism, particularly when employees see that those progressing quickly have the strongest relationships with leaders.

#### Illustrative comments from individual respondents

“The system is as it has been for the past 20 + years. Senior managers rule with impunity at country office and global level. Small example: my D2 supervisor has not done a PACE 3 years in a row. This means I cannot even dream of promotion. He gets away

#### Illustrative comments from individual respondents

“The senior management in WFP is powerful and quash any issues that arise by simply moving FT staff to different offices, shifting positions etc. There is no point in trying to report any abuse of power etc. as there are prolific people in WFP that control all of the moves. This behaviour needs to be changed from the top down.”

“WFP should clarify grounds for promotion in a much more transparent way, there is a lot of detachment and cynicism within WFP with regard to promotion, career path and criteria for advancement. For some, it seems much easier than others, no matter the skill set or experience.”

“There is a lack of communication in terms of the work of WFP and the work of each employee. Tasks and responsibilities are not shared transparently in a way where others know

**Illustrative comments from individual respondents**

with it. In reassignments, how can some people go from P3 to P5 in 1.5 years, while others don't move at all? Referring to people I worked with and consider equally skilled, with one exception: the fast promoter was good in greasing one senior manager (and kicking down on subordinates).”

The contract renewal process stands out as one of the areas in which abuse of authority is believed by employees to be most prevalent and causing significant harm. This is because of the extreme difference in the power between people in leadership roles and those employees that are on ongoing temporary or fixed term contracts. The data clearly indicates that there is a major problem with the management of contract staff, particularly those with the title 'consultant'. These are the group most at risk of being on the receiving end of abusive behaviour.

Due to the lack of job security and the decision-making power of leaders regarding the renewal of contracts, employees without a permanent contract are faced with constant threat of not having their contract renewed.

**Illustrative comments from individual respondents**

“WFP relies on an exploitative contract model (using consultants to perform core functions), employees with more secure and longer term contracts can easily abuse those with shorter and less secure contracts.”

“Managers use it [contract types] against employees. Employees with temporary contracts (Consultants, STP, and other modalities) feel powerless.”

“Many of the HR practices create a situation where people are afraid to report, as most staff do not have indefinite / continuing contracts so they are always concerned that their contracts will not be renewed (for both fixed term and consultants) or they will not be considered for promotion if they make any complaints.”

of the manager, so to secure their position they must do as they are told, not rock any boats, don't question their leader or present an opposing perspective. Participants shared experiences of being asked to do non-work related tasks for leaders (e.g. pick up laundry) or to misuse company resources (e.g. company drivers) and must make a decision if they should risk their job by speaking up or just staying quiet and playing the game. It was reported that leaders are comfortable reminding employees of the risks to their contract if they do not comply with their demands. It would be easy to dismiss this as an isolated situation experienced by a limited few. This topic however was

**Illustrative comments from individual respondents**

what their colleagues are doing. The values that are promoted tend to be more of secrecy and closed door discussions rather than openness and transparency.”

Looking at abuse of authority during selection in more detail, numerous interviewees shared stories of people being hired without meeting the advertised essential requirements, and selection decisions not being made based on suitability or best fit for the role.

“[There is a need for] more transparent reassignment and promotion process where people are hired and / or promoted based on merit and not connections.”

“People are recruited because they are 'friends' without considering the ability to work. Here it is better to have the right friends instead of to be able to work well”

regularly referenced in both the interviews and focus groups and is one of the most important areas to focus improvement efforts on, in order to reduce the opportunity for abuse of power.

#### Illustrative comments from individual respondents

‘If you have a consultant contract, if you have a kid, you will not report anything because you want to keep your job because of your family’

“WFP has the policies in place, however if you speak up it comes at a cost. I have personally been told that I should have kept my head down at HQ and I would be in a better position now.”

Similar to the talent management topics outlined above, employees have reported the reassignment process is plagued by favouritism. For those who are favoured, they have the pick of places they would like to be reassigned to. For those less favoured there is a perception that they are deliberately reassigned to places that they have expressed they don't want to go or that would be hard for them and their family to go. This again comes back to the perceived lack of transparency behind the decision making and consistent application of the relevant policies and processes.

While many acknowledged a significant level of autonomy at a country level may be required from an operational perspective to ensure the work can proceed at the required pace, the lack of transparency and accountability regarding talent management decisions is resulting in inconsistent and, at times, discriminatory decision making.

The dramatic impact that leaders can have on an individual's career and life is at the core of the problem – this unequal power balance tipped in the favour of leaders means that it's in employees' best interest to stay on the good side of leaders (supervisors, deputy country heads, chiefs, etc.) and that means doing what leaders say, not speaking up, not expressing any opposing views and not reporting abusive behaviour.

Participants referenced the use of WFP resources for personal benefit as an additional form of abuse of authority. Employees shared stories of leaders using WFP drivers to attend non-work related events or to drive non-WFP employees such as spouses.

Employees expressed a greater need for 'equity, equality and fairness' as this was the second most important area to improve with leadership being the first based on results of the English focus group. Employees described how the current practices do not align with the concept of 'equity, equality and fairness' and hence the need to improve this.

#### Illustrative comments from individual respondents

“The managing staff does not always treat the other equal. They offer opportunities to some while restrain from others who are qualify for the opportunities.”

#### Illustrative comments from individual respondents

“Better oversight of the members of the LG - so they can be held accountable their decisions.”

“The “managers” need to actually manage. There doesn't seem to be a culture of management at WFP-- rather just bark at someone to get the job done. It's very strange coming from other organisations...”

“Promotion and grade level should be based on qualifications not based on an archaic system”

“On promotions, known senior staff who can affect decisions and push their candidates (not the best ones!), should be removed from panel”

“Merit, qualifications and experience should count”

**Illustrative comments from individual respondents**

“The leadership group abuses their position to manipulate the reassignment process. They have favourites and some don't have the skills for the position they are in.”

“[Practices related to] promotions and reassignment process.”

“Double standards is a big issue.”

“Tools in place for equity, etc but not always respected by the management”

“HR rules can be played on a case by case”

“[There is] favouritism-- promotion is not based on performance”

“Not fair in recruiting process. Some managers' use favouritism”

**Employees also shared some of their ideas on how the abuse of authority can be improved.**

**Illustrative comments from individual respondents**

“Promotion on merit. Better education possibilities for middle managers.”

“We need a normal and known promotion system. There are people on the same grade for years and years. Identifying senior managers with true leadership skills and not basing leadership appointments on 'good managers'... a manager is NOT a Leader.”

“Overall lack of consistency in management, lack of support for managers from other management and lack of structure and order in the organization.”

“Consequences. The culture of immunity in management is toxic.”

“Transparent HR - recruitment process”



# Harassment

Harassment (any improper conduct that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offense or humiliation to another person) was the second most referenced form of abuse experienced or witnessed by survey respondents, with 29% of respondents (2,365 people) indicating they had experienced/witnessed harassment while working at WFP. Harassment was also a key topic raised by interviewees.

Similar to abuse of authority, harassment is reportedly experienced and witnessed across the organisation – it is not limited to or contained within a single region or location. This form of abusive behaviour is pervasively felt across the organisation with HQ & WFP Offices having the largest number of respondents (50%) indicating they have either experienced or witnessed harassment. This is significantly more than in other regions (Figure 11, pg 27). The region with the fewest people reporting they have experienced or witnessed harassment is RBD with 21%. Harassment is experienced by 23% of male survey respondents and 39% of female survey respondents. These results clearly highlight the gender disparity within WFP with many more women experiencing or witnessing harassment compared to men. It is clear that this is a serious issue and requires immediate attention.

The most common form of harassment experienced and witnessed by survey respondents is ‘Shouting/aggressive behaviour’ (Table 4). This form of harassment was experienced by 48% of respondents and witnessed by 55%. ‘Persistent critical/demeaning remarks in front of others/behind your back’ and ‘Spreading malicious rumours’ were also reported by large numbers of respondents.



TABLE 4:  
percentage of different forms of harassment experienced or witnessed (N=2,935 respondents)

Form of Harassment	Experienced	Witnessed
Shouting/aggressive behaviour	48%	55%
Persistent critical/demeaning remarks in front of others/behind your back	37%	45%
Spreading malicious rumours	35%	42%
Isolation or exclusion in the workplace	29%	40%
Repeated use of offensive gestures and/or words	25%	31%
Unwanted comments/questions about social/cultural/racial background/religion	18%	22%
Unwanted comments about appearance	15%	20%
Using emails to send abusive words and/or images	12%	15%
Physical violence	2%	4%
Other	11%	5%

Harassment is most often committed by people in leadership roles. Data from the Safe and Harmonious Workplace Survey shows that 44% of people who have experienced or witnessed harassment indicate it is committed by Senior Managers and 61% report it is committed by a Direct Supervisor/Manager (Figure 13). A significant amount of harassment is also being perpetrated by colleagues (51%).

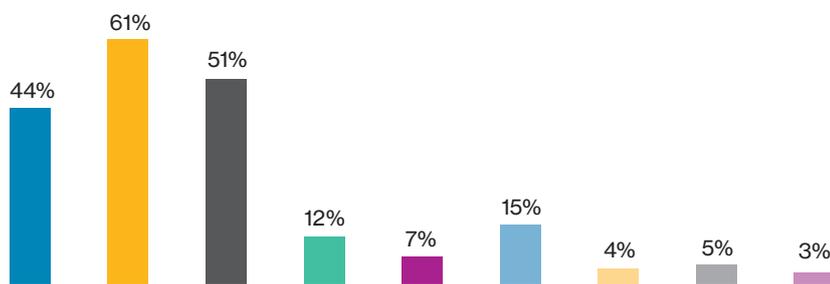


FIGURE 13:  
Main perpetrators of harassment (% selected by N=2,739 respondents)

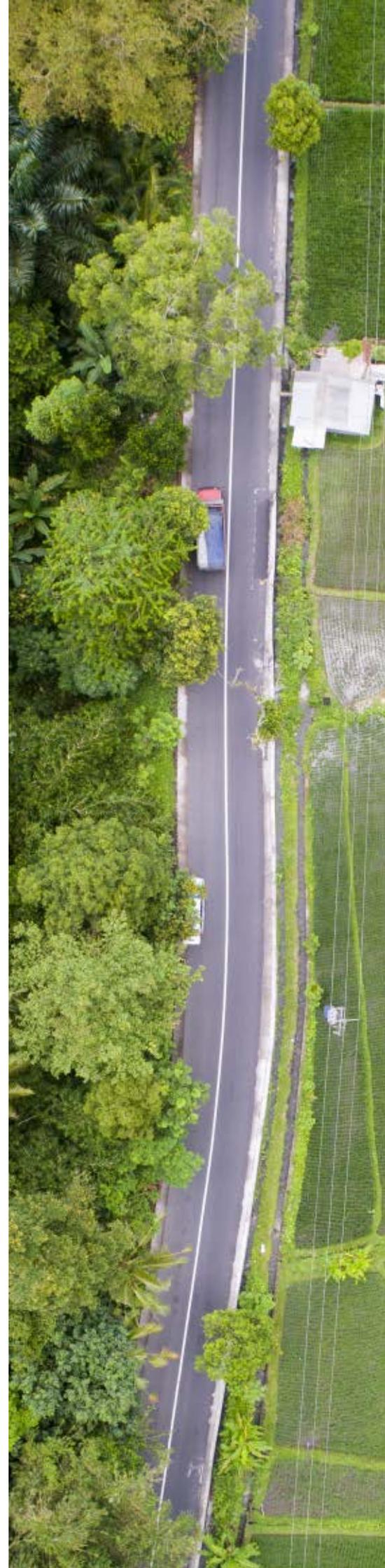
- Senior Manager
- Direct Supervisor/Manager
- Colleague/co-worker
- Subordinate
- Government official
- Someone else working for WFP
- Someone else not working for WFP
- Dont Know
- Other

Harassment was also a major topic in many of the interviews and was referenced during the virtual focus groups. The types of harassment experienced mirror the key themes indicated in the table above, in that people report experiencing both overt and covert forms of harassment.

