

**TOWARDS AN END TO SEXUAL
HARASSMENT:
THE URGENCY AND NATURE OF
CHANGE IN THE ERA OF #METOO**



*“In 2006, Tarana Burke founded the **me too.** movement to help survivors of sexual violence, particularly young women of color from low wealth communities, find pathways to healing. Using the idea of “empowerment through empathy,” the **me too** movement was ultimately created to ensure survivors know they’re not alone in their journey.*

*The **me too** movement has built a community of survivors from all walks of life. By bringing vital conversations about sexual violence into the mainstream, we’re helping to de-stigmatize survivors by highlighting the breadth and impact sexual violence has on thousands of women, and we’re helping those who need it to find entry points to healing. Ultimately, with survivors at the forefront of this movement, we’re aiding the fight to end sexual violence. We want to uplift radical community healing as a social justice issue and are committed to disrupting all systems that allow sexual violence to flourish.”¹*

*“(…) On June 2015, in the Plaza del Congreso in Buenos Aires and in hundreds of squares throughout Argentina, a multitude of voices, identities and flags showed that **Ni Una Menos** is not the end of anything but the beginning of a new path (...) The call was born of a group of journalists, activists, artists, but it grew when society took it over and turned it into a collective campaign. **Ni Una Menos** was joined by thousands of people, hundreds of organizations throughout the country, schools, militants of all political parties.”²*

In October 2017 Alyssa Milano, a North American actor tweeted about her sexual harassment experience. The tweet went viral and thousands of women joined. The actor was joined by Hollywood celebrities and they gave unprecedented visibility to the **me too** movement. Milano’s tweet has 24,063 retweets and 54,454 likes.³

In November 2017 Time Magazine published a letter from 700,000 farm workers⁴ connecting to and supporting the Hollywood women. In January 2018, more than 300 women in Hollywood formed an anti-harassment coalition called **Time’s Up**.⁵

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This publication is the work of several teams and colleagues at and beyond UN Women.

It was produced, authored and edited by the Office of the Executive Coordinator and Spokesperson on Addressing Sexual Harassment and Discrimination at UN Women.

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Contributors who hold briefs that relate to ending violence against women include the Ending Violence Against Women, Safe Cities, Campus Violence, Women's Political Participation and Women Peace and Security teams, as well as the Trust Fund to Eliminate Violence Against Women.

Contributors who hold an advocacy and watching brief on the work of UN Women and the UN more broadly are the UN Women Youth Council and the UN Feminist Network.

Professor Catharine MacKinnon is engaged as an advisor on this work, produced the core elements and reviewed this publication.

Finally, inspiration for all efforts to end violence comes from the victims, survivors and women's rights advocates who clamour for change.

From Addressing Sexual Harassment and Discrimination at UN Women team, thank you to:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The greatest global challenge seen to sexual violence is in full flow.

From every region, women have grasped the power of social media to expose their pain and harm, including through use of the hashtags #MeToo, #NiUnaMenos, #BalanceTonPorc, #PrimeiroAssedio, #Babaeko and #WithYou⁶.

Sexual harassment is not complementary, humorous or unavoidable; victims have demanded that it be understood as a form of violence and abuse of power. Power's gifting of protection to the privileged has been profoundly challenged through victims serving notice on abusers, saying Time's Up. Some committed journalists have listened and treated with seriousness victims' stories; policy, practice and legal changes need to follow.

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women - UN Women, with a mandate to promote gender equality and the rights of women as well as our history of working to end violence against women, stand with victims and fully endorse their calls for a new world order. We recognise that men, women and children can be, and have been, victims of sexual harassment.

This UN Women publication seeks to contribute to shaping business as unusual. It is part of UN Women's knowledge offer towards realising Sustainable Development Goals - SDG 5, 11 and 16. It recognises the framing provided by the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) to end discrimination against women. It draws on work underway and provides guidance from the leading authority on sexual harassment, Professor Catharine MacKinnon⁷.

This publication is not a comprehensive document on sexual harassment; more publications will follow. It is intended to support policy makers, employers and activists by sharing UN Women's varied work on this topic and it offers new guidance on policy and practice on sexual harassment. It does so within the context of international commitments and standards against violence, discrimination against women and on human rights. The voices of some critical groups are also given space here - the UN Feminist Network and the UN Women Youth Council. Both include in their orbit victims and survivors of abuse; their advice and expectations are taken seriously.

Urgent and thoughtful work is needed to build a new normal. This requires:

1. Understanding sexual harassment as a matter of sex and gender inequalities of power that intersect with other dimensions of inequality including race and ethnicity, age, disability and sexual orientation; it is a violation of human rights;
2. Recognition that sexual harassment has much in common with other sexual abuse, whether it happens in conflict, the home, the street or elsewhere;
3. Placing the concept of unwelcomeness at the core and acknowledging that the victim is the source of this determination;
4. The crafting of a culture of intolerance of sexual harassment, with unequivocal leadership that repeatedly and proudly speaks as well as acts against abuse and for victims;
5. Prompt, appropriate, and publicly disseminated sanctions against perpetrators, regardless of their status or seniority;
6. Recognize that those who report sexual harassment in fact help authorities (college, work, transport etc.) to deliver their obligations on equality and safety; refuse to pre-judge them as untrustworthy or malicious;

7. Enact policy and practices, including training and campaigns, that understand the cultural construction of inequalities and the need for persistent and repeated efforts to undo and reshape these;
8. Implement multiple and publicized avenues for reporting, so that victims have options from which to select what works best for them;
9. Provide support for bystander engagement in incidents, including but not only the enabling of immediate safety;
10. Acknowledging that sexual harassment runs the range from looks to rape, recognize the harm and trauma it can bring and structure all interventions to support healing and change. A victim focus requires setting out their rights.

These are UN Women's ten essentials of addressing sexual harassment. This publication offers policy makers a framing for the revision or promulgation of sexual harassment policies. It identifies practices that have promise in addressing sexual harassment and eroding its tolerance – such as specific laws against sexual harassment.

In all work, UN Women honours the victims and survivors across the world who have forsaken their imposed acquiescence to abuse and served notice, saying Time's Up.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

2030 AGENDA	2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	MINUSTAH	United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti
APDEL	Association pour la Promotion du Développement Local	NGOS	non-governmental organizations
CEB	Secretary-General's Chief Executives Board	OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
CEB TASK FORCE	Secretary-General's Chief Executives Board Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment	OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women	SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
CEDAW GR	CEDAW General Recommendation	SEA	Sexual exploitation and abuse
CRSV	Conflict Related Sexual Violence	SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women	SH	Sexual Harassment
EVAW	Ending violence against women	SHA	Sexual harassment and assault
HIV/AIDS	Human immunodeficiency virus / acquired immunodeficiency syndrome	UN	United Nations
HLCM	High-Level Committee on Management	UN WOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
ILO	International Labour Organization	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
		UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
		UNFN	UN Feminist Network
		UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
		UNGA	United Nations General Assembly

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