

# JOINT HARASSMENT PREVENTION BOARD

## Rules of Procedure

### Purpose

1. The purpose of the present document is to provide guidance on the work and administrative procedures of the Joint Harassment Prevention Board established pursuant to bulletin of the Secretary-General [ST/SGB/2008/14](#) of 27 October 2008.

### Membership

2. In accordance with section 3 of bulletin [ST/SGB/2008/14](#), each of the Boards shall consist of one member nominated by the Secretary-General and one member nominated by staff. In addition, there shall be one alternate nominated by the Secretary-General and one alternate nominated by staff. Members of the Board shall be granted the necessary release for the fulfilment of their duties.

### Accountability

3. The members of the Board shall be held accountable for the fulfilment of the duties assigned to them by bulletins [ST/SGB/2008/5](#) of 11 February 2008 and [ST/SGB/2008/14](#) and by the rules of procedure they establish for the Board of which they are members. They are strongly encouraged to decline nomination or submit their resignation when they are not in a position to deliver as expected.

### Confidentiality

4. The members of the Board shall treat all information and documents shared with them, as well as views expressed, suggestions or admissions made by any party, with due confidentiality and may use information obtained through the work of the Board only for purposes of their duties as Board members.

### Standards of conduct

5. It is incumbent on members of the Board to adhere to the highest standards of conduct and to exhibit competence, integrity, impartiality and discretion in carrying out the work of the Board. They must remain independent and their conduct must reflect that independence. They should neither seek nor accept instructions from any person or entity external to the Board and those persons or entities should commit themselves to respecting this independent status.

### Officials serving in advisory capacity

6. The Board may invite officials from the Organization to attend its meetings when specific agenda items would benefit from their presence. This may include heads of office or department and representatives of the Office of Human Resources Management, the Staff Association, the Office of the Ombudsman, the Office of the Staff Counsellor, the Office of Staff Legal Assistance and the Medical Service. Officials serving in an advisory capacity will have the right to participate fully in discussions of the Board and to offer advice to the Board as required. The Board shall explain to officials serving in an advisory capacity the importance of maintaining confidentiality as required. Only members of the Board will have the right to participate in decision-making.

## Duties

7. Each member of the Board shall give thorough consideration to the contents of bulletin ST/SGB/2008/5, entitled "Prohibition of discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, and abuse of authority", with a view to gaining a correct understanding of the policy and the obligations vested in the Board. To that end, the Board may seek clarification from the Office of Human Resources Management.

8. The main duties of the Board shall be as follows:

(i) To monitor the implementation of bulletin [ST/SGB/2008/5](#) at the duty station where the Board is located;

(ii) To review, on an annual basis, the use of the preventive, corrective and monitoring measures established by sections 4, 5 and 6 of bulletin [ST/SGB/2008/5](#) at the duty station where the Board is located;

(iii) To evaluate the effectiveness of the measures established by sections 4, 5 and 6 of bulletin [ST/SGB/2008/5](#) in ensuring that the objectives of the Bulletin are fulfilled; that all staff members of the duty station are treated with dignity and respect; and that a workplace free of any form of discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, and abuse of authority is maintained; and

(iv) To submit a report to the Office of Human Resources Management on an annual basis. The report shall include an overview of all preventive, corrective and monitoring measures taken in the duty station in relation to prohibited conduct, as well as a review of the effectiveness of the processes established under bulletin [ST/SGB/2008/5](#) in addressing the prohibited conduct and ensuring a harmonious work environment. The report may also include additional evaluations, assessments or proposals relating to these measures and processes.

9. In performing its duties, the Board shall foster an understanding of the policy by the relevant actors listed in paragraph 5.6 of [ST/SGB/2008/5](#), namely:

- (i) The Ombudsman and members of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediations Services within the duty station where the Board is located;
- (ii) The Staff Counsellor within the duty station where the Board is located;
- (iii) Human resources officers within the duty station where the Board is located;
- (iv) Members of conduct and discipline teams (in peacekeeping missions or at Headquarters);
- (v) Members of the executive committee of the staff representative body within the duty station where the Board is located;
- (vi) The Office of Staff Legal Assistance and/ or legal counselors advising and representing staff at the duty station
- (vii) Staff representatives within the duty station where the Board is located;
- (viii) Focal points for women within the duty station where the Board is located;
- (ix) Supervisors, including first or second supervisors;
- (x) The Medical Service within the duty station where the Board is located;

## **Collection of information by the Board**

10. The Board may collect information for the purposes of performing its duties, including by:
- (i) Conducting staff surveys;
  - (ii) Conducting informal interviews with staff members willing to contribute to the work of the Board;
  - (iii) Conducting informal interviews with the actors mentioned in subparagraph (9) above;
  - (iv) Convening an annual town hall meeting in collaboration with the Head of Office and the Staff Association with a view to informing staff of the progress of work and the potential for improved implementation of the policy and to obtaining feedback from staff;
  - (v) Seeking confidential advice from the Chief Medical Officer or other staff with a legal, psychological or counselling background to obtain expert opinion on issues it may identify in the course of its work;

11. The Board may request offices and departments within the duty station where the Board is located or within a different duty station, including the Office of Human Resources Management, the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services and the Office of Staff Legal Assistance, to provide statistical and systematic information necessary for the performance of its duties.

