

Code of conduct

To prevent harassment,
including sexual harassment,
at WIPO events



1. Purpose

The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) is committed to providing an inclusive, respectful, and safe environment during events that it organizes, hosts or sponsors.

WIPO events are guided by the highest ethical and professional standards, and participants are expected to behave with integrity and respect towards the other participants, the organizers, and everyone else involved in the preparation and delivery of such events.

Harassment, including sexual harassment, has no place in WIPO. WIPO is committed to enforcing a culture of ethical, inclusive behavior that protects everyone's right to a safe and equal environment where each individual has the ability to thrive.

2. Applicability

This Code of Conduct applies to all WIPO events, including assemblies, meetings, conferences, workshops, receptions, exhibitions, side events, gatherings and any other fora organized, hosted or sponsored in whole or in part by WIPO, whatever the format (in-person, virtual or hybrid) and location (on WIPO premises or off-site).

The Code of Conduct applies to all participants at WIPO events, i.e., all persons, including WIPO personnel, attending or involved in any capacity in the event.

The Code of Conduct does not supersede any existing policies, laws, regulations, rules, or agreements, including those regulating the venue of the event and any applicable Host Country agreements.

3. Prohibited conduct

Harassment is any improper and unwelcome conduct, whether verbal or physical, that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offense or humiliation.

It may take the form of words, gestures or actions, that threaten, demean, isolate, or belittle any participant, cause personal humiliation or embarrassment, or create an offensive, hostile or intimidating environment.

Examples of harassment include, but are not limited to:

Exclusion or refusal to cooperate with a person because of their ethnicity, national origin, or any personal characteristics

Making derogatory or demeaning comments about a person's ethnicity or national origin

Unwarranted, intrusive or persistent questioning about a person's ethnic origin, culture or religion

Sexual harassment is a specific type of prohibited conduct. Sexual harassment is any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offense or humiliation.

Sexual harassment may involve any conduct of a verbal, nonverbal or physical nature, including written and electronic communications, and may occur between persons of the same or different genders.

Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

Making sexual comments about appearance, clothing, or body parts

Making inappropriate sexual gestures

Repeatedly asking a person to go on a date or asking for sex

Making derogatory or demeaning comments about someone's sexual orientation or personal characteristics

Sharing sexually suggestive communications in any format (messages, images, etc.)

Attempted or actual sexual assault

4. Reporting harassment

A participant who feels that they have been the victim of harassment or sexual harassment at a WIPO event may report the matter to the organizer of the event. A participant who witnesses such harassment should report it immediately. The organizer of the WIPO event will be expected to take appropriate action in accordance with its applicable policies, regulations and rules.

Examples of appropriate action by a participant, or the organizer may include, but are not limited to:

If safe to do so, requesting the offender to immediately stop the offending behavior

Reporting the matter to local authorities

Contacting WIPO emergency number: 9999 (from any WIPO internal phone) or +41 22 338 9999 (from mobile)

Reporting the matter to WIPO's Internal Oversight Division if the alleged offender is a member of WIPO personnel

A participant should never knowingly make a false or misleading claim about prohibited conduct.

5. Prohibition of retaliation

Threats, intimidation, or any other form of retaliation against a participant who has made a complaint or provided information in support of a complaint are prohibited. WIPO will take any reasonable appropriate action needed to prevent and respond to retaliation, in accordance with its applicable policies, regulations and rules.