

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCESS

UN Women National Committee Aotearoa New Zealand (UN Women NCANZ) is a not-for-profit organisation which is managed by a Board elected from the membership. Board members provide their services free-of-charge. The Board may recruit paid contractors to carry out delegated tasks on its behalf.

UN Women NCANZ collects funds from members, donations and from fundraising activities. These funds in turn are directed to UN Women projects which improve the lives and status of women, particularly in Pacific countries.

Should any member of the organisation, stakeholder or member of the public wish to lodge a complaint about any aspect of UN Women NCANZ activities or personnel, the process for receiving and resolving the complaint follows:

Rationale

Unresolved and badly handled complaints can seriously affect the reputation of an organisation. On average, a person who has a positive experience with an organisation will tell two or three other people about it. A person who has a negative experience will tell many more. However a person who has complained and whose complaint has been well handled and speedily resolved will become an advocate for the organisation.

The main elements of a good complaints process include:

- Recognising complaints
- Listening to the complainant
- Resolving complaints speedily at the point of first contact if possible
- If it is not possible to resolve the complaint immediately, having a clear and comprehensible process with set time frames.
- Keeping the complainant informed about what is happening
- Keeping clear records, with safeguards for confidential information.

1. Recognising complaints

Many people do not like to be labelled as complainants. They may say they have a concern, or are anxious about something rather than saying they want to complain. However they still expect to be taken seriously and for action to be taken.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction coupled with an expectation that something will be done about it.

This complaints process applies to complaints about UN Women NCANZ, including its Board, subcommittees, regional contacts, interns and contractors.

2. Listening to the complainant

Many complaints can be resolved simply by understanding the complainant's concerns and giving appropriate assurances. As a first step in the complaints process, the complainant should be made to feel comfortable about making the complaint and should be assured that it is being taken seriously.

3. Complaints process – initial handling of complaint

- a. Complaint made to Administrator or President at president@unwomen.org.nz /info@unwomen.org.nz
 - i. Administrator or President resolves complaint immediately - record it in complaint register. No further action.
 - ii. If the Administrator or President cannot resolve the complaint immediately, she must contact the complainant within five working days, and give an explanation of what will happen next and when further contact can be expected.
 - iii. The President may decide to refer the complaint back to the Administrator to handle it herself or to refer it to the Board or to the regional contact.
 - iv. If the complaint is to be handled by the Board, or the regional contact, the President should refer it to the Board or regional contact and tell the complainant, within five working days. The President or the regional contact must also contact the complainant within one week and tell them what will happen next and the timeframe – eg the date of the next Board meeting if the complaint is to be considered at that meeting.
- b. Complaint made to member or regional contact
 - i. Member or regional contact resolves complaint immediately. Advise Administrator who will record it in complaint register. No further action.
 - ii. If the member or regional contact cannot resolve the complaint immediately, she must contact the complainant within five working days, and give an explanation of what will happen next and when further contact can be expected. She must also advise the President that a complaint has been received and explain what action is to be taken.
 - iii. The complaint must be referred to the President
 - iv. if is not about the regional group or any of its members, or
 - v. if it has not been resolved within two weeks.
- c. Complaint made to President or Board member
 - i. Board Member or President resolves complaint immediately. Advise Administrator who will record it in complaint register. No further action.
 - ii. If the complaint is made to a Board member and cannot be resolved immediately, then the Board member must refer it to the President (within five working days) unless it is a complaint about the President. The President must then contact the complainant to acknowledge the complaint immediately.
 - iii. If the complaint is about the President, the Board member must ask the Secretary to put it on the agenda for the next Board meeting, where it will be discussed “in committee”
 - iv. Either the member or the President must contact the complainant within one week and explain what will happen next and the timeframe.

4. Complaints process – after initial stages

- a. Any complaint that has not been resolved within two weeks should be referred to the President
- b. The President has discretion to delegate the handling of the complaint to the Administrator, a Board member, or the regional contact if this seems to offer the best chance of resolution. However the President should monitor progress and be prepared to step in if necessary.
- c. Once the complaint has reached the President, it must be put into writing. If the complainant is unable to put it in writing, the President or her delegate should either write it themselves and ask the complainant to agree that it is a fair representation of the complaint, or offer the services of an independent person to assist in writing the complaint.
- d. The written complaint should, as far as possible, include the dates and times of any relevant events and names and contact details of witnesses. It should also state what action the complainant would consider necessary to resolve the complaint.
- e. Each complaint is different and the President or her delegate may use their own judgement about the best way to resolve any complaint. However the following must be observed:
 - i. The complainant and/or anyone assisting the complainant must be told what the President or her delegate proposes to do and must be updated on progress at least once a week.
 - ii. The complainant must be invited and encouraged to bring one or more support persons to any meetings.
 - iii. Any agreement to resolve the complaint must be put in writing and signed by all parties. The agreement should state that the resolution is full and final. If the resolution is only partial, the agreement should identify any unresolved issues and state what is to be done about them.
 - iv. If the complaint is about an employee or contractor of UNWNCANZ, it may result in disciplinary action against the employee or contractor. It is important to distinguish between the complaint process and the disciplinary process and to keep them separate.
 - v. When complaints cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainants, they should be invited to take the complaint to the Council for International Development (CID). See below for CID complaints process. In appropriate cases, complainants may also be offered an investigation of the complaint by an independent person (to be agreed between UNWNCANZ and the complainant).

5. Complaint information

- a. The Administrator will keep a complaints register on which will be recorded
 - Name and contact details of complainant
 - Date and nature of complaint
 - Name of person handling complaint for UNWNCANZ
 - Dates of progress reports, meetings and other significant events.
 - Date and nature of complaint outcome.
- b. The complaint register and all information on it is confidential and may not be disclosed to any third party without the consent of the complainant.
- c. Similarly, all other personal information about the complainant that may be supplied to or created by UNWNCANZ in the course of the complaint process is confidential and

may not be disclosed to any third party without the consent of the complainant. All such information should be returned to the complainant or destroyed once it is no longer needed.

- d. The Board will review the Complaints Register annually.

Council for International Development (CID) Code of Conduct Complaints Handling Process

Complaints regarding breaches of the CID Code of Conduct can be made to the CID Code of Conduct Committee. For information on the CID Code of Conduct and how to make a complaint, see the CID website: www.cid.org.nz

References: UN Women NCANZ Constitution
UN Women Recognition Agreement
CID Code of Conduct

Approved: UN Women NCANZ Board 12 May 2018

Review Date: 30 May 2020

Complaints Procedure Summary

