



21 April 2026

**UNFPA management response**  
**to**  
**Report of the Ethics Office 2025 (DP/FPA/2026/7)**

UNFPA – Reports of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS Ethics Offices

Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS

Annual session

2026

New York

1 UNFPA remains steadfast in its commitment to a zero-tolerance policy for wrongdoing, prioritizing a culture of accountability and integrity at all levels. The notable increase in requests for ethics advice—rising to 703 in 2025 from 624 in 2024—reflects a workforce that is increasingly proactive and trusts the available advisory functions. This trend underscores the importance of the Ethics Office as a reliable partner in safeguarding the organization's reputation and operational integrity.

2 The effectiveness of the Protection against Retaliation mechanism is central to a healthy “speak-up” culture. With 11 formal requests handled this year, the stability in reporting suggests a maturing awareness of whistleblower protections. All recommendations for temporary protective measures were fully implemented, demonstrating a collective dedication to shielding those who report misconduct from adverse actions.

3 UNFPA acknowledges with appreciation the Ethics Office’s analytical rigor, noting that its determinations were sustained in two of the three no prima facies reviewed by the Ethics Panel of the United Nations (EPUN) Chairperson. Furthermore, the Ethics Office's original assessment of the third case was validated when a full Office of Audit and Investigation Services (OAIS) investigation found no retaliation, despite an initial prima facie finding by the EPUN Chair. Management commends the continued collaboration with the EPUN demonstrating alignment of the UNFPA ethics frameworks across the United Nations system. The Ethics Office’s proactive collaboration with OAIS, remains instrumental in reinforcing the organization’s oversight functions and integrity framework.

4 The Financial Disclosure Programme (FDP) continues to serve as a critical safeguard against conflicts of interest, achieving a 100 per cent completion rate among the 950 required filers. The upcoming transition to an automated FDP platform in 2026 is a welcomed development that will reduce manual workloads and allow the Ethics Office to focus on higher-level advisory functions. Furthermore, the maintained independence of the ethics function—demonstrated by its exemption from 2025 budget reductions and travel restrictions—remains essential for impartial oversight.

5 UNFPA leadership remains fully committed to supporting the unique mandate of the Ethics Office. Building on the Office’s demonstrated independence and operational integrity in 2025 – validated by its adherence to Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) standards – senior leadership will continue to ensure the necessary safeguards are in place to protect the impartiality and independence of the Office’s advisory functions. This commitment to institutional independence is demonstrated by ensuring the Ethics Advisor’s direct access to the Executive Director and by explicitly exempting the Office from 2025 budget reduction measures. Such financial prioritization, including the decision to uphold the originally planned investment despite a challenging funding environment, reaffirms management’s dedication to cultivating a robust culture of ethics, integrity and accountability.

6 Significant strides were made in expanding ethics education through digital modernization. This progress is evidenced by a high baseline compliance rate of 86.2 per cent for mandatory online training, supported by a continued commitment to increase training compliance.

In addition, the organization updated its educational portfolio to include 11 interactive, bite-sized modules available in six languages, and five new modules covering critical operational topics such as social media conduct and bystander intervention. Furthermore, ethical standards have been integrated into global operations through strategic regional missions to the Asia and the Pacific, the Arab States, and the Latin America and the Caribbean. These initiatives are reinforced by the successful pilot of the Ethics Champions network, which provides a vital localized resource by positioning trained peers as the primary point of contact for field personnel seeking ethical guidance.

7 Looking towards 2026, the launch of the “Support and Connect” tool will provide staff with a streamlined, confidential pathway to address workplace concerns. We recommend continuing inter-divisional collaboration with the Integrity Group (DHR, OAIS, Legal Unit, PSEAH Coordinator, and the Ombudsman) to allow staff to receive appropriate support from all respective units.

8 Consistent with previous years, UNFPA compliments the Ethics Office on its continuing efforts to enhance the services provided under its mandated areas of work and will maintain strong support for its operations. Management anticipates a continued and fruitful collaboration to further foster a robust culture of ethics and integrity within UNFPA.

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