### Overt Harassment

Overt forms of harassment reported including shouting, yelling and generally aggressive behaviour such as standing over people and even throwing objects. This can also take the form of making jokes at the expense of others or openly laughing with a group about something someone else has done. Other forms of verbal harassment shared include ongoing criticism and putting people down in front of peers by using statements such as “This is not good enough, how did you get to your level producing work like this”.

The perception shared during interviews was that this management approach is part of the culture at WFP and is being rewarded through promotion of leaders behaving in this way, resulting in colleagues copying this way of interacting and therefore perpetuating it.



## Covert Harassment

The covert harassment reported by participants is much more subtle, however this includes behaviours that create an underlying feeling of an 'in crowd' and an 'out crowd'. This is perceived to be created through bullying behaviour such as excluding people from meetings when they should be included or when a discussion impacts them and their work, completely ignoring people and pretending they are not there, talking behind people's backs, not sharing knowledge that someone needs to complete their work and then accusing and blaming them for not completing their work.

In addition, interviewees reported micromanagement in the form of dictating each and every task someone is doing and checking every output, demanding overwhelming amounts of changes in a short timeframe, creating urgency that forces people to work over the weekend when this is actually not required or bringing in more senior people to regular performance conversations which creates an intimidating environment.

The performance management of people was identified as an avenue through which many experiences of harassment take place. The ability of managers to provide clear and constructive feedback without disempowering the individual is an area requiring improvement. Employees shared stories of their supervisor telling them tasks were not completed to the required standard and needed to be done again without providing specific feedback as to what needs to be different. If the employee then asked questions or sought clarification, they were further berated and shamed. This resulted in the new work also not meeting the required standard, as the employee was not provided the guidance required to effectively improve. This sort of interaction was reported to happen behind closed doors most of the time, leaving employees feeling isolated and doubting their professional capabilities. In addition, the outcome for the employee was usually an underperformance rating, removing their chance for promotion.

This description of events was shared in some form by numerous employees. It highlights the long-term impact this covert form of harassment can have on an individual's psychological wellbeing and their career prospects.

## Colleague Harassment

While interviewees shared some stories about experiences of colleague harassment, people tended to focus more on harassment perpetrated by people more senior than them, such that even when the harassment was initially perpetrated by a colleague, the poor management of the situation by management resulted in the employee feeling

### Illustrative comments from individual respondents

“There is also a lot of yelling and shouting, they make jokes. There are quite a few directors that shout at people to get things done, and they are considered go getters. It's not just at me it's done to a lot of people. If a director is male and if you are female it's even worse.

“I've seen people throwing shoes and boxes at people.”

“WFP thinks that it can get away with a few online courses but a real culture and values are to be embodied by the leadership and what we see is people getting away with misconduct, abuse, shouting - no one says anything. Lead by example is an unknown concept in this organisation. People are not accountable and the organisation cannot fire staff when necessary. There are many cases well known to everyone and these people are still in place. So WFP has to first settle this, then promote leaders based on a thorough 360 exercise whereby people who are managed will judge on the leadership capacity.”

“...we have hundreds of supervisors and managers and I think a majority would respond appropriately to inappropriate behavior. But we have a culture (or leadership) that awards aggressive behavior - this then translates to how we should behave to others.”

at best a lack of support and at worst even more harassed. As such, the focus shifted to the manager when the employees expectations of how a situation of colleague harassment should be handled were not met.

Further, interviewees shared a perception that employees are aligning to the abusive behaviour role modelled by leaders, which is further embedding a culture of harassment across the organisation. With employees observing leaders, and the lack of accountability regarding professional behaviour, it sends a clear message that harassment is accepted within the organisation and at times rewarded when people who display harassing behaviour are promoted or celebrated for their accomplishments.

#### Illustrative comments from individual respondents

“I have experienced bullying from managers and colleagues, intimidation, professionally undermining me. This is a very political environment. I’ve seen a supervisor who was bullying the junior consultants that we had. Both in terms of undermining their confidence and telling them to do work that he should be doing.”

“I had noticed a team that was deliberately not willing to understand me at all. My efforts to do my duties were completely mis-understood by some people. The peace I have now is that I keep quiet and follow whatever they say, if am excluded from certain responsibilities, unless otherwise they become more aggressive in a way that they give bad reports on me, in the name that am too low for me to be heard.”

“People at WFP care more about getting the job done than they do about how it is done.”

“Management shows the most abusive behaviour.”

“More at manager level and head of unit.”

“Managers get away with it more easily.”

“See this more from a management perspective, or direct supervisors.”

“Unpleasant tone, “screaming/ shouting” and condemnation for work done correctly, tasks completely useless.”



# Discrimination

Discrimination is another form of abusive behaviour experienced or witnessed by a large number of people at WFP, with 23% of survey respondents (1,855 people) indicating they had experienced/witnessed discrimination while working at WFP. This is considerably more than the 12% that reported experiencing discrimination as part of the GBEC survey 2018<sup>1</sup>, suggesting this is an important area to improve for WFP. Discrimination was also a key topic for focus group participants and interviewees.

As is shown in Figure 11, pg 27, discrimination is experienced and witnessed across the organisation –

it is not limited to or contained within a single region. RBN and HQ & WFP Offices have the largest number of people reporting having had experienced or witnessed discrimination at WFP with 28% and 27% respectively. The region with the fewest people reporting they have experienced or witnessed discrimination is RBP with 17%.

When we look at the experience or witnessing of discrimination across the various segments of the employee population, some interesting results emerge, as summarized in Figure 14-16.

FIGURE 14: experiencing and witnessing of discrimination, broken down in different employee segments (Gender, Employee Group, Contract Type)



<sup>1</sup> <http://www.boeingssuppliers.com/GBES2018-Final.pdf>

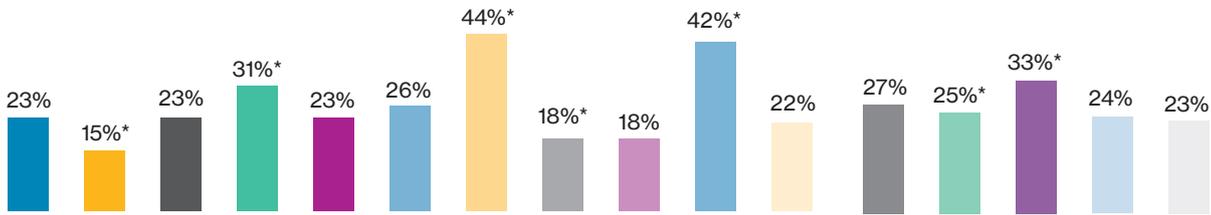


FIGURE 15: Percentage of survey respondents who answered “Yes” to the question “During your time working for WFP, have you ever experienced OR witnessed discrimination?” by functional area

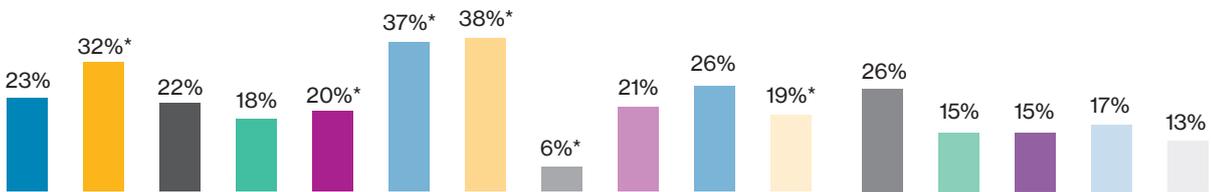
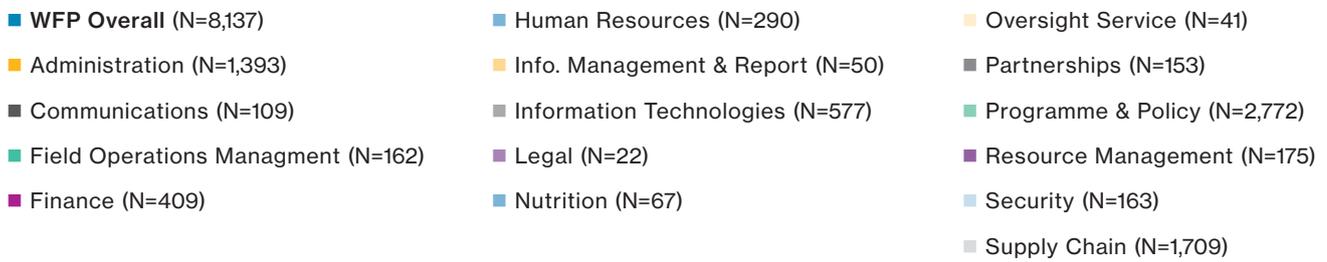


FIGURE 16: % of survey respondents who answered “Yes” to the question “During your time working for WFP, have you ever experienced OR witnessed discrimination?” by employee category