12. Requests for information and documents by the Board shall be made in writing and specify how the information or documents requested are necessary for the performance by the Board of its duties. Requests shall be made with reasonable notice and shall nominate a member to whom the information or documentation is to be provided. Documents and information received shall normally be circulated in sufficient time for them to be received at least 21 days in advance of a meeting.

13. If the Office and department to whom such a request is made is able to provide information or documents they will be responsible for ensuring that the information is provided in a timely manner.

## **Communications**

14. All communications relating to the business of the Board shall be addressed jointly to its members.

## **Meetings**

15. The Board usually meets every three months to monitor progress in the performance of its duties. It may meet more frequently at the initiative of any member. The member initiating the meeting shall endeavour to give 21 days' notice of a meeting. Each notice shall specify the date, time and place of the meeting and the business to be transacted. Notice shall normally be in writing, including by e-mail. However, the Board may choose to reduce the period of notice and notice may be given by telephone, subject to later confirmation in writing.

16. Each member of the Board shall attend meetings. In the event of a member being unable to attend all or part of a meeting, he or she may delegate his or her responsibility to his or her alternate. The Board may decide to invite alternates to attend all meetings.

## **Agenda**

17. All business to be transacted shall be specified in a draft agenda, which shall be circulated with the notice of the meeting. The draft agenda shall be prepared jointly or, in the case of meetings called at short notice, by the member initiating the meeting. Any member may propose an item for inclusion in the draft agenda.

## **Minutes**

18. The Board shall ensure that accurate minutes are kept of all meetings. The minutes shall record the business discussed and the decisions of the Board.

## **Decisions and reporting**

19. The Board shall normally reach its decisions by consensus. In the event of the Board being unable to arrive at a consensus in respect of any matter, advice may be sought from the Office of Human Resources Management. The Board may reach decisions at its meetings or by means of written communication between the members.

20. Unanimity among the members of the Board is not required for completion of its annual report to the Office of Human Resources Management report; differences of opinion, however, must be noted. The report must be finalized during the first quarter of each year, so as to allow for its consolidation with the reports of other Boards and subsequent transmission to the annual meeting of the Staff Management Coordination Committee.

## **Support services**

21. Support services may be provided by the duty station at the request of the Board subject to available resources.

## **Changes to rules of procedure**

22. The Board may decide to amend its rules of procedure at any time, upon which it shall forward a copy of the amended text to the Office of Human Resources Management for circulation to other Boards.

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Approved on 23 July 2012



27 October 2008

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## **Secretary-General's bulletin**

### **Joint Harassment Prevention Boards**

The Secretary-General, pursuant to section 6.3 of Secretary-General's bulletin [ST/SGB/2008/5](#) of 11 February 2008, entitled "Prohibition of discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, and abuse of authority" (hereinafter referred to as the "Bulletin"), with the objective of ensuring the proper implementation of the Organization's policy and procedures as set out in the Bulletin, promulgates the following:

#### **Section 1 General**

The Joint Harassment Prevention Boards, hereinafter referred to as "the Boards", are hereby established in New York, Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi and in regional commissions other than the Economic Commission for Europe.

#### **Section 2 Purpose**

2.1 The purpose of each Board shall be to monitor the implementation of the Bulletin at the duty station where it is located.

2.2 The Boards shall review, on an annual basis, the use of the preventive, corrective and monitoring measures established by sections 4, 5 and 6 of the Bulletin. The Boards shall evaluate the effectiveness of those measures in ensuring that the objectives of the Bulletin are fulfilled; that all staff members of the Secretariat are treated with dignity and respect; and that a workplace free of any form of discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, and abuse of authority is maintained.

#### **Section 3 Membership, meetings and procedures**

3.1 Each of the Boards shall consist of one member nominated by the Secretary-General and one member nominated by staff.

3.2 In addition, there shall be one alternate nominated by the Secretary-General and one alternate nominated by staff. Subject to prior notification, the

alternate's attendance at a specific meeting may be designated as necessary in the absence of a member.

3.3 Nominations of suitable staff members to serve as members designated by the Secretary-General shall be requested from all heads of departments, offices and missions where a Board will be established. Nominations of suitable staff members to serve as members designated by staff shall be requested from the staff representative bodies in each duty station where a Board will be established.

3.4 The Under-Secretary-General for Management shall, on behalf of the Secretary-General, appoint the members and alternates on the basis of the nominations received. Each member and alternate shall serve for a two-year renewable term.

3.5 Meetings of the Boards shall be held as required but, normally, not less frequently than every three months. Emergency or informal meetings may be called as required by either of the members.

3.6 The Boards shall establish their own rules of procedure.

#### **Section 4** **Reports**

4.1 Each Board shall submit a report to the Office of Human Resources Management on an annual basis. The report shall include an overview of all preventive, corrective and monitoring measures taken in the duty station in relation to prohibited conduct, as well as a review of the effectiveness of the processes established under the Bulletin in addressing the prohibited conduct and ensuring a harmonious work environment. The report may also include additional evaluations, assessments or proposals relating to these measures and processes.

4.2 The Office of Human Resources Management shall consolidate the reports received from each of the Boards for transmission to the annual session of the Staff-Management Coordination Committee, for the purpose of reviewing the implementation of the policy in the Secretariat.

#### **Section 5** **Final provisions**

The present bulletin shall enter into force on 1 November 2008.

(Signed) **Ban Ki-moon**  
Secretary-General

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