The Alliance for Peacebuilding (AfP) is a membership network of over 100 organizations. Our members include some of the world’s largest development organizations, the most innovative academic institutions, and the most powerful peacebuilding groups. We bring together coalitions in key areas of strategy and policy to elevate the entire peacebuilding field, tackling issues too large for any one organization to address alone. We are writing this statement to reiterate our firm commitment to fight discrimination, sexual harassment, and abuse within our community; both at the headquarter and field mission level. Those working in the peacebuilding field have an obligation to the communities we serve, our staff, our supporters, and our donors not only to uphold and practice high peacebuilding ethics, but to ensure that we promote a strong and healthy organizational climate within the peacebuilding field. Organizations must work to ensure that they reduce the risk of and deter discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse within their organizations and protect the communities they serve.

Peacebuilding organizations must have a strong organizational climate that supports a diverse and respectful workplace. Recent studies find the strongest, most potent predictor of sexual harassment in an organization is rooted in its organizational climate.\textsuperscript{1} Organizations seeking to root out harassment at all levels need to be prepared not only to detail with what is impermissible, but must further create an environment in which these behaviors are never tolerated in the first place. It is not enough to merely say harassment is not tolerated or to have a zero-tolerance policy. The major study from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine outlines a more comprehensive way of examining sexual harassment within organizations and identifies the strongest predictor of such behavior. Surprisingly, it has little to do with individual perpetrators. The study finds that the strongest, most potent predictor of sexual harassment is essentially the culture of the company — what the researchers call “organizational climate.” The report finds that organizations need to focus on the entire corporate culture: when organizations truly cultivate a climate that makes clear that sexual harassment will not be tolerated in any form, employees are much less likely to engage in sexual harassment.

The study further asserts that the second most potent predictor of harassment is whether the men at an organization outnumber the women, particularly at the top of the organizational chart. Organizations must support diversity policies to ensure that women are fairly represented in organizations at the senior level. As one recent court case in the US revealed, it was found that women at a major company were reportedly routinely mistreated, demeaned and under-valued. These behaviors enable a culture where sexual harassment, discrimination and abuse thrive.

Therefore, organizations need to have a comprehensive, transparent program in place that clearly details the consequences for inappropriate behavior and provides extensive training to reduce the risk of harassment in the workplace. Training staff on how to prevent and respond appropriately to allegations of wrongdoing is not a one-time, annual training – it requires organization-wide support and an investment in resources that encompass time, capacity, and money. In addition to prevention, organizations must also provide reporting options and whistleblower protections to

ensure the safety and confidentiality of victims and others who come forward, in order to inhibit retaliation. It is also critical to create internal services or connect appropriately to external services that can compassionately and efficiently respond to victim’s needs.

In line with good peacebuilding values, organizations should promote diversity, be transparent about processes and actions that have been taken, and should eliminate nondisclosure agreements and other forms of enforced secrecy. As a field, we cannot appear to support, even tacitly, allegations of covering up or hiding wrongdoings within our own organizations. Peacebuilders have a responsibility to lead the way, and to practice the values that we require in our programming. We must stand for diversity and respect, and must address conflict, including discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse. We must have the courage of our convictions to push this movement forward in a transparent and open manner.

As a field, we will have to work together collectively to identify better practices. Peacebuilding organizations must ensure they create and maintain a culture in which individuals believe they can come forward, and must establish safe structures and strong diversity practices. To transform a culture of discrimination, harassment, and abuse to a culture of respect and accountability, leadership must face these issues in a transparent manner, and create policies encouraging respect, dignity, and safety for all employees, clients, and beneficiaries.