



Office of the Ombudsman for UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNOPS and UN Women

## **First Regular Session 2026 UN Women Executive Board**

**Statement of  
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Ombudsman,  
Office of the Ombudsman for UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNOPS  
and UN Women**

### **Item 6. Organizational Culture**

**Presentation of the 2024 Annual Report of the Office of the Ombudsman  
for UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNOPS and UN Women**

**19 February 2026  
New York**

Distinguished Members of the Board,  
Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for the invitation to present the 2024 Annual Report of the Office of the Ombudsman for UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNOPS and UN Women.

The Office of the Ombudsman provides impartial and confidential services to address work-related issues and conflicts. Our guiding principles are *informality*, *confidentiality*, *neutrality*, and *independence*.

The purpose of our Office is to provide a safe and confidential space for colleagues to be heard, and we support conflict resolution through exploring options, conflict coaching, shuttle diplomacy, mediation, and team or restorative processes. We also provide feedback and observations on trends and systemic issues. In doing so, the Office reduces the human, operational and potential litigation costs of unresolved conflict - particularly during periods of rapid change.

In the reporting period of 2024, our Office handled a total of 712 cases - an increase of 26% compared to 565 cases in 2023. Of these, 52 related to UN Women, representing a 67.7% increase from the prior year (31 cases). This growth is welcome - it proves increased familiarity with our services and greater confidence among colleagues to put *informal* resolutions first. An 'informal first' approach is expressly supported by the General Assembly, and our Office works well with colleagues at all levels in UN Women.

Our training and outreach activities in 2024 reached some 9,700 personnel across the five organizations served, enhancing awareness and capacity for conflict resolution.

Our mediation cases also increased in 2024, with a total of 119 new mediations received, and 128 mediation cases closed during the year. Mediations showed a 76% successful resolution rate. 8 mediations related to UN Women, which corresponds to the workforce ratio. Mediation participants replied in surveys that they would recommend mediation to a colleague, regardless of the outcome.

As per our mandate, the report highlights some systemic observations. These include, for example, the following areas:

- 1. Psychological and Mental Safety:** The Office saw a rise in concerns related to psychological safety and high-pressure environments. Visitors reported mental strain linked to perceived unclear expectations, stress, job insecurity, and communications seen as hostile. The Office observed that mental health awareness and resources have notably expanded, and this trend is continuing.
- 2. Use of Power:** The Office addressed many cases of supervisor/supervisee conflict involving alleged or perceived misuse of power - ranging from alleged threats and micromanagement to performance evaluations claimed to be biased. Likewise, more supervisors reported feeling harassed when feedback they gave to supervisees was

misinterpreted. The Office recommends expanded training in people management for all supervisors.

3. **Change Management and Restructuring:** The Office supported personnel affected by restructuring, where perceived unclear communication, favoritism, and job insecurity led to stress and mistrust. For 2024, the Office generally a pattern of greater conflict avoidance by personnel concerned over potential job security. The Office offered mediation, coaching, and clarification support, and emphasized that transparent communication and early engagement are key to minimizing disruption and conflict.
4. Further systemic observations can be found in the Annual Report.

Looking ahead, the upward trend has continued. In 2025, the Office managed **832 cases**—a further **17% increase** from 2024. For UN Women, the increase was **25%**, rising to **64 cases**. Once again, we interpret this not as a sign of more conflict, but as a sign of greater trust in informal, constructive dialogue during a period marked by substantial organizational change. Before closing, I would like to sincerely thank my team, and our colleagues in UN Women’s human resources and executive office as well as the Staff Council. Your willingness to collaborate, engage promptly, and propose mediation proactively makes a tangible difference. We appreciate these partnerships immensely.

I am happy to address any questions you may have.

Thank you.