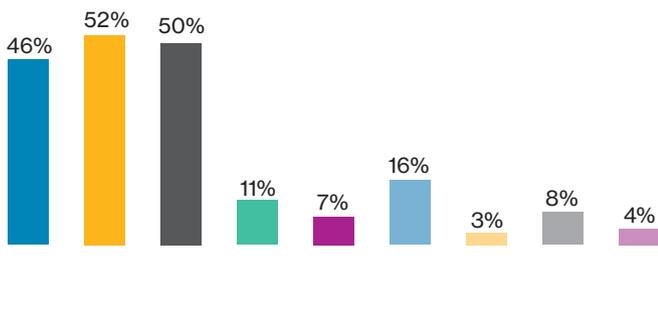
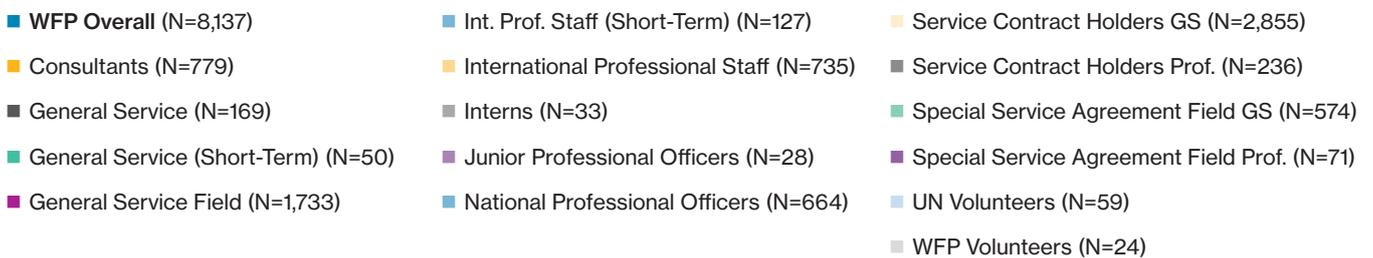


FIGURE 17: Main perpetrators of discrimination (% selected by N=2,265 respondents)



TABLE 5:  
percentage of different forms of discrimination experienced or witnessed (N=2,561 respondents)

Form of discrimination	Experienced	Witnessed
Contract Type	40%	44%
Nationality/Ethnic origin	31%	36%
Race	22%	29%
Sex	20%	25%
Language	16%	18%
Age	14%	14%
Religion/Belief	11%	13%
Gender Identity	10%	13%
Sexual Orientation	3%	6%
Disability	1%	2%
Other	9%	6%

Discrimination is most often committed by people in leadership roles (Figure 17), with 46% of people who have experienced or witnessed discrimination indicating it is committed by Senior Managers and 52% reporting it is committed by a Direct Supervisor/Manager. A significant amount of discrimination is also being perpetrated by colleagues with 50% of people identifying colleagues.

The most widely experienced or witnessed form of discrimination is by contract type. This form of discrimination was experienced by 40% (1,017 people) of discrimination victims and witnessed by 44% (1,139 people) of discrimination witnesses. Discrimination based on nationality/ethnic origin is also reported by a large proportion of victims with 31% (785 people) indicating they have experienced ethnic discrimination and 36% (920 people) indicating the discrimination they had witnessed was based on nationality/ethnic origin. Discrimination based on race and ethnicity were also the most indicated forms of discrimination experienced by employees that participated in the GBEC survey 2018<sup>1</sup>.

In line with survey results, discrimination based on contract type was the most frequently raised concern of all the topics discussed across the interviews and was also referenced during the virtual focus groups. The inequality that exists based on the type of contract people are awarded is clearly observable to employees at WFP and is causing undue stress for employees.

Employees report that, because supervisors and managers decide on the renewal of contracts, some of the inequality is caused by leaders taking advantage of the vulnerability of this group.

Much of the discrimination however is created through the policies governing the use of consultants as a resource pool.

**Illustrative comments from individual respondents**

“Being a consultant and having contributed many years of my life to WFP, I am fearful and seriously stressed that I shall not be considered for a consultancy contract, having reported a Country Director for wickedness and extreme abuse, and conveniently side-lined.”

“There was no concrete support from the Ombudsman office, even though an

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.boeingsuppliers.com/GBES2018-Final.pdf>

**Contractor Vulnerability:** The lack of job security of contract employees, especially consultants, but also fixed term contract staff, makes this group more susceptible to being taken advantage of, as the risk of not having their contract renewed is ever present.

With employees being on daily, weekly and monthly contracts, if they do not comply with requests of leaders their contracts can quickly end. As mentioned previously, this not only lays the foundation for abuse of authority, but it also creates inequality and discrimination.

As consultants have limited power, they are not in a position to push back when asked to do the tasks that no one else wants to do or work extended hours and weekends, so while permanent staff head home, consultants are often left picking up the extra work.

**Contractor policies:** The policies that stipulate the conditions and benefits of contract staff are inherently discriminatory due to the vast difference to that of permanent employees. Despite being required to do the same work, contractors are not afforded the same benefits as permanent employees. With some employees remaining on short or fixed terms contracts for many years, in some cases up to 15 years, without the opportunity to become a permanent employee, they are being disadvantaged. This issue aligns with the results of the UN review of non-staff personnel completed in 2014 in which it was reported that there are essentially dual workforces 'one with full rights and entitlements and another with no or limited entitlements, working in the same organisation. This is in line with neither international labour principles nor the values promoted by the United Nations.' This same report strongly encouraged the UN and all UN agencies to look for alternative resourcing arrangements to end the use of non-staff personnel<sup>1</sup>. The reliance on non-staff personnel at WFP continues despite this report being submitted 5 years ago. There is clearly a need for WFP to take the issue of using non-staff personnel including consultants and contractors much more seriously and commit to an alternative resourcing approach.

**Discrimination based on nationality or ethnicity:** The second-most often reported form of discrimination in the survey, is illustrated in the virtual focus groups and interviews. The virtual focus group and interview data help us understand how this form of discrimination is playing out at WFP. Based on the comments shared and the stories told, it is clear some employees experience a difference in the way people with some ethnic backgrounds are treated compared to people from other ethnic backgrounds.

More specifically, it was shared that there is a preference for Americans or Europeans ("Race discrimination - (white preferred) and nationality (American, North American or European preferred)") and people shared that they have experienced discrimination based on English language proficiency "My supervisor once told me [nationality] people are stupid, no one speaks English here". In addition, there is a perception that national staff are not regarded as being as competent as international employees, even when years of experience and expertise of the national employee match or exceed that of the international employee.

Discrimination based on nationality/ethnic origin was also referenced through discussion of the difference in the way national employees are treated compared to international employees. The shared experiences also indicate international employees are given superior treatment and are favoured over national employees. This sentiment was reflected many times in stories that referenced the differences in treatment and benefits, for example:

#### Illustrative comments from individual respondents

abuse of power was committed. The work of consultants should be protected and acknowledged. Staff management tends to take advantages of the lack of rights by the consultants in case of disputes."

"I strongly believe that the system is always in favour of senior managers, especially if they come from a certain ethnic background (white European)."

"WFP only cares about the International Staff. Where there is training, it is only the international staff who are benefitting from this. International staff know better since they are experts. Why is it only them going for training instead of training the national staff so that they can be experts?"

"What we are feeling is that we are always the wrong and the international staff are

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.unjju.org/sites/www.unjju.org/files/jiu\\_document\\_files/products/en/reports-notes/JIU%20Products/JIU\\_REP\\_2014\\_8\\_Final.pdf](https://www.unjju.org/sites/www.unjju.org/files/jiu_document_files/products/en/reports-notes/JIU%20Products/JIU_REP_2014_8_Final.pdf)

- The difference in allowance given to international and national employees to support their children's education;
- International employees can have a driver sent to pick them up, national employees cannot;
- The difference in benefits of international employees compared to national employees ("the salary of internationals takes into account the rate of inflation, that of locals does not");
- The difference in career development opportunities provided to international versus national staff. Many local employees shared their struggle to be promoted or to be considered for positions being told certain roles are not open to them;
- Different levels of treatment and respect afforded to international staff compared to national staff – 'He would never treat one of his national counterparts like this. He never treated his European or American colleagues like this.'

**Gender discrimination** was also raised in the survey as being experienced and witnessed by a large proportion of survey respondents (20%, 500 people and 25%, 641 people respectively). It is interesting to see that females report higher levels of gender discrimination than males. This reinforces the gender inequality that is present at WFP but it also highlights that there is a group of male employees that feel they are treated differently due to their gender. While significantly fewer than female respondents, this is still cause for concern. The central theme regarding gender discrimination is regarding the treatment of women by men who are often more senior. Shared stories indicate the various forms of gender discrimination being experienced at WFP:

- Males being given preference to do field work (e.g. one female employee was told "Are you sure you want to into the field? It's really hard you know.")
- The perception that females are most often in less senior roles than males (e.g. women usually cover lower positions than men)

**Illustrative comments from individual respondents**

always the right ones and if you tried to report or speak about any harassment from them, especially if they are managers, you will be the wrong one!"

"Internationals are better listened to, better considered in the organization even if the capacities of the local are higher."

"Authorities rely more on international staff, and communicate mostly with international staff."

"Discrimination based on nationality - being local staff."

"Discrimination based on your nationality or passport."

"There is competence and a lot of capacity at the level of staff under local contract and it must be more valued by offering them opportunities for local promotion."

"[National employees should have] access to grants for

- Assumptions being made about how women should prioritise career and outside work life (e.g. one female employee was told ‘You are in your child bearing years, you should focus on finding a husband and having a family rather than promotion’)
- The perception that women are inferior to men in some way (e.g., “Men are condescending towards women. We are made to feel like idiots”, “I have woman colleagues reporting to me and in meetings, if they make a suggestion, they are ignored and when men make the same suggestion everyone agrees.”)
- The notion of a boy’s club mentioned by a number of people suggests an ‘in and out mentality’ with males being ‘in’ and women being ‘on the outer’. (e.g. “There is, what amounts to a boys club, that seeks to identify and promote those in their image”; “There is exclusion, gender based discrimination (boys club ganging up)”)
- Women being shown less respect than males through the inappropriate behaviour of male employees including inappropriate jokes, sexual innuendo, comments, touching and invitations to non-work activities. These points will be covered in more detail in the following section on sexual harassment.

An interesting finding that differs from the majority of the data collected was the positive perception of those who attended the Spanish virtual focus group. When asked about the most positive aspects of the culture at WFP, this group of employees indicated it was the lack of discrimination that was most positive. That is, the lack of discrimination by nationality, sex, race, and gender was indicated to be what people valued most about the organization. As this perception varies greatly from the experience of most other employees that provided input into the review, this requires further exploration to understand what may be contributing to the difference in experience.

**Illustrative comments from individual respondents**

children’s school fees; opportunity to work in another country for nationals over a period of three to six months.”

