

Reporting by Session Note-takers at the 2019 Annual Consultations with NGOs

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Session Title:	“Our Joint Journey – towards a working environment free from sexual misconduct”
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Major points arising from speakers and discussions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants were asked to strongly agree/agree/disagree/strongly disagree with the three following statements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It is easier to be a man than a woman: the vast majority of participants agreed or strongly agreed (e.g. because gender inequality and power mostly in favor of men). ○ Men need sex more than women: the vast majority of participants disagreed or strongly disagreed arguing that this perception was the result of a social construct (e.g. sex=power or it is inappropriate for women to express sexual needs). ○ Complaints by women of concern about SEA are often false: the vast majority of participants strongly disagreed. Research shows that over 90% of allegations are true. Repercussions of allegations are so significant that false allegations are highly unlikely. On a related note, research demonstrates the vast majority of men are most worried of false allegations in the workplace. • The following panel members delivered remarks and answered questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Leah Goldmann (Raising voices) recalled that her organization was values-based with a strong focus on an organizational culture, which enables transparent and inclusive dialogue, treatment of all staff with dignity and respect, and acceptance of failure and conflict. It was important to hold each other accountable and prioritize safety over reputation. Responsibility of leadership as well as mainstreaming are key. Programmatic methodologies include power dynamics as central element (e.g. “Getting moving” program with IRC). Challenges include consistency between values/policies and actions as well as excessive focus on intent over impact. ○ Lennart Hernander (Lutheran World Federation) shared his experience on investigations, including challenges regarding impunity and victim-centered approach. Of note, his organization has: i) streamlined policies; ii) considered whistleblowers as “heroes”; iii) established an internal reporting mechanism to share experience only as well as SOPs jointly with other organizations. Inter-organizational cooperation was also key on vetting and reference-checking of staff. Donors are understanding and supportive when organizations face sexual misconduct transparently. ○ Ana Saiz (Sin Fronteras) informed that most of the staff are young female while most of persons of interest (PoI) are young male. Both are considered 	

as part of “the community”. The Code of Conduct for staff did not address cases of sexual harassment of staff by Pols. After few cases, the organization established an internal protocol to address SH within the community as well as an Internal Gender Council, which includes Pols.

Recommendations/Conclusions/Decisions on the way forward

- Engage men to challenge norms and raise awareness about costs of imbalance and inequality.
- Establish organizational cultures enabling reporting and addressing grievances regarding ALL type of sexual misconduct

Top two quotes from the session:

- “Whistleblowers are heroes” (Lennart Hernander, Lutheran World Federation)
- “Not everything that is unacceptable is illegal. Sometimes, we have higher standards than the law. It is a struggle.” (Lennart Hernander, Lutheran World Federation)

Any general points regarding UNHCR-NGO partnerships