

# **CODE OF CONDUCT TO PREVENT ABUSIVE CONDUCT AND SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AT UNAIDS EVENTS AND GATHERINGS**



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CODE OF CONDUCT

# to Prevent Abusive Conduct and Sexual Misconduct

AT UNAIDS EVENTS  
AND GATHERINGS



**#RESPECT**  
**#NoExcuse**

# Purpose

**UNAIDS is committed to enabling events at which everyone can participate in an inclusive, respectful and safe environment.**

**UNAIDS events are guided by the highest ethical and professional standards, and all participants are expected to behave with integrity and respect towards all participants attending or involved with any UNAIDS event.**

## APPLICABILITY

The Code of Conduct **applies to any UNAIDS event or gathering**, which shall include but is not limited to meetings, conferences and symposia, assemblies, receptions, scientific and technical events, expert meetings, workshops, exhibits, side events, and any other forum organized, hosted or sponsored in whole or part by UNAIDS. Such UNAIDS event or gathering, whether it is organized, hosted, or sponsored by UNAIDS, may take place in person or online, within/on or outside UNAIDS premises.

The Code of Conduct **applies to all participants** at a UNAIDS event or gathering, including all persons attending or involved in any capacity in UNAIDS events or gatherings.

Any other entity responsible for a UNAIDS event or gathering commits to implementing the Code of Conduct.

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

## PROHIBITED CONDUCT

UNAIDS has **zero tolerance for discrimination, abuse of authority, harassment** (collectively referred to as “abusive conduct”), and **sexual misconduct** and has a responsibility to take all appropriate steps to prevent and address it.

# PROHIBITED CONDUCT

- Abusive conduct or sexual misconduct may be comprised of a one-time incident or a series of incidents.
- Sexual misconduct is an all-inclusive term used to address all forms of prohibited sexual behaviour by staff members or collaborators towards colleagues or members of the public in locations where UNAIDS staff and/or collaborators operate. The term includes any sexual activity with children (i.e., persons under 18 years of age) regardless of the age of majority or consent under national legislation.
- Sexual misconduct encompasses all behaviour characterized as sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, and sexual harassment.
- Sexual exploitation is the actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.
- Sexual abuse is the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.
- Sexual harassment is any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation. Sexual harassment may involve any conduct of a verbal, nonverbal or physical nature, including written and electronic communications, and may occur between persons of the same or different genders.

**Examples of sexual misconduct include, but are not limited to:**

- Unwelcome sexual advances.
- Sharing or displaying sexually inappropriate objects, images, or videos in any format.
- Sending sexually suggestive communications in any format.
- Sharing sexual or vulgar anecdotes or jokes.
- Making inappropriate sexual gestures, such as pelvic thrusts.
- Unwelcome touching, including pinching, patting, rubbing, or purposefully brushing up against another person.
- Staring in a sexually suggestive manner.
- Asking for sexual favours or repeatedly asking a person for dates.
- Making comments about or rating a person's attractiveness.
- Making sexual comments about appearance, clothing, or body parts.
- Name-calling or using slurs with a gender-sexual connotation.
- Making derogatory or demeaning comments about a person's sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Sending unsolicited gifts (e.g., romantic or of a sexual nature).
- Technology-assisted voyeurism, including via social media/cyber-stalking of a sexual nature.
- Attempted or actual sexual assault, including rape.
- Threatened or actual use of electronic images or video of a sexual nature in a physical and/or virtual manner as a means of fear, coercion, duress, psychological oppression, or abuse of power.

# COMPLAINT PROCESS

A participant at a UNAIDS event or gathering who feels that they experienced or witnessed abusive conduct may:

- Report the matter to the organizer of the UNAIDS event or gathering, and the relevant security authority.
- Submit a formal complaint including anonymously through the UNAIDS Integrity Hotline or to the WHO Office of Internal Oversight Services.

Suspected or actual concerns or acts of sexual misconduct must be reported to the WHO Office of Internal Oversight Services which provides investigation services to UNAIDS at [investigation@who.int](mailto:investigation@who.int).

The organizer of the UNAIDS event or gathering will be expected to take appropriate action in accordance with its applicable regulations, rules, and policies.

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

- Requesting the offender to immediately stop behaviour.
- Suspending or terminating the offender's access to UNAIDS events and gatherings or refusing registration at future events and gatherings.
- Conveying the complaint to any investigative or disciplinary authority with jurisdiction over the person accused of abusive conduct or sexual misconduct.
- Conveying report to UNAIDS, the employer or authority with jurisdiction over the person accused of abusive conduct or sexual misconduct for appropriate follow-up action.

The victim/survivor (i.e., the person who identifies their experience as being, or having been, subject to abusive conduct or sexual misconduct) may also seek help from other relevant authorities, such as the police, bearing in mind the applicable legal framework. A participant should never knowingly make a false or misleading claim about prohibited conduct.

As victims/survivors or bystanders, UNAIDS staff members may choose to disclose sexual misconduct, on a confidential or medically privileged basis, to staff members of WHO/UNAIDS whose functions require confidentiality and are designed to provide physical, mental, or emotional support and guidance.

Such functions include the positions within:

- The Office of Staff Health and Wellbeing Services.
- Staff Counsellors.
- Positions within the Office of the Ombudsperson and Mediation Services.

## PROHIBITION OF RETALIATION

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



# If you have experienced or witnessed harassment at an event organized by UNAIDS

Submit a formal complaint through

**UNAIDS  
Integrity Hotline**



**WHO Office of  
Internal Oversight  
Services (IOS)**



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#NoExcuse**