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# Ethics Report

UNAIDS/PCB (56)/25.20

UNAIDS 56th PCB Meeting

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# Establishing an independent Ethics Office

Outstanding issues

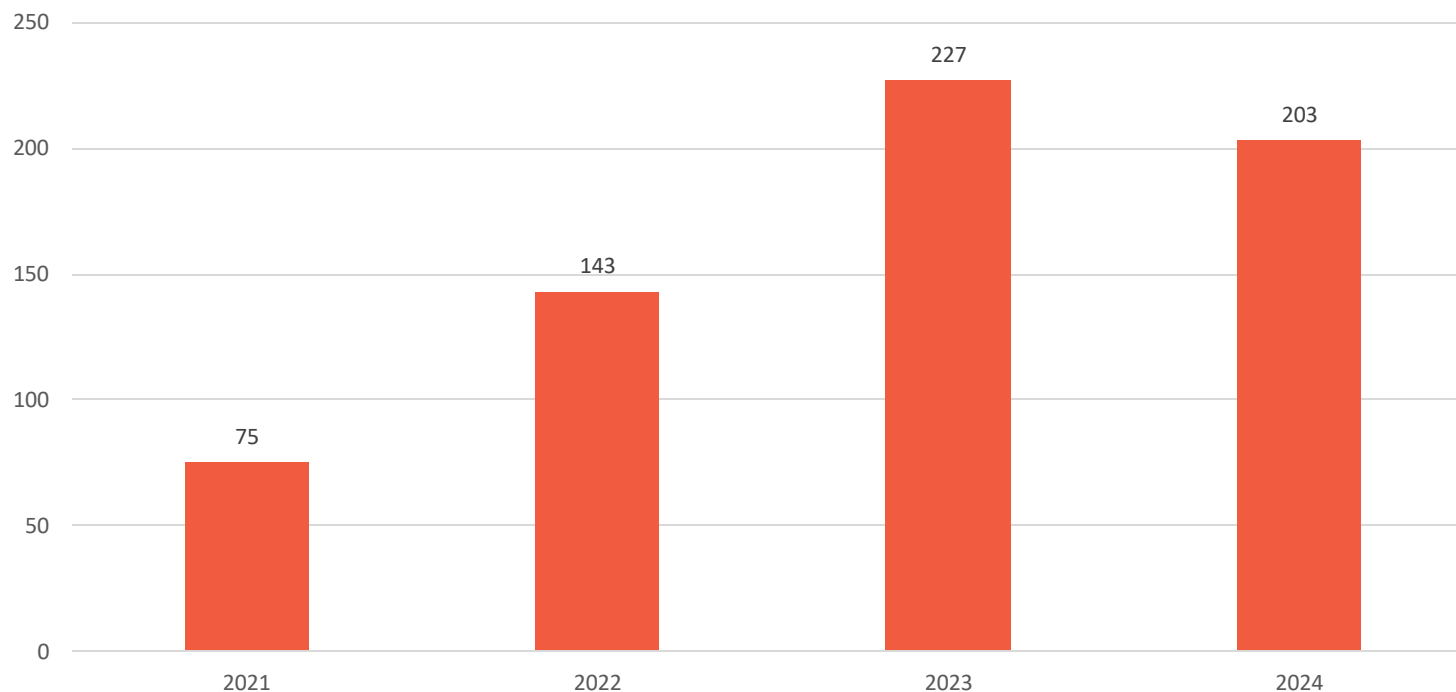
# Independence of the Ethics Office - outstanding matters

- The oversight committee to be involved in the recruitment of the Head of ethics.
  - Oversight committee consulted throughout the recruitment process
- The contract of newly appointed heads of Ethics functions should be issued for the full term.
  - This is still outstanding
- Administrative support and backup resources should be provided to the Ethic Office.
  - Recruitment of P3 halted due to financial situation

# Highlight of key Ethics Office activities in 2024

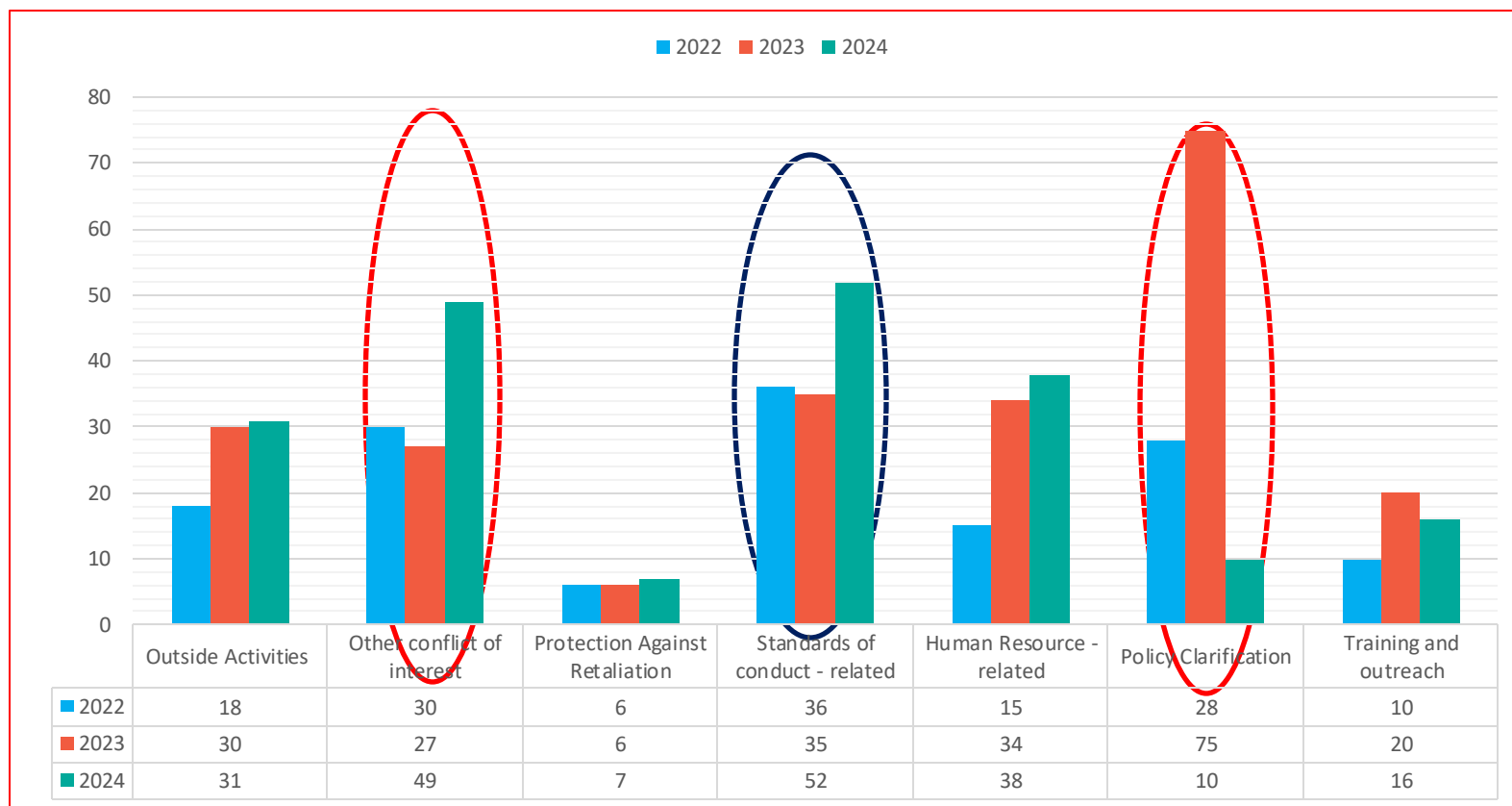
# Overall requests for Advise and Guidance

- Small dip in volumes requests from 227 in 2023 to 203 in 2024
- In spite of dip, number of requests remained high



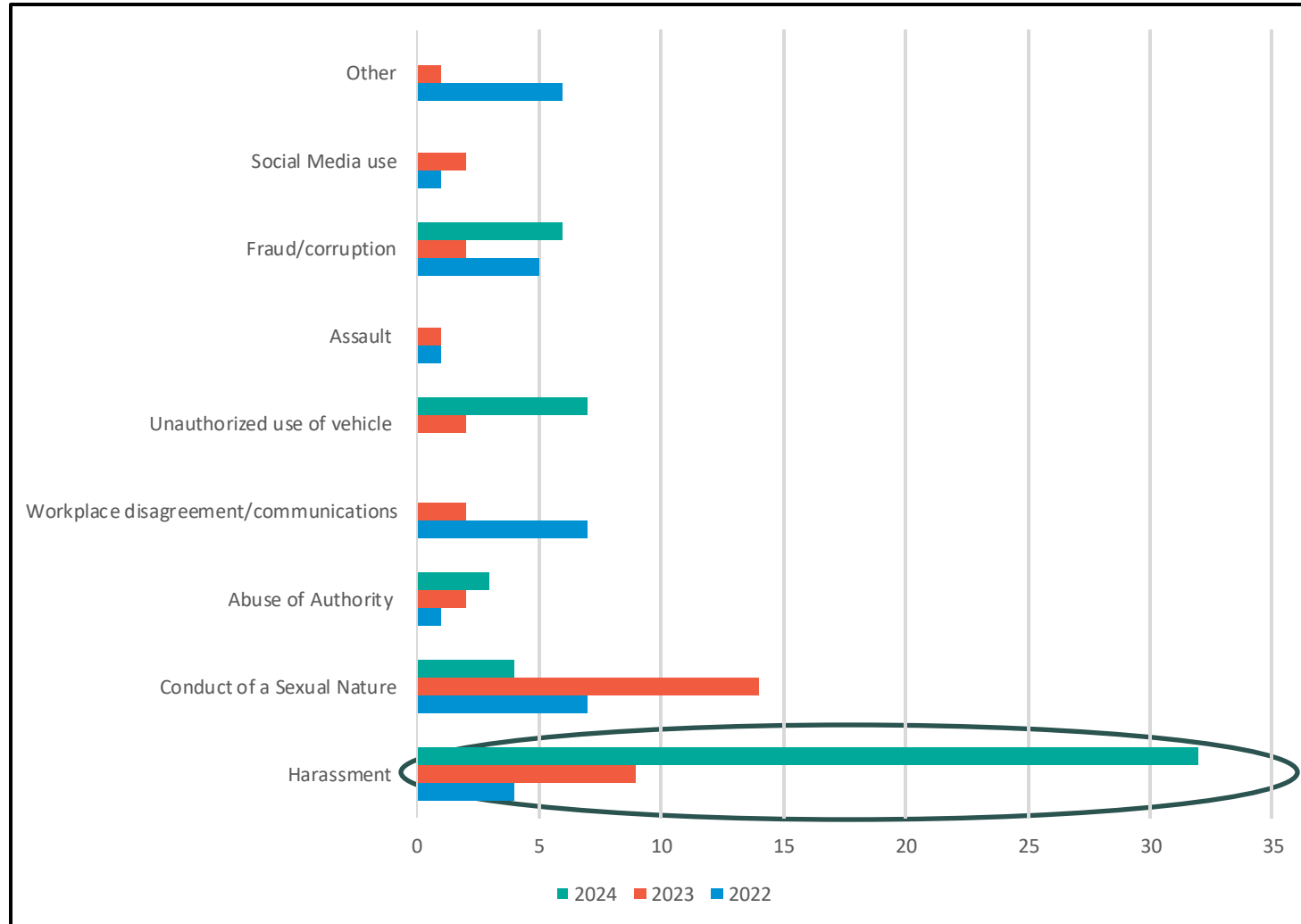
# Overall requests for Advise and Guidance

- Increases in other conflict of interest and standards of conduct requests
- Significant decrease in policy clarification



# Standards of Conduct-related requests

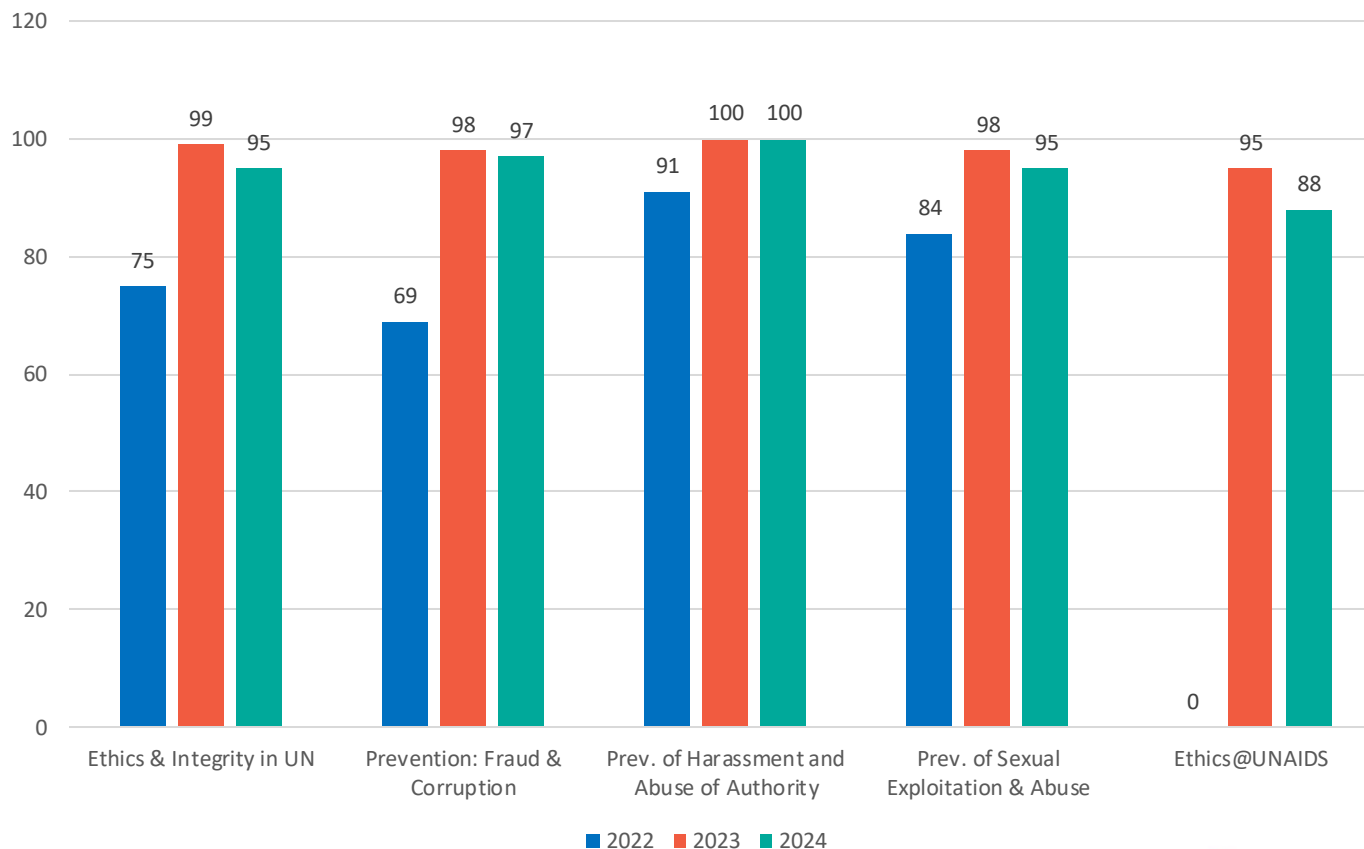
- Significant increase in harassment related request





## Ethics Training and awareness creation

- Maintained a high completion rate of mandatory training 88-100%
- Continued integration of ethics training into New Staff Orientation
- Region/Country Office-specific training



## Other Activities

- No request for protection against retaliation\*.
- Enhance prevention of sexual misconduct
  - No new allegations of sexual misconduct received
  - Implementation of **digital footprint checks**, and **ClearCheck screening** of all external candidates to whom UNAIDS intends to offer staff positions.
  - Survey conducted by OSCSEA shows improvements and highlights specific areas for improvement, including improving the confidence of personnel to report sexual misconduct.
- There is however need to improve confidence in the reporting of all misconduct, including retaliation.



# Implications of restructuring on ethics in UNAIDS

# Implications of Restructuring on Ethics in UNAIDS

- During restructuring process:
  - Potentially high number of requests for advise and guidance regarding restructuring
  - Potentially high number of conduct-related complaints emanating from shifting workplace dynamics, affecting collaboration and trust amongst staff.
  - Engagement of Ethics Office in restructuring processes to ensure transparency and fairness in addition to responding promptly all requests received.

# Implications of Restructuring on the Ethics Office

- Post Restructuring
  - Ethics Office preserved with one Staff member.
  - Risk of reduced oversight and peer accountability, especially in countries with one staff member, which may lead to ethical lapses or misconduct.
  - Potentially higher SEA vulnerability in isolated offices, especially in high risk countries/settings.
  - Increased risk of misconduct including retaliation going unreported due to isolation, reduced organisational footprints and fear of retaliation.
  - Greater difficulty in implementing protective measures in smaller teams or one-person offices where separation is less feasible.
  - Financial and logistical difficulties in delivering in-person training which are particularly useful in engaging staff and addressing nuanced issues.

# Ethics Office Priorities

## Identified Priorities

- Prioritize high-risk locations with targeted support, including in PSEA and prevention of other misconduct.
  - Tailor training and other initiatives to prevent and address ethical issues
  - Undertake special initiatives to address the fear of retaliation
- Support a Management-led process to develop and implement and accountability framework for SEA and other misconduct in accordance with relevant policies.
- Explore the use of digital tools to regularly monitor staff perceptions, identify emerging risks and assess effectiveness of implementation measures.
- Collaborate with other offices including senior leaders, Culture Transformation, People Management (HR), Staff Counsellor, Ombudsperson, IT, IOS to address issues comprehensively.

# Conclusion



## Conclusion

- The Ethics Office has continued to foster integrity through confidential advice, retaliation protection, sexual misconduct prevention, and policy coherence. However, additional work is needed to ensure zero tolerance for all forms of misconduct.
- Current financial constraints and ongoing downsizing present risks that require strong collaboration with management to ensure zero tolerance for misconduct.
- The Ethics Office will work with senior leadership to mitigate ethical risks and promote a culture of integrity and respect by focusing on prevention, support, and accountability.