

## ACFID Resolution No. 2/2018

### **Resolution on preventing sexual misconduct, exploitation, abuse and harassment in ACFID member agencies**

#### **Preamble**

Noting the forthcoming 2018 Independent review to improve practice and response of ACFID members in the prevention of sexual misconduct conducted by the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine (VIFM Report) and the Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse review of the ACFID Code of Conduct standards conducted by the ACFID Code of Conduct Committee with support from Learning 4 Development.

Noting also the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade review of policies and procedures for Preventing sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment and expectations and obligations of Australian NGOs.

Drawing upon the ACFID Code of Conduct Value of RESPECT.

Recognising the incidence of sexual harassment in Australia, and globally, remains high and is disproportionately experienced by women.

Recognising that evidence demonstrates that survivors of sexual assault and harassment are unlikely to make a report or complaint and, when they do, are less likely to report that the complaint mechanism was responsive to their needs.

Recognising the basic standards developed by UN Women in implementing a survivor centred approach to preventing violence against women and girls.

Recognising the importance of ensuring a robust and transformative approach, grounded in a commitment to achieving gender equality, to prevent sexual misconduct, exploitation, abuse and harassment in ACFID member agencies.

Therefore, as the Council of ACFID Members we resolve to:

1. Acknowledge the critical importance of sector leadership to establish an enabling environment for preventing sexual misconduct, exploitation, abuse and harassment in ACFID member agencies;
2. Assert the prioritisation of the rights, needs, and wishes of the survivor, while ensuring natural justice for all parties to a complaint as guiding principles for ACFID member agencies in preventing sexual misconduct, exploitation, abuse and harassment in our organisations;
3. Affirm the importance of adopting a transformative approach to preventing sexual misconduct, exploitation, abuse and harassment in our organisations, by challenging gendered power relations and individual and systemic gender norms, ensuring allocation of resources to achieve change, and adopting ethical frameworks to promote changes to organisational policies, procedures, and cultures.
4. Ensure that our organisations use the VIFM Report recommendations as the starting point to drive the prevention of sexual misconduct, exploitation, abuse and harassment, and undertake to do so within the shortest practicable timeframe following the release of the VIFM Report.

#### **Background to preamble statements**

The Australian Bureau of Statistics Personal Safety Australia 2016 Report details that 53% of women and 25% of men experience sexual harassment in their lifetime and 17% of women in the last 12 months. The Australian Human Rights Commission notes that one in five complaints to the commission relate to sexual harassment and the majority of these relate to the workplace. The recent report Change The Course: National Report on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment at Australian Universities (2017) found that 94% of students who were sexually harassed and 87% of students who were sexually assaulted did not make a report or complaint to their university. Students who did make a formal report or complaint about sexual assault or sexual harassment were often dissatisfied with the response of their university. The International Development Inquiry into Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in the Aid Sector in the United Kingdom found that lack of rigour in reference checking and difficulty in navigating privacy concerns allowed individuals who had admitted to sexual abuse and misconduct to move to new positions in the sector.

**Moved:** Bettina Baldeschi

**Seconded:** Matthew Maury