

# Code of Conduct for Participants in Events Organized by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF)

Adopted by LWF Council June 2015



THE  
LUTHERAN  
WORLD  
FEDERATION

A Communion  
of Churches

***This document is intended for participants of meetings organized by LWF.***

***To report a possible infringement of the LWF Staff Code of Conduct, or to ask to speak with someone about a troubling experience in connection with an LWF event.***

***Please consult the materials prepared for your meeting, which will describe the steps to take. At each meeting there will be response plans for these concerns. These will include persons (male and female) on site who are prepared for confidential response and are appointed as a response team. You may contact them directly or on a confidential email address:***

***[codeofconduct@lutheranworld.org](mailto:codeofconduct@lutheranworld.org)***

## Preamble

As people whose faith is rooted in the Gospel we uphold the principle that each human being has received his or her dignity as a gift of God and therefore needs to be respected and protected. This fundamental insight, rooted in our faith, needs to be expressed coherently in the ways we meet and interact in events that bring us together.

As stated in the LWF Staff Code of Conduct<sup>1</sup>, basic ethical commitments and standards are to be lived out in the work of the LWF. These include

- Respect for the dignity and integrity of all human beings
- Fair and just treatment of all, without discrimination, exploitation or harassment
- Responsible stewardship in the exercise of power and use of financial and other resources
- Respect for diversity, inclusiveness and participation, and transparency and accountability

All employed by the organization and all LWF events participants are expected to comply with these commitments.

These commitments call for special attention in international and multicultural work contexts where differences based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, age or disability can lead to attitudes or practices that violate individuals' personal integrity or sense of what is appropriate.

The temptations to misuse power, harass and exploit others, also in relation to sexuality, are considerable, and therefore must be constrained. The LWF Code of Conduct embodies zero tolerance with regards to sexual exploitation and abuse, harassment, abuse of power, fraud and corruption in all of LWF activities and responsibilities, at the organizational or program level in our humanitarian, development and advocacy work, and applies rules and penalties for any breaches or violations.

These convictions are shared in the LWF throughout all its activities. No one should be subjected to any misconduct from any participant at events organized by the LWF.

## How to be alert to abuse, harassment and exploitation of any kind during a LWF event

- Treat all persons fairly and with respect, courtesy, dignity and according to the respective country law, international law, and local customs.
- Behave respectfully towards others and do not misuse private, professional or any other relationships.
- Be aware of the special responsibility that any person in authority has.
- Be sensitive to cultural and social differences and practices.

---

<sup>1</sup> LWF Staff Code of Conduct, February 2023, is freely accessible to anyone on the LWF website: <https://www.lutheranworld.org/resources/document-lutheran-world-federation-staff-code-conduct> Its reading is therefore recommended.

- Do not cross boundaries set by others. If someone indicates “No”, even without words, respect it.
- Be alert to contexts which may encourage unacceptable behavior for some being in unfamiliar circumstances away from home, for example, or drinking too much alcohol.
- Refuse any inappropriate gesture or contact. Show that such behavior is not welcome.
- Do not exchange money, goods or services for any kind of sexual favors.
- Never commit any act of fraud, corruption or unethical business practice, including conflict of interest during LWF events.
- Do not accuse falsely people for harassment or exploitation of any kind for your own advantage.
- Be aware that such behavior should be respected not only in the meeting itself but also in social times, at meals, etc.

## What action should be taken?

### Procedure:

- Before the start of the LWF event, two members to form the Complaint Handling Committee (CHC) are identified, preferably one woman and one man. The CHC members will receive a short briefing from the event organizer on this Code of Conduct and procedures to follow.
- At the beginning of the meeting/event (first session), the organizers should remind all participants about the Code of Conduct for Participants in Events Organized by the LWF. Focal persons (CHC) should be introduced at the first session. Focal persons shall draw the attention of the participants to the Code of Conduct principles and the commitment of LWF to uphold them.
- Should anyone need to make a complaint, the following procedures shall apply:
  1. approach a member of the CHC at this event, or fill out the **Complaint Form** available at the conference to make a complaint found as **ANNEX 2**.
  2. hand the filled out complaint form to any member of the CHC (put in their hotel pigeon boxes, or slip under their room doors, etc.);
  3. or send an email to [codeofconduct@lutheranworld.org](mailto:codeofconduct@lutheranworld.org) (only accessed by the LWF Human Resources Office) or report misconduct via the LWF website form.
- All complaints should be carefully and promptly investigated, meeting privately with the subject of complaint and the complainant (person making the complaint).
- For the complainant, counseling, pastoral care, accompaniment and assistance should be made available. In cases where the complainant wishes to consider reporting the incident to the relevant legal and/or ecclesial authorities, he or she shall be offered support and assistance in considering such report. However, if the person decides to pursue legal action against the subject of complaint, the LWF, as an organization, can in no case be held liable, directly or indirectly, for such act and its possible prejudicial consequences.
- The subject of complaint should also be offered the possibility of pastoral care. The CHC may find it necessary to remove the person from the meeting or from positions where the offense could be repeated.

## KEY TERMS

(extract from the LWF Staff Code of Conduct)

### Abuse of power

Viewed positively, power is the ability to act, especially in ways that respect and empower rather than dominate and oppress others. Those in positions of authority or trust are expected to carry this out in responsible and just ways that do not take advantage of others, especially those who are more dependent or vulnerable. Abuse of power is manifested in how those with less social power are treated physically, psychologically, emotionally, and/or sexually. Sexual activity, even when consensual, between those of unequal power in this sense is an abuse of power.

### Bullying

Bullying is the use of force or coercion to abuse or intimidate others. The behavior can be habitual and involve an imbalance of social or physical power. It can include verbal harassment or threat, physical assault or coercion and may be directed repeatedly towards particular victims, perhaps on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexuality, or ability

### Corruption

As a particular form of the abuse of power, corruption is the abuse of one's position for private gain, such as misusing the financial and other resources of the organization. The offering, giving, soliciting or acceptance of an inducement or reward which may improperly influence the action of any person is also to be considered as corruption.

### Discrimination

Discrimination means exclusion of, treatment of, or action against an individual based on social status, race, ethnicity, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, national origin, political affiliation or disability.

### Gender and power

Gender is the English word being used to describe cultural/societal differences between males and females in terms of roles and responsibilities, expectations, power, privileges, rights, and opportunities. "Gender" refers to the differences between males and females that are rooted in culture, tradition, society, and religion. Gender is something that is learned from infancy. An individual or society's gender perspective can change. Unequal power relationships provide the basis for sexual exploitation and abuse.

### Fraud

An intentional distortion, deceit, trickery, and perversion of truth or breach of confidence, relating to an organization's financial, material, or human resources, assets, services and/or transactions, generally for the purpose of personal gain or benefit.

### Harassment

Harassment means any unwelcome comment or behavior that is offensive, demeaning, humiliating, derogatory, or any other inappropriate behavior that fails to respect the dignity of an individual.

## Intimidation

Intimidation (also called cowing) is intentional behavior that "would cause a person of ordinary sensibilities" fear of injury or harm. It's not necessary to prove that the behavior was so violent as to cause terror or that the victim was actually frightened.

## Protection

Ensuring that individual basic human rights, welfare and physical security are recognized, safeguarded and protected in accordance with international standards.

## Sexual exploitation

Sexual coercion and manipulation (includes all types of sexual acts) by a person in a position of power providing any type of assistance in exchange for sexual acts. In these situations, the potential victim believes she/he has no other choice than to comply; this is not consent and it is exploitation. Exploitation is using one's position of authority, influence or control over resources, to pressure, force or manipulate someone to do something against his/her will or unknowingly, by threatening them with negative repercussions such as withholding project assistance, not approving an employee's work support requests, threatening to make false claims about an employee in public, etc. Sexual exploitation is any abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes; this includes profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.

## Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment means any unwelcome sexual advance, comment, expressed or implied sexual demand, touch, joke, gesture, or any other communication or conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal, written or visual, by any person to another individual within the scope of work. Sexual harassment may be directed at members of the same or opposite sex and includes harassment based on sexual orientation.

## Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse is actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, including inappropriate touching, by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

## Zero tolerance

The principle and practice of not tolerating any instance of sexual exploitation and abuse, harassment, abuse of power, fraud and corruption in all of our meetings and conferences and applying rules and penalties for breaches or violations.

## ANNEX 1

### CODE OF CONDUCT FOR LWF EVENTS

#### Information on the event

Complaint Mechanism specific to:

**Title of Event:** .....

**Place/Country:** .....

**Date:**.....

Complaint Handling Committee (CHC) at this specific event:

Mr./Mrs..... - focal persons at this event

Mr./Mrs.....

Timeframe:

Give full dates of the event (arrival to departure):

.....

However, according to our policy, complaints can be sent within 60 days of the incident.

Important information:

Any complaint that is not resolved during the time of the meeting or that may need follow-up shall be forwarded to the LWF Human Resources Officer.

For coordination, please get in touch with the LWF staff organizer of this specific event.

For any questions or concerns feel free to email the LWF Human Resources Officer:  
[codeofconduct@lutheranworld.org](mailto:codeofconduct@lutheranworld.org)

## ANNEX 2

**CONFIDENTIAL**

The Lutheran World Federation

### Complaint Form

This form should be completed by the person wishing to lodge a complaint or documented by a third party. All information must be held securely and confidentiality must be maintained at all times

File Number: \_\_\_\_\_

A: General data

Name of the person lodging the complaint: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_ email: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the person you wish to lodge a complaint against (if known): \_\_\_\_\_

Date of incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Time of incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of reporting: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of reporting: \_\_\_\_\_

**B: What is the complaint?** (State the nature and key issue of the Complaint)

**C: Brief description of the incident or concern:** State what exactly happened, trying to follow the sequence of events from start to finish. If the incident location is not well known, describe the location based on your memory of it. Give a description of the 'subject of complaint' if you do not know her/his name.

**D: Name of witnesses:** (if any) Supply the names of witnesses and where they can be contacted, if known.

**E:** State what kind of a response you expect from LWF and how you wish to see the matter resolved:



Name and Signature of Complainant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Case referred to: \_\_\_\_\_ Date referred: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and signature of LWF Staff responding to the Complaint \_\_\_\_\_

**Describe action taken:** (provide detailed information example, if medical assistance has been provided, what psychosocial care has been provided and whether a report has been made to the Police.)