19. GSF Sexual Harassment Policy

As Board members of the Global Speakers Federation and as representatives of our respective member Associations, we commit to each other that we will act in an honest manner with one another and that we will make decisions that are in the best interest of the members of the Global Speakers Federation. At the beginning of each Board meeting, Board members voice these values. These are the core values that we use in the conduct of our meetings:

19.1 Honoring Personal Agency

This policy recognizes the agency of all parties involved. The complainant has the right to choose whether to pursue a complaint, to select the preferred process for resolution, and to withdraw from the process at any time.

The respondent is entitled to a fair opportunity to respond to the allegations. Both parties are encouraged to participate actively in the process.

19.2 Terminology

Term	When to Use	Rationale
Complainant	During investigation	Neutral, respects agency
Victim	After findings, impact	Recognizes harm, post-investigation

19.3 Scope & Applicability

1. This policy applies to complaints that are directly received by the Global Speakers Federation (GSF).
2. This policy also guides associations affiliated with or related to GSF on the steps to take when they face any sexual harassment issues internally.
3. If an association facing a sexual harassment issue approaches the Global Speakers Federation (GSF) for support, GSF may offer guidance, resources, and assistance to help address the matter in a manner consistent with the established policy.

In summary, the policy's scope covers both direct complaints to GSF and the responsibility of associations to manage sexual harassment issues, with GSF playing an advisory capacity aimed at fostering consistent integrity and safety practices across affiliated associations.

This policy would apply to all members, employees, volunteers, guests, and participants in all organizational activities, including meetings, events, and online interactions, irrespective of their gender.

19.4 Definitions

19.4.1 Sexual Harassment:

Unwelcome or unwanted conduct of a sexual nature (verbal, visual, or physical) that is likely to cause offence, humiliation, or create an intimidating, hostile, or detrimental environment. It includes, but is not limited to:

- Unwanted sexual advances or requests for sexual favors
- Uninvited touching, hugging, kissing, or other physical contact
- Repeated sexual jokes, flirtations, or propositions
- Comments or jokes about an individual's body or sex life
- Display or distribution of sexually suggestive materials
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature
- Leering, whistling, or suggestive gestures
- Spreading rumors about a person's sex life or sexual orientation
- Use of sexually suggestive language

19.4.2 Retaliation:

Any adverse action taken against an individual for reporting sexual harassment or participating in an investigation, including intimidation, threats, or exclusion

19.4.3 Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Board/Leadership	Promote adherence to the policy, encourage awareness activities, facilitate the complaint process, and strive to foster a respectful environment
Ethics Committee	Receive and investigate complaints, ensure confidentiality, recommend corrective actions
All Members/Staff	Follow the policy, consider reporting incidents, aim to cooperate with investigations, and engage in awareness activities

19.5 Reporting and Complaint Procedures

How to Report:

- Reports will be accepted only in writing, addressed either to the Executive Director, Association President, or Designated Officer
- Complaints should include details of the incident(s), dates, locations, and any witnesses
- Reports should be made as soon as possible, ideally within one year of the last incident, unless circumstances prevent this

Confidentiality: All reports and investigations will be handled with the utmost confidentiality, disclosing information only as necessary for investigation or corrective action

Investigation Process:

- The Ethics Committee will inform the respondent within 10 business days of the complaint, including the nature of the allegations and the right to respond

- Both parties may submit written statements and evidence
- The Committee will conduct interviews and gather relevant documentation
- Investigations will be completed within 90 business days, with extensions communicated as needed
- If legal or external investigations are ongoing, the internal process may continue in parallel

Resolution and Corrective Actions

- Early resolution through mediation may be offered if both parties consent
- Action will be taken if proven malicious, including warnings, suspension, or expulsion
- Both parties will be informed of the outcome and any actions taken

19.6 Protection from Retaliation

No individual will face retaliation for making a good-faith complaint or participating in an investigation. Retaliation will result in disciplinary action

19.7 Awareness and Communication

- The policy will be communicated to all stakeholders and posted in accessible locations.
- Regular awareness sessions will be provided to ensure understanding and compliance.

19.8 Review and Monitoring

- The policy will be reviewed every three years or as required by changes in law or organizational needs
- Feedback from members and staff will be incorporated into policy updates

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