



CALL FOR PAPERS IN RESPECT OF THE FIRST REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND THE LAW IN AFRICA

Kenya, Nairobi, 24-26 June 2020

The Africa End Sexual Harassment Initiative (AESHI) is hosting the first regional conference on sexual harassment and the law in Africa under the theme of ‘uniting towards the development of a regional model law on sexual harassment for Africa.’ This regional conference brings together lawyers, workers, gender activists, media practitioners, policy makers and academics from across Africa and beyond to share, learn and deliberate on the problem of sexual harassment and the solutions.

The evolution of what used to be a “problem without a name,” in western countries to what eventually became recognized in law as ‘sexual harassment’ in the 1970’s, was shaped within the context of a social movement. This was a catalyst for a cultural shift on the perceptions of the emerging roles of women and men within the home and in the workplace. Since then, the demand for workplace gender equality has increased in its volume and morphed into a global cry likewise echoed by African feminists on the grounds that sexual harassment is not only a form of gender based violence but represents a serious impediment to gender equality, violation of





human rights and the economic empowerment of women in particular.

The call for a regional model law on sexual harassment for Africa is based on multiple observations. It is propositioned that the uneven and fragmented approach, interpretation, development and implementation of sexual harassment laws across Africa has in a sense allowed this scourge to continue as a ‘problem without a name’ in many African countries. Furthermore, creating a balance between achieving a legal standard of what constitutes sexual harassment and societal constructs of cultural values and norms which may strain against the boundaries of acceptable behavior needs to be resolved. The harsh economic realities often ease the facilitