

Joint Statement on Continuous Advancement of Standards to Prevent Sexual Harassment, Abuse, and Exploitation

In a meeting on 21 April 2018 convened by Sigrid Kaag, Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, the Netherlands and Penny Mordaunt, Secretary of State for International Development, United Kingdom, 10 International Financial Institutions (IFIs) (the Asian Development Bank, African Development Bank, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, European Investment Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, International Finance Corporation, International Fund for Agriculture and Development, International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank) reaffirmed their commitment to preventing sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation, both within their own institutions and in their operations.

Cognisant of the important role they play in both the example they set in their own institutional practices and in how they embed high standards in their projects and operations, IFIs reinforced their commitment to the following principles:

- to foster a culture of respect and high standards of ethical behaviour across institutions;
- to establish and maintain standards aimed at preventing sexual harassment, abuse, and exploitation and other forms of misconduct;
- to provide a safe and trusted environment for those affected by sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation to step forward to report incidents and concerns, with the assurance that they will be treated respectfully and consistently;
- to provide protection for those affected, as well as whistle-blowers and/or witnesses within their institutions, and to take appropriate measures against any form of retaliation;
- to maintain robust policy frameworks and clear institutional mechanisms that address how incidents and allegations will be handled should they arise;
- to provide effective training programmes so all staff understand the requirements and standards of behaviour expected of them as international civil servants; and
- to support clients to develop and implement policies and mechanisms that address sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation.

IFIs will promote, implement and, where needed, reinforce efforts to give full effect to these principles.

Moreover, IFIs have a powerful proactive agenda through their development programming that helps to promote gender equality, including the prevention of gender-based violence, as a goal in and of itself, and as a key element of development impact through enhanced policy engagement and capacity building. IFI working groups on gender, human resources, procurement, legal, compliance and ethics, and environment and social safeguard standards, provide ideal fora for continuing to share lessons learned, best practice, and encouraging the continued raising of standards and their consistent implementation.