“WFP is educating on the very obvious behaviour. However, it is still difficult for a woman to be treated equally and there is still discrimination based on gender and/or nationality. We still hear: we should hire women but they only get low level positions. In logistics at least, men allow themselves to make inappropriate comments to women as a joke and if the woman replies, she’s wrong. We still hear, she got this position because she’s a woman.”

“Favouritism by country of origin, gender and age.”

“There is a lot of gender discrimination.”

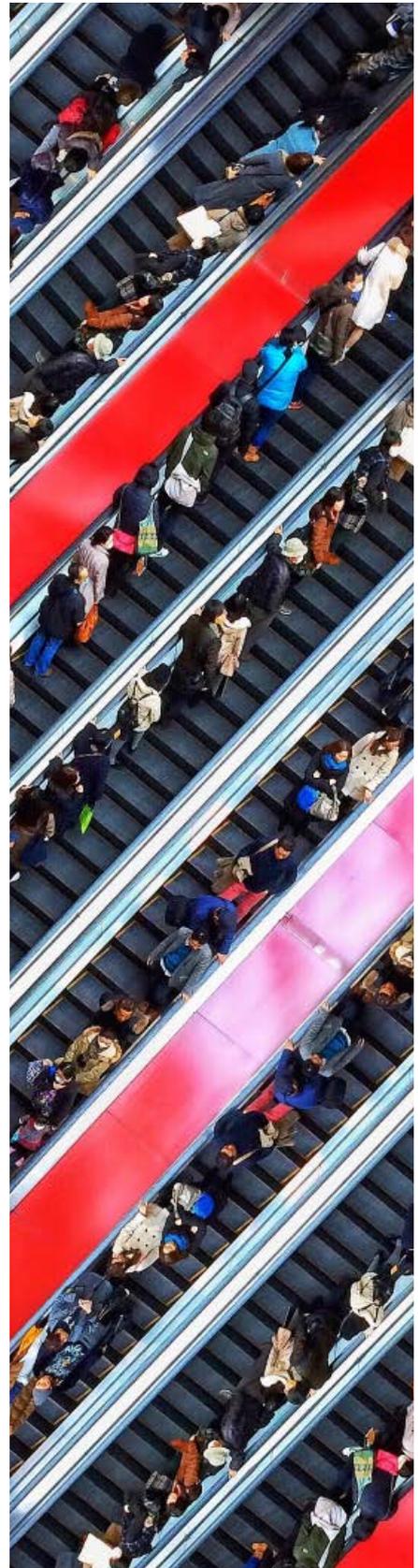
“Happens based on nationality, contract type, gender.”

# Sexual Harassment

According to the survey results, of the 5 types of abusive behaviour being considered, sexual harassment was reported to be experienced or witnessed by the fewest number of people (8%, 641 people). The result may reflect a true indication of sexual harassment compared to other forms of abusive behaviour however it may also be related to lower likelihood of people who have experienced sexual harassment admitting that they have. According to a report by the EEOC<sup>1</sup>, people who experience this form of harassment are likely to deny or downplay the gravity of the situation, or attempt to ignore or forget the behaviour. While the result is considerably lower than that reported in the United Nations Safe Space Survey Report 2019 in which 38.7% said they had experienced sexual harassment at some point while working for the UN, it is only slightly less than than results of the GBES 2018 survey which reported 12% of people had observed sexual harassment in the work place. Further, when you consider the actual number of people, that is, 641 people who indicated they have either experienced or witnessed sexual harassment at WFP, this is cause for concern. Although fewer than the other forms of harassment, there is still a large number of people being affected. When we look at results by gender, we see that females indicate they have experienced or witnessed sexual harassment significantly more than men with 13% of females selecting 'yes', compared to just 5% of males which is consistent with most research findings in this area<sup>2</sup>.

As can be seen in Figures 11, 18 and 19, sexual harassment was most often experienced or witnessed by respondents located in HQ & WFP Offices (14%), by respondents in personal grades P1-4 (19%) and P5 and above (24%).

There are also some countries (Kenya 17%, Egypt 16% and Italy 14%), functions (Field Operations Management 20% and Resource Management (17%) and employee categories (Consultants 15%, International Professional staff (short term) 16% and International professional staff 21%) that report higher levels of sexual harassment. Despite some groups reporting significantly higher levels of sexual harassment compared to others, there are few employee segments in which everyone indicated sexual harassment was not present. This indicates there is a clear opportunity to improve the culture of WFP and remove the exposure of WFP employees to sexual harassment.



<sup>1</sup>EEOC Select Task Force on the Study of Harassment in the workplace Report June 2016  
<sup>2</sup>EEOC Select Task Force on the Study of Harassment in the workplace Report June 2016

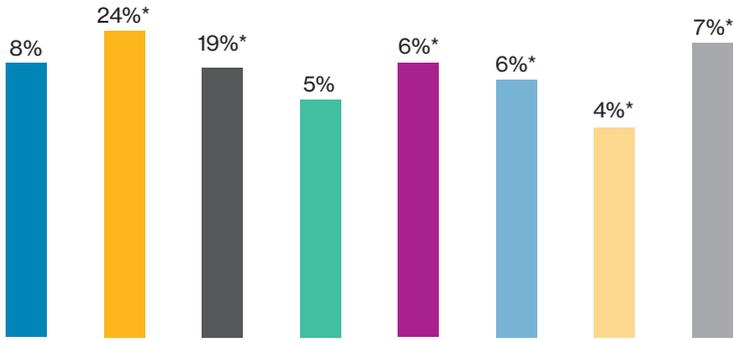


FIGURE 18:  
% of survey respondents who answered “Yes” to the question “During your time working for WFP, have you ever experienced OR witnessed sexual harassment?” by personal grade

- WFP Overall (N=8,137)
- P-5 and above (N=247)
- P1-P4 (N=643)
- NO-C/D (N=79)
- NO-A/B (N=585)
- G4-G7 (N=1,511)
- G1-G3 (N=441)
- Ungraded (N=4,631)

**Illustrative comments from individual respondents**

“It should be made clearer to staff at all levels that negative comments on religion, sexual orientation, etc are not acceptable under any circumstance. I feel this message is not yet clear to many staff.”

“Requested for several dates, when I refused, my contract has terminated as simple as that, then I moved to another unit on a new contract.”

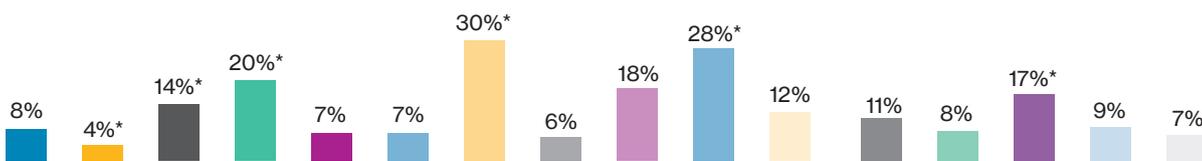
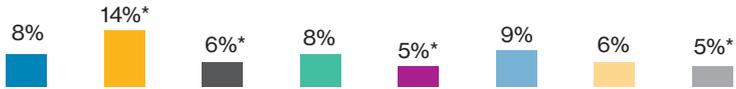


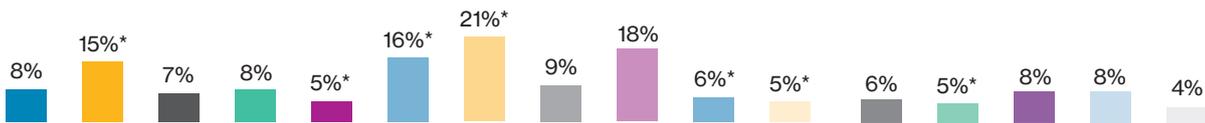
FIGURE 19:  
% of survey respondents who answered “Yes” to the question “During your time working for WFP, have you ever experienced OR witnessed sexual harassment?” by functional area

- WFP Overall (N=8,137)
- Administration (N=1,393)
- Communications (N=109)
- Field Ops. Man. (N=162)
- Finance (N=409)
- Human Resources (N=290)
- Info. Man. & Reporting (N=50)
- Info. Tech. (N=577)
- Legal (N=22)
- Nutrition (N=67)
- Oversight Service (N=41)
- Partnerships (N=153)
- Programme & Policy (N=2,772)
- Resource Man. (N=157)
- Security (N=163)
- Supply Chain (N=1,709)



% of survey respondents who answered "Yes" to the question "During your time working for WFP, have you ever experienced OR witnessed sexual harassment?" by region

- WFP Overall (N=8,137)
- HQ & WFP Offices (N=913)
- RBJ 2019 (N=925)
- RBC 2019 (N=1,593)
- RBP 2019 (N=555)
- RBN 2019 (N=1,742)
- RBB 2019 (N=1,196)
- RBD 2019 (N=1,200)



% of survey respondents who answered "Yes" to the question "During your time working for WFP, have you ever experienced OR witnessed sexual harassment?" by employee category

- WFP Overall (N=8,137)
- Consultants (N=779)
- General Service (N=169)
- General Service (Short-Term) (N=50)
- General Service Field (N=1,733)
- Int. Prof. Staff (Short-Term) (N=127)
- International Professional Staff (N=735)
- Interns (N=33)
- Junior Professional Officers (N=28)
- National Professional Officers (N=664)
- Service Contract Holders GS (N=2,855)
- Service Contract Holders Prof. (N=236)
- Special Service Agreement Field GS (N=574)
- Special Service Agreement Field Prof. (N=71)
- UN Volunteers (N=59)
- WFP Volunteers (N=24)



Interestingly, colleagues were identified as the group most likely to be the perpetrator of sexual harassment (58%) followed by Director Supervisor/ Manager (35%) and Senior Manager (30% - Figure 20). This differs from the other forms of abusive behaviour considered, in which leaders were the most likely group to commit the abuse.

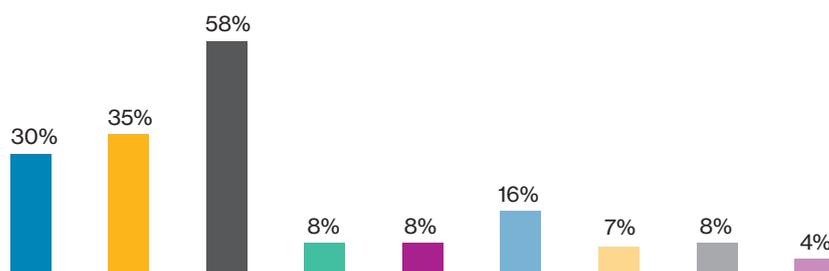


FIGURE 20: Main perpetrators of sexual harassment (% selected by N=973 respondents)

- Senior Manager
- Direct Supervisor/Manager
- Colleague/co-worker
- Subordinate
- Government official
- Someone else working for WFP
- Someone else not working for WFP
- Dont Know
- Other

The forms of abuse outlined in Table 6 indicate the range of ways that survey respondents claim to have experienced / witnessed sexual harassment. The forms of abuse also align with the stories shared during the interviews and the responses of virtual focus group participants.

TABLE 6: percentage of different forms of sexual harassment experienced or witnessed (N=973 respondents)

Form of Sexual Harassment	Experienced	Witnessed
Suggestive sexual comments or jokes about sex or with a sexual meaning	36%	45%
Unwarranted questions/remark about marital status/sexual orientation/history/ activities	26%	31%
Repeated requests for 'a date'	19%	25%
Unwanted touching or kissing	19%	23%
Unwanted receipt of images or verbal/written messages of a sexual nature	8%	12%
Promise of benefits in return for sexual acts	5%	12%
Threat of negative consequences for declining sexual advances	5%	7%
Rape, attempted rape or other sexual assault	3%	3%
Other	7%	5%

The top four forms of sexual harassment can be explored in more detail using experiences shared during the one-on-one interviews and virtual focus groups.

## Suggestive sexual comments or jokes about sex or with a sexual meaning

- This reflects the inappropriate and unprofessional language and topics that people are exposed to at WFP and is consistent with the most common form of sexual harassment reported by respondents in the United Nations Safe Space Survey Report 2019. This was reported to occur both on the work site and during after-work activities such as team drinks or team social activities. The large number of people experiencing or witnessing this form of sexual harassment indicates that the expectations of professional behaviour at work are not being clearly set or enforced which sends a message that this sort of behaviour is acceptable at WFP.

## • Unwanted questions/remark about marital status/sexual orientation/history/ activities

- This form of sexual harassment reflects the crossing of professional boundaries by discussing non-work related topics with people in a manner that makes the victim uncomfortable. This demonstrates disregard for the sensitivity of such topics and for cultural, social and professional appropriateness. The lack of clarity about appropriate boundaries and non-existent accountability for those who cross those boundaries results in victims being placed in uncomfortable situations that they shouldn't have to be exposed to in a work environment.

## • Repeated requests for 'a date'

- This form of sexual harassment refers to employees at WFP making repeated requests for 'a date' despite being told 'no' many times. This has led to situations of stalking and people being followed by a colleague or leader who wants to pursue a romantic relationship with them. Situations in which employees have tried to entice other employees to come over to their house or to meet outside of work under the premise of continuing work tasks or discussions. This sort of behaviour creates significant discomfort with the pursued employees having to repeatedly reinforce their boundaries.

## • Unwanted touching or kissing

- This includes both deliberate inappropriate behaviour of a sexual nature as well as behaviour that is intended as friendliness but crosses individual boundaries and inadvertently causes discomfort. The former is intended sexual harassment while the latter reflects poor understanding and disregard for individual and cultural differences. While behaviours associated with both of these forms of sexual harassment are described similarly, victims can often identify the difference. Victims report feeling more conflicted about reporting the latter because they are aware that the behaviour is not intended as malicious.

Other forms of sexual harassment indicated in the table above are also important and need to be acknowledged. Particularly, the result that 3% of respondents (28 people) have experienced 'Rape, attempted rape or other sexual assault' while working at WFP. These are serious criminal offenses that go well beyond inappropriate workplace behaviour. This reflects the depth of reform that needs to occur at WFP and the need to acknowledge the serious abuse that some people have experienced while working at WFP.

While the numbers of people who have experienced or witnessed sexual harassment at WFP are fewer than for the other forms of abusive behaviour being considered, this does not make this any less serious or important. Steps must be taken to protect WFP employees from the unprofessional and at times criminal behaviour of colleagues and leaders and to develop a workplace environment in which everyone can feel comfortable that their personal boundaries will be respected without question.

### Illustrative comments from individual respondents

“Yes, sexual comments, inappropriate touching on daily basis, in particular at HQ.”

“I have seen a male staff abused by a male manager by touching -so called- friendly.”

“Overt sexual comments.”

“Told men have sexual needs to justify sexual activities against code of conduct.”

“Not me personally, but so many women colleagues have told me what they have experienced. Propositions, rape, men masturbating, comments on their physical appearance...”

“Not personally, but I think some colleagues forget that “jokes” are perceived differently depending on culture, personalities, etc.”

“My director makes jokes about others having sex when they are not present.”

# Retaliation

In the Safe and Harmonious Workplace Survey, 12% of respondents (950 people) indicated that they have experienced/witnessed retaliation while working at WFP. Retaliation was defined earlier on as follows: “Any direct or indirect detrimental action recommended, threatened or taken towards an individual who, in good faith, has reported misconduct or cooperated with a duly authorized investigation, audit or proactive integrity review (in practicality).”

This form of abusive behaviour is experienced across the organisation and is most prevalent amongst employees working in HQ & WFP Offices (17%) and least prevalent in RBJ and RBB with 9% of respondents from these groups indicating they have experienced/witnessed retaliation (Figure 11, pg 27). Retaliation is also experienced significantly more frequently by women (14%) than men (10%). Additional demographic results provide interesting insight into groups that are experiencing or witnessing retaliation across the organisation (Figures 21-23), including:

- Internationally recruited employees (17%) are more likely to report experiencing retaliation than locally recruited employees (10%).
- Those people aged 45 years and above report experiencing retaliation more than other age brackets – 45 years and above (14%), 30-45 years (11%) and 18-30 years (9%)
- This is consistent with tenure, with those who have been with the organisation for 10 years or more report having experienced or witnessed retaliation the most (15%) followed by those with 5-10 years of tenure (13%). Respondents with less than 5 years of service report experiencing the least retaliation (9%). This result

could potentially reflect that people with greater tenure have had more opportunity to experience/witness retaliation due to being with the organisation longer. It could also be they are referencing less current experiences of retaliation.

- Results differ across personal grades with P5 and above (21%), P1-4 (20%) and NO – C/D (18%) reporting they have experienced/witnessed retaliation significantly more than the average for WFP (12%).



- Two employee categories also stand out as experiencing/witnessing retaliation significantly more than other employee categories with 22% of International Staff and 19% of General Service employees reporting they have experienced/witnessed retaliation.
- Respondents in Resource Management more frequently reported experiencing retaliation than other functional areas with 21% of respondents from Resource Management indicating they have experienced/witnessed retaliation at WFP.

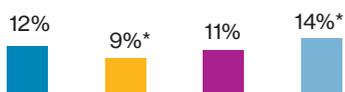


FIGURE 21:

% of survey respondents who answered "Yes" to the question "During your time working for WFP, have you ever experienced OR witnessed retaliation?" by age group

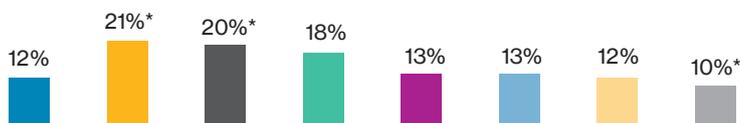


FIGURE 22:

% of survey respondents who answered "Yes" to the question "During your time working for WFP, have you ever experienced OR witnessed retaliation?" by personal grade



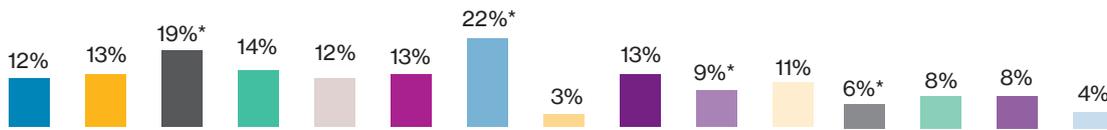
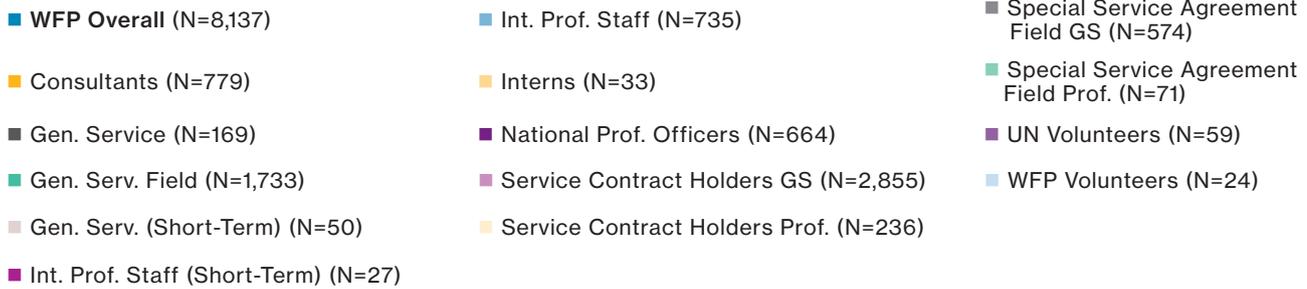


FIGURE 23:

% of survey respondents who answered “Yes” to the question “During your time working for WFP, have you ever experienced OR witnessed retaliation?” by employee category



Retaliation is most often committed by people in leadership roles (Figure 24), with 52% of people who have experienced or witnessed retaliation indicating it is committed by Senior Managers and 68% reporting it is committed by a Direct Supervisor/Manager. It was however also reported that colleagues/co-workers are perpetrating retaliation (30% of the cases).

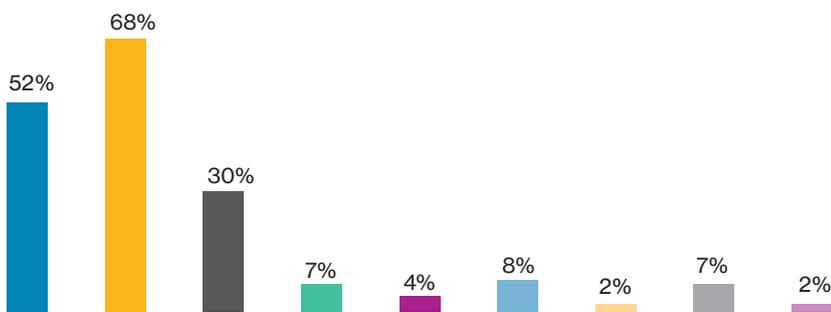


FIGURE 24:

main perpetrators of retaliation (% selected by N=1,596 respondents)



Retaliation at WFP takes various forms (Table 8) with 'Change in duties/ responsibilities/role without reason' being the most frequently reported form. 25% of people

who indicated they had experienced retaliation indicated that it came in this form and 33% also indicated they had witnessed retaliation happening in this way.

TABLE 8:  
percentage of different forms of retaliation experienced or witnessed (N=1,596 respondents)

Form of retaliation	Experienced	Witnessed
Change in duties/responsibilities/role without reason	25%	33%
Exclusion from meetings and/or communications	24%	23%
Humiliating/taunting/badmouthing/embarrassing you/someone in front of other colleagues	22%	27%
Intentional blocking or interference with promotion/career opportunities	22%	20%
Excessive supervision/over-monitoring performance and/or assigning unachievable tasks	21%	21%
'Putting down'/singling out/treated differently and other forms of isolation	17%	20%
Contract change or non-renewal/termination of contract	16%	33%
Interference with duties/setting objectives with unreasonable deadlines	14%	13%
Downsizing of your post	13%	19%
Reassignment or transfer to another office/location	10%	16%
Other	6%	4%

During the interviews and focus groups, employees shared that because they reported other abuse such as abuse of authority or harassment, they then experienced retaliation because the perpetrator was informed that they had reported them. In line with this, retaliation is indicated as the main reason people are reluctant to report abusive behaviour. This will be discussed in detail in the reporting section of this report.

Additional key themes that emerged align with the top forms of retaliation indicated in the survey as listed in Table 8. The experiences and stories shared in the interviews and focus groups bring these key themes to life and provide insight into the way retaliation is experienced at WFP.

### Retaliation through negatively impacting someone's work and career:

As can be seen from the quotes taken from the virtual focus groups that are included below, retaliation

is often experienced by employees through the negative implications on their career. These negative implications can include the blocking of promotions, contracts not being extended, removal of work, changes of work duties to work of lesser interest or challenge and exclusion from upskilling opportunities such as training. This form of retaliation is closely linked to abuse of authority as leaders are using their authority related to career advancement and work allocation to retaliate against individuals.

### Retaliation through exclusion:

Employees report experiencing retaliation through being excluded, as evidenced through the quotes included below.

Exclusion is referenced generally in these quotes, however, the stories shared during the interviews indicate exclusion can include being ignored, not being invited to meetings that they would have been invited to previously, or should be invited to, as it impacts their work, or being excluded from

team activities and office communications. This creates a sense of isolation and being cut off socially with employees sharing that they were made to feel that they no longer belonged at the organisation and should leave.

### Retaliation through harassment:

Retaliation through harassment references the types of harassment discussed in the previous section on harassment, but specifically relates to when this type of abusive behaviour is used to punish employees for something that the manager did not like (e.g., challenging their approach, presenting an opposing point of view or speaking up against unethical or abusive work practices).

As can be seen from the quotes below, harassment-based retaliation includes people speaking in a negative way to others, rather than addressing an issue directly with the person, ganging up on individual employees, being yelled at and belittled, and being discredited. Employees shared that this impacts their confidence and belief in themselves as a professional.

Retaliation is a form of abusive behaviour that is being experienced by many people across WFP, with some employee segments experiencing this more than others. As can be seen from the detailed exploration of how retaliation is displayed within WFP, it is closely linked to a number of the other abusive behaviours, including abuse of authority and harassment. The most frequently reported experience of retaliation was in relation to the reporting of abusive behaviour and, as will be shown in the following section, fear of retaliation is the number one reason that employees give for not reporting abusive behaviour. This indicates that one aspect of the solution to the issue of retaliation lies in the effective management of reporting and investigation of complaints concerning abusive behaviour.

#### How do you experience retaliation at WFP?

##### Illustrative comments from individual respondents

“Threats about contract extension and promotion.”

“Block promotions.”

“Contract extension issues.”

“No contract extension.”

“Removal of work or transfer of the credit for work to others.”

“I have been told that I should not fight the fight if I want to keep working at WFP.”

“Through insecure employment contracts. Through performance reviews. Through bad-mouthing / malicious gossip which then prevents access to professional opportunities.”

##### Illustrative comments from individual respondents

“Exclusion from training opportunities, even if relevant to my post.”

“Delay in promotion, changing tasks frequently, not a clear TOR.”

“Because the senior management took no action and instead, changed the course of my career by reassigning me to a position I did not want while promoting their ‘favourites’.”

“When you are excluded, shot down, career progression blocked, bad mouthing and gossip.”

“Goes from being yelled at to being excluded.”

“Primarily through exclusion; also by belittling the worth of a team member/ bad mouthing them.”

#### Illustrative comments from individual respondents

“Discovered my post was cancelled through corridor chats – everyone knew it but not me – everyone around me was shocked and wondering why – deputy told me this was purely a management decision, this has nothing to do with you.”

“My supervisor also isolated me, excluded me from important events although I should be involved. Left me with a feeling of being punished while trying to rectify wrongdoing and feel very lonely, lose trust and faith in the organisation.”

“When I reported harassment, my supervisor got even worse and put me in difficult situations constantly, being yelled at, being belittled and discredited as a professional.”

“By management ganging up.”

“They often discredit you and block opportunities for advancement.”

“When manager is not qualified they are always aggressive against qualified staff.”

“There is a very common practice of shouting with colleagues...”



# Reporting

Given the experiences of abusive behaviour outlined in the sections above, having access to an effective reporting avenue is essential at WFP. Unfortunately, results of the survey, focus groups and interviews, suggest this is not currently the case at WFP. Effective reporting channels and associated follow-up procedures represent another area that requires serious improvement.

Seven in ten survey respondents, on average, say they would personally report instances of misconduct and around half believe most other people would do the same.

In reality however, the numbers are quite different with on average, only a quarter of people who have experienced/

witnessed misconduct indicated they reported the incident (Table 9). This low reporting rate is not surprising however, as industry research indicates at least 70% of employees who experience harassment or discrimination at work never report it<sup>2</sup> The largest number of reported cases are about harassment, whilst the lowest are about retaliation.

The reporting rates range from 17-36%, with people who experience harassment being the most likely to report, at 36%, and people who experience or witness discrimination being the least likely to report, at 17%. When compared to the reporting rate of one third included in the UNAIDS report, there is some alignment however reporting rates for discrimination and retaliation are well below this.

TABLE 9  
Percentage and number of survey respondents who indicated they have reported each type of abusive behaviour

Type of Misconduct	HARASSMENT	SEXUAL HARASSMENT	ABUSE OF AUTHORITY	DISCRIMINATION	RETALIATION
% of people who indicated they reported abuse	36%	23%	26%	17%	20%
Number of cases where participants indicated that they reported	989	178	854	380	264

There are some differences in reporting avenues across types of abusive behaviour, however, when we look at the average, the most preferred avenue to report is to the direct supervisor / manager or another supervisor/manager. Many people also choose to report to a HR Officer or focal point, a staff counsellor and the Ombudsman. The Ethics Office, A Security Officer, a Peer Support Volunteer and the Office of the Inspector General are the least utilised reporting avenues. Interviewees shared that they are less likely to report using these avenues as they seem very serious and most preferred to explore other avenues or simply leave the organisation. Interestingly, respondents who report sexual harassment, are more likely to report to the Office of the Inspector General compared to respondents who report on other types of abuse (13% compared to the average of 8%). On average, 'Other' was selected as a reporting avenue by 13% of respondents indicating employees are utilising additional reporting avenues to those listed below.

Experiences shared during the interviews reflect a positive experience of the Staff Counsellor, with employees feeling a strong level of support from this program. Employees expressed less positive views of HR, the Ombudsman, Staff representatives and advisors, the Office of the Inspector General and The Ethics Office. This is largely related to the perception that these avenues were less supportive and helpful in resolving the issue. As mentioned earlier, 31% of respondents indicate they reported to HR which suggests that HR has a vital role to play in responding to abusive behaviour however there is considerable work to do to improve and expand the role of HR in preventing and addressing these issues.

As there are so many avenues to report abusive behaviour, it is difficult for all avenues to provide a consistent response that meets the needs of the employee. Refining these avenues and creating greater clarity on the role of each avenue will ensure more effective reporting and improved response to reports.

<sup>1</sup> Average is calculated using the % of survey respondents across the 5 types of abuse who answered "Yes" to the question "Did you report the abuse you experienced or witnessed"

<sup>2</sup> EEOC Select task Force on the Study of Harassment in the Workplace 2016

TABLE 10

survey respondents choosing each reporting channel to report experiences of abusive behaviour (% selected, average of different types of abusive behaviour)

The Ethics Office	4%
A security officer	7%
A peer support volunteer	8%
The Office of the Inspector General	8%
A respectful workplace advisor	11%
A Staff Association Representative	12%
Other	13%
The Ombudsman	18%
A staff counsellor	26%
A human resources officer or focal point	31%
Another supervisor/manager	38%
Direct supervisor / manager	49%

TABLE 12

reason given for reporting abusive behaviour by survey respondents (% selected, average of different types of abusive behaviour)

Other	14
Did not want the matter to be investigated	10
Only wanted to talk about the matter with someone	27
Wanted the matter to be investigated	43
Had faith in the person and/or office	51
Knew the person and/or the office and felt comfortable	52

#### Illustrative comments from individual respondents

‘Need something like the ombudsman that is confidential but also has the power to talk to someone in management. Need someone to say ‘we have had a number of complaints about this issue – what are you doing to manage it’. Problem with the ombudsman is that they don’t have any power. People won’t do the right thing unless someone is looking at them and enforcing that the correct action is taken.’

While a large proportion of people are reporting abusive behaviour, the reporting rates indicate the majority of abusive behaviour, on average 69% , goes unreported, which suggests there are factors that are discouraging people from reporting. This reporting rate is not unique to WFP with industry research indicating up to 70% of harassment and discrimination goes unreported . To understand this further, it is interesting to explore the top selected reasons for reporting and not reporting abusive behaviour.

Table 12 above shows that the most common reason indicated for reporting abusive behaviour is that the individual wanting to report ‘knew the person and/ or the office and felt comfortable’ (52%) followed closely by ‘had faith in the person and/or office’ (51%). Both of these reasons reference a feeling of trust and confidence that the matter would be handled well. Given that the most preferred avenue to report is to the direct supervisor/manager or another supervisor/ manager (Table 11), this suggests that those who report are more likely to have an existing positive perception of the supervisor/manager they are working with, so they feel reassured that reporting will not have negative implications for them.

When we consider the reasons people give for not reporting, it is clear those who choose not to report (Table 13) do not have such a sense of trust and confidence that the matter will be handled well or are fearful of the potential ramifications of doing so.

This sentiment was echoed in the Virtual Focus Groups and one-on-one interviews, with a large number of people indicating that they are scared of reporting because of the impact it could have on their career and their job security. Many also indicated that reporting will most likely make their situation worse and will not lead to any implications for the perpetrator, so they see no point in reporting. This speaks to the lack of faith employees have in the reporting process and their belief that perpetrators will not be held accountable even if they do report.

Employees also shared that they would likely be labelled as a ‘complainer’ or be seen as letting the team down by discussing team matters with outside people, which could lead to further isolation and exclusion.

### Employees’ experience of the reporting process

Of those respondents who did decide to report, many expressed dissatisfaction with the reporting process with only one in three, on average, being satisfied with WFP’s response to the report (Table 14). Those who reported sexual harassment were the most satisfied with WFP’s response, whilst those who reported retaliation were the least satisfied. When we compare levels of satisfaction with those included in the UNAIDS report, it is clear that satisfaction levels at WFP are much

#### Illustrative comments from individual respondents

“I have informal discussions with colleagues and what I hear is that people do not report issues because of their contracts, or because they don’t think anything will change, they don’t want to be labelled as the problem or the abused person, they don’t want to miss any professional opportunities.”

“They have to change the employment contracts status because this is a huge risk and a huge problem. No one will report when they have dependents.”

“One thing that I have experienced after almost 8 years working for WFP is the culture of retaliation. I will still file a formal complaint but I do not feel comfortable, at least before I have the next assignment. When you file complaints you get known as the trouble

TABLE 14

#### % satisfaction with reporting experience by survey respondents

Harassment (N=989)	37%
Sexual Harassment (N=178)	47%
Abuse of Authority (N=854)	36%
Discrimination (N=380)	34%
Retaliation (N=264)	26%

lower. At UNAIDS, the overall satisfaction level was 43.4% while for WFP this ranges from 26%-46%.

Analysis of the open comments from the survey indicate that the main reasons why people were dissatisfied with WFP's response to their report, were the lack of action/sensitivity from management, including abuse of authority, 'covering up', and no systematic follow-up process. Many also felt the investigation took far too long, was not confidential, did not provide sufficient protection for either the victim or the accused and the investigation itself was not thorough enough to draw an accurate conclusion.

TABLE 13

reasons given by survey respondents for not reporting abusive behaviour (% selected, average of different types of abusive behaviour)

Preferred to report it to the police	1%
Was threatened/told not to report	1%
Feared isolation from community	3%
Felt ashamed/had cultural/social reasons	3%
Did not feel like re-living the bad experience and re-experiencing trauma	5%
Concerned about my reputation	10%
Did not realise at the time that the behaviour was not allowed	11%
Feared isolation from colleagues/peers	11%
Not aware of resolution options	13%
Preferred to deal with it without any direct involvement of WFP	13%
Other	14%
Feared retaliation by others in the workplace	19%
Feared isolation from manager/supervisor	22%
Concerned about confidentiality	22%
Did not want to be perceived as the trouble-maker	25%
Felt WFP would not respond / take too long to remedy	26%
Did not have trust in WFP taking action	38%
Feared retaliation by manager/supervisor	38%

**Illustrative comments from individual respondents**

maker. I will not report what happened to me until I am in a secure position.”

“It is unfortunate but WFP’s response came with fabrications, ignoring the abuse of authority committed. I have a trauma from the case and still suffer from retaliations. WFP should come up with a stricter policy preventing retaliations from happening.”

“Lack of trust in the system. Hard to document and prove.”

“Retaliation!”

“Why report when the ones who will follow up are worse?”

“No faith in the system.”

“Lack of accountability.”

“Lack of trust.”

“Fear of losing their job.”

Further, participants report vastly different experiences when reporting to the same source. For example, when reporting to the Ombudsman some participants shared that they were told that the Ombudsman has no authority to act so the individual should go to their manager or HR, while others shared that the Ombudsman came to their office, spoke to people involved and tried to find a solution. Interviewees also shared that due to the lack of confidentiality, people that have been wrongly accused suffer implications regarding their reputation and career and the victim's personal stories of experiencing abuse become known across the organisation. The inconsistent application of suspension means some people accused of abusive behaviour are allowed to continue working in an environment with the victim for many months, creating at best, significant discomfort and at worst, enabling abuse to continue. Others may be suspended on full pay and prevented from working, only for the investigation outcome, to find they were falsely accused. There isn't a simple answer to this challenge, however it is clear that the current approach to investigations requires significant revision to ensure a faster, more consistent and more thorough investigation process that can ensure confidentiality is maintained.

### Employees' suggestions to improve the reporting process

When employees were asked for their ideas on what could be done to improve the reporting approach and encourage more people to report, they had some interesting suggestions. The key focus of these suggestions is about taking action and demonstrating that people will be held accountable for their behaviour. The desire for greater confidentiality and protection of those involved is also clear.

#### More accountability

##### Illustrative comments from individual respondents

“Ensure accountability for known cases of harassment, abuse of power etc.”

“Seeing that some people have been sanctioned will encourage others to report abuse.”

“Quick process to move out from WFP people behaving badly.”

“Show that people can be actually fired!!”

“Make example of some D level staff who have been there for 20 years and abuse their power.”

“Actual consequences once abuse is confirmed.”

“Reduce impunity by punishing these behaviours.”

“Sanction the authors harshly, fire them.”

##### Illustrative comments from individual respondents

“Retaliation from supervisor, rumours around by other colleagues, described as trouble maker.”

“Because nothing would happen. Need more cases of people actually getting fired for their actions.”

“Being singled out, and we do not know if it is worth it.”

“Evidence is the main problem, and also blaming.”

“One of my employees was falsely complaining about me to my supervisor. I was advised to discuss this with him directly so we went to the ombudsman where it was the classical sit down discussion with a mediator. Nothing was clarified, the issue was just discussed, the mediator was just repeating what we were saying but no actions or no solutions were outlined. Noting happened with that individual.”

## Raise awareness

### Illustrative comments from individual respondents

“Keep raising the awareness so that staff know what to do and when in case they encounter any harassment.”

“Going more public about the actions taken against SUBSTANTIATED reports of harassment, sexual harassment, abuse of authority, discrimination and retaliation, without safeguarding the identity of the perpetrators: sometimes WFP seems to be overly fair to perpetrators by making them disappear, rather than going openly sharing names and why they have been found guilty of misconduct.”

## Confidential platforms / consider independent channels for reporting (e.g. counsellor, focal point)

### Illustrative comments from individual respondents

“Offer confidential platforms for staff to report harassment, sexual harassment, abuse of authority, discrimination and retaliation. When a staff member reports an incident or files a complaint, everyone knows about it. There is no confidentiality.”

“Face to Face methods of reporting harassment are not working in WFP, individuals don't have integrity any more, they will just report you back to the person. We need more discreet methods of reporting harassment. More frequent visits by the staff counsellor.”

“There should be a focal point in every office to report about this. Most of the staff feel shy to report such issues so it's very important to have a focal to be pivotal in such case.”

## More training on how to report / simplify process of reporting, more frequent (anonymous) reporting with clear link to actions

### Illustrative comments from individual respondents

“WFP should train staff on how to report harassment, sexual harassment, abuse of authority, discrimination and retaliation and to whom they should report to.”

### Illustrative comments from individual respondents

“I reported harassment to my divisional director (D2) level who did nothing and told me to ‘get over-it’.”

“The person I reported the matter to told my supervisor everything. Nothing else was done. This is the culture in WFP. When you report an issue, not much is done. Managers / supervisors protect each other. The issue is discussed within the circle and you are treated very badly.”

“Because management never takes the problem seriously.”

“Everyone recognized that the supervisor was not acting ethically but not action was taken to support me in practice. The supervisor's higher grade counted more.”

“As in more cases, it was covered up and not addressed as it involved a Director and a Chief.”

#### Illustrative comments from individual respondents

“Report more frequently on reported cases, without giving names, and the actions taken so that people see the system works, is impartial, confidential and has results. Also, simplify the process of reporting, as many people sometimes feel overwhelmed about the steps in the process.”

“Organize staff training sessions, mandatory training and organize exchange sessions on a regular basis.”

“Establish serious processes to report such things.”

#### Quicker action in response to misconduct reports

##### Illustrative comments from individual respondents

“There is need to be quick and responsive in dealing with the cases that are already reported. If victims trust the system and expect that action will be taken quickly against the perpetrators of course after due investigation, they may hopefully be confident to take the risk to report. However, if reporting will only expose the victims to stronger retaliation, it is unlikely that progress will be made.”

#### Reassurance of confidentiality / no retaliation

##### Illustrative comments from individual respondents

#### Reassurance of confidentiality / no retaliation

“Keep speaking about the protection of people who report and actually take action when people report.”

#### Illustrative comments from individual respondents

“They should convince staff that there will be no retaliation after they report incidences of harassment and abuse of authority.”

“Ensure confidentiality.”

“The whole process should be kept strictly confidential and the victims should be supported throughout.”

“Increased confidentiality and concrete actions being taken/reported on.”

“Give them every assurance that they will not suffer any inconvenience, especially if they are consultants.”

“Guarantee protection by re-evaluating assessments because sometimes the bosses evaluate badly as a retaliation.”

#### Impact of abusive behaviour on employees

In addition to creating a respectful and harmonious workplace, WFP also has the opportunity to create an environment that promotes the wellbeing of employees rather than diminishing it. As part of this review, employees shared the impact that exposure to abusive behaviour is having on their psychological, emotional and physical wellbeing and it is not a positive story.

Employees indicated that the abusive behaviour is causing significant amounts of stress and frustration but also contributing to a sense of being discouraged and demotivated. More serious impacts include the experience of depression and burnout. In the one-on-one interviews, employees shared experiences of becoming physically unwell with ongoing illness or injuries caused in accidents that they feel occurred due to the stress they were experiencing at work. These impacts align with those discussed by the EEOC<sup>1</sup> in which mental, physical and economic harm were referenced as the negative implications of abusive behaviour on victims. It is clear that employees feel their wellbeing is suffering due to the workplace environment they are experiencing and this is impacting on their life outside of work, including family dynamics. The EEOC also made it clear that abusive behaviour doesn't

just affect victims, it affects all employees as well as the organisation. From an organisational perspective, employees are not able to perform at their best which will be having implications for the quality of the service being delivered. The cost to WFP in terms of decreased productivity, increased turnover and reputational harm could be significant. In 2015 alone, the EEOC recovered 164.5million USD in compensation for employees who alleged they had experienced harassment in the workplace. The ongoing experience of abusive behaviour presents a serious risk for WFP and requires immediate committed action to start the journey of change.

Employees shared the following statements when asked about the impact of abusive behaviour at WFP.

#### Illustrative comments from individual respondents

“Discouragement, stress, loss of motivation, diseases.”

“Drop of staff performance, low morale, push the staff to depression or to the door.”

“A lot of frustration, for some the feeling of being useless, being the doormat of others.”

“Demoralizing, demotivating, risk of depression assured, and loss of self-confidence.”

“Disempowering.”

“It is very discouraging and demotivating.”

“Less commitment to work.”

“Demoralise capable staff.”

“Lack of trust on managers.”

“Mentally depressing.”

“Burn out - depression - mental health issues - destruction of trust.”

“Low morale and hence low performance”

“Depression, feeling of helplessness & isolation”

“Frustration due to contrast with WFP mandate”

“I was depressed for a very long time. Bullying colleagues and supervisor made my life horrible”

“Underperformance; they are traumatized and cannot recover easily after action.”



## Recommended areas of focus

Based on the key themes that have emerged from this review, there are fundamental changes that need to be made to support WFP in moving towards a more respectful and harmonious workplace. These fall into 4 key categories: Leadership, Talent Management, Accountability and Reporting. These recommendations are for organisation wide actions as they are relevant for all WFP employees. It will be important to allow for additional attention to be given to HQ given the results in that location. These recommendations are not targeted to any specific type of abusive behaviour because the core of the problem at WFP sits with leadership and culture which require organisation wide initiatives to create change. Once these elements have improved, it is likely that experiences of all types of abusive behaviour will reduce. Any remaining issues can then be targeted for specific actions to ensure these are resolved.

In terms of implementation, we recommend running parallel processes that target leaders and while at the same time improving talent management policies and practices. This multi pronged approach will ensure the fastest and most sustainable approach to resolving the challenges outlined in this report.

In order for any change to occur and for the culture to be improved, senior leaders must demonstrate authentic commitment and actions towards changing the culture at WFP and creating a respectful and harmonious workplace. Leaders are able to demonstrate this commitment through having a sense of urgency and committing the required time and resources to achieve long lasting change. Employees must start to see change so they can begin to believe that senior leaders are truly going to do what is required to change the culture, even when what is required is challenging and involves making difficult decisions.

This review is an important step in the WFP culture change journey, however there are many more to follow as outlined in the recommended actions below. The first step to take, before any other actions, is to be honest and transparent about the issues identified in this review. Sharing an organisation wide communication acknowledging that the feedback provided has been heard and is being reviewed, is critical. This needs to be followed by a clear plan of action outlining the areas that will be the focus for improvement. As different initiatives are rolled out, a global and all employee communication campaign will be required to ensure all actions are linked to the culture change project and to reinforce the organisations and senior leaders commitment to change. This campaign needs to engage all employees to take responsibility for shifting the culture to a more respectful and harmonious workplace.

### Leadership

We recommend the following actions be taken to improve the overall quality of leadership at WFP:

#### High priority

- Leadership team effectiveness program for senior leadership team (executive director and his direct reports) to raise awareness of their role in creating the



culture change required. This will provide a supportive environment for them to reflect on their impact as a team and the changes they can make to set the tone of a harmonious and respectful workplace.

- Design, develop and implement leadership competencies and behavioural KPI's for leaders including an associated 360 assessment tool that can be used to assess performance on these KPI's. By including an assessment of behaviours into leaders' performance assessment, it ensures that how leaders achieve outcomes is made of equal importance as the outcomes themselves.
- Introduce rigorous selection process to identify management and leadership talent, inclusive of the assessment of key leadership capabilities and behaviours that WFP expects their leaders to display. Everyone that aspires to be a leader must demonstrate competence in all leadership capabilities and proven track record of role modelling behaviours.
- Roll out of extensive leadership development program with 2 streams – one for Senior Managers and one for Managers/Supervisors. This training should include but not be limited to the following modules:
  - Self-Awareness and Leadership Style
  - Unconscious bias
  - Ethical and appropriate workplace behaviour
  - Diversity and Inclusion
  - Performance Management
  - Coaching Conversations
  - Intercultural awareness
  - Managing difficult conversations
  - Delegation skills
  - Building high performing teams (engaging and motivating employees)
  - Giving and receiving feedback
  - Safety & Wellbeing

These modules must be designed specifically for WFP as they will provide the avenue for WFP to educate their leaders about the newly developed leadership competencies and behavioural expectations WFP has for its leaders.

In addition, attendance at this training must be mandatory with build-in assessments (online and practical) to ensure

leaders develop the necessary skills to meet the learning outcomes. Assessments must be completed by external leadership development experts.

To support leaders in developing their leadership style and adapting their behaviour, we recommend providing an external coach for each country head to support them in effectively role modelling professional behaviour and guide their response to abusive behaviour when it is brought to their attention. These coaches can shadow the leaders to monitor their behaviour and provide informal ongoing advice on ways to improve.

#### **Additional recommendations**

- Introduce a mandatory handover period between country leads (1-3mths) to ensure effective briefing of new leaders. This needs to include a briefing specifically on people and performance of team members.

## **Talent Management**

### **High priority**

- Detailed review of talent management processes and practices to inform complete redesign of approach. New approach to be built on the foundations of fairness, meritocracy, equity and transparency. This review should include full talent management lifecycle including selection, performance evaluation, promotion, reassignment and contract renewal as a minimum.
- Review of consultant role/contracts to identify improvements that can be made to reduce the vulnerability of this group including updating of contract conditions to provide better job security and more equity in terms of benefits.
- Build out the values to include behavioural expectations for all employees that explicitly describe how the values can be brought to life every day. These should align with the behavioural expectations set for leaders. This will then ensure all leaders and employees are aware of what is expected of them and enable any behaviours outside of those expected to be called out and addressed. In addition, when people display positive behaviour in line with the values this should be celebrated and rewarded.
- Upskilling of HR professionals to be business leaders that monitor and enforce the behavioural expectations, support leaders to consistently apply policies and procedures and be the go to function for managing employee conflicts. HR must be positioned and resourced

as a function whose purpose is to represent and enforce the organisations values and behavioural standards. They need to be separate and equal in authority to business leaders to ensure they are empowered to hold business leaders accountable for inconsistent application of HR policies and non-compliance with HR procedures. In addition, HR needs to broaden in perspective to own and drive WFP's approach to providing a positive employee experience for all staff as well as work collaboratively with other key bodies such as the Ombudsman and Ethics Office to provide a consistent and effective response to abusive behaviour.

### **Additional recommendations**

- Review existing compliance and online training to determine effectiveness. Ensure WFP values and behavioural standards are clearly communicated in all trainings with a specific focus on continual education about abusive behaviour – what it is, what to do if you're experiencing it and the ramifications are for those perpetrating it.
- Review existing career pathways and identify additional career tracks that would provide alternatives to people leadership. This will ensure those employees not interested in or deemed unsuitable for leadership positions have an avenue to continue to progress in their career at WFP.
- Introduce matrix reporting so individuals have multiple managers that they have relationships with and more people will be in a position to contribute to the performance evaluation of employees. This will reduce the opportunity for managers to abuse the authority they have as other managers will be involved.
- Gender analysis to explore the distribution of women in leadership roles across the organisation.
- Explore avenues for HR and the other departments involved in managing abusive behaviour to work more collaboratively in order to proactively address abusive behaviour.

## **Accountability**

### **High priority**

- Instil an 'it's on us' mind-set such that all employees feel accountable for reducing abusive behaviour and creating a more harmonious and respectful workplace. This includes calling out abusive behaviour when it is witnessed by directly addressing it, through encouraging the victim to report it or reporting it themselves. Further, employees can promote the culture shift by raising the topic for discussion amongst themselves and in meetings, by embracing the topic rather than it being considered taboo. To empower employees to be accountable in this way, senior leadership

needs to role model this by actively communicating about the topic including asking employees about their experiences and including the topic in meetings.

- Introduce a requirement of transparency related to decision making. This will mean that leaders can only make decisions that are defensible and explainable. Employees will have more clarity regarding decisions that affect them including the reasons behind them which will prevent any opportunity for employees to misunderstand decisions or incorrectly attribute them to abusive behaviour.

### **Additional recommendations**

- Introduce additional checks and balances for supervisors/managers as well as senior leaders on people related issues e.g.:
  - Before a leader can hire a new employee they must first demonstrate there is no conflict of interest with the person they want to hire. If a conflict of interest becomes apparent both the person hired and the manager will face disciplinary action. Further, they must attempt to fill the position internally. If unsuccessful, they must demonstrate why existing employees or contractors are not suitable for the position.
  - Before a staff or non-staff contract can be terminated or not renewed, they are given the opportunity to demonstrate competence by working in a different team under a different manager that is deemed mutually acceptable by the employee and the organisation. This does not apply to situations in which abusive behaviour has been substantiated and termination is deemed necessary.
  - Use 360 assessment as an additional data input to individual's PACE result rather than just their managers rating.
  - Use the 360 assessment tool designed to assess leader performance on KPI's on an annual basis or as required. Ensure managers have completed employee performance evaluations before their 360 results are shared with them to ensure retaliation is prevented. Have a trained coach provide leaders with 360 feedback to ensure they are supported in their reaction and guided in the ways they can continue to build their strengths while improving in development areas.

## **Reporting**

### **High priority**

- Review entire formal and informal reporting approach including utilisation and effectiveness of avenues. Remove those avenues that are not adding value and invest time and resources into creating well-functioning

and responsive reporting avenues. The number of reporting avenues should be kept to a minimum to reduce complexity and maximise effectiveness. Most importantly, all reporting avenues must ensure confidentiality is maintained throughout reporting and investigation process.

- Introduce avenue for anonymous reporting to allow people who would like to report but are fearful of retaliation are protected. This may be removed over time as reporting rates improve and fear of retaliation reduced. If this is already in place, greater communication is required to ensure employees are aware of this reporting avenue.
- Redesign of investigation process to improve confidentiality, consistency in application of organisation and HR policies and procedures. Build and train a consistent investigations team that have clear policies and procedures to follow and targets regarding the timeliness of investigations.

#### **Additional recommendations**

- Introduce a new reporting line targeting less serious complaints that may not be enough to warrant investigation on their own but if a number of complaints accumulate over time (3-5) then an investigation should be instigated. If this is already in place, greater communication is required to ensure employees are aware of this reporting avenue.
- Appoint an external ethics professional to visit each office for 2-3 weeks at a time to observe ways of working and interacting. This will enable them to call out abusive behaviour and support in the follow up action required to improve the workplace. This will help to build awareness of what abusive behaviour is and ensure perpetrators are clearly told that what they are doing is abusive and they are supported in how to change their behaviours to better align with WFP values.
- Conduct an audit of the investigations process to review cases and determine if correct processes were followed, if process taken is defensible and outcome could be replicated by a different team. If this type of audit has already taken place, the results should be communicated more proactively and clearly to employees to build confidence in the investigation process.
- Conduct an audit of the disciplinary process to determine how effectively WFP has been in disciplining those involved in substantiated cases of abusive behaviour.





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