

DEFINITIONS

SEXUAL ABUSE ¹

is actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION ¹

is any actual or attempted abuse of 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 HARASSMENT ¹¹

is any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offense or humiliation, when such conduct interferes with work, is made a condition of employment or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. Sexual harassment may occur in the workplace or in connection with work. While typically involving a pattern of conduct, sexual harassment may take the form of a single incident. In assessing the reasonableness of expectations or perceptions, the perspective of the person who is the victim/survivor of the conduct shall be considered.

Explanatory notes

Sexual harassment is the manifestation of a culture of discrimination and privilege based on unequal gender relations and other power dynamics. Sexual harassment may involve any conduct of a verbal, nonverbal or physical nature, including written and electronic communications. Sexual harassment may occur between persons of the same or different genders, and individuals of any gender can be either the victims/survivors or the perpetrators. Sexual harassment may occur outside the workplace and outside working hours, including during official travel or social functions related to work. Sexual harassment may be perpetrated by any colleague, including a supervisor, peer or a subordinate. A perpetrator's status as a supervisor or a senior official may be treated as an aggravating circumstance.

Sexual harassment can take a variety of forms – from looks and words through to physical contact of a sexual nature.

EXAMPLES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT (NON-EXHAUSTIVE LIST) INCLUDE:

- Attempted or actual sexual assault, including rape;
- Sharing or displaying sexually inappropriate images or videos in any format;
- Sending sexually suggestive communications in any format;
- Sharing sexual or lewd 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;
- Repeatedly asking a person for dates or asking for sex;
- Rating a person's sexuality;
- 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 someone's sexual orientation or gender identity.

¹ Secretary-General's Bulletin, *Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse*, ST/SGB/2003/13.

¹¹ [UN System Model Policy on Sexual Harassment, 2018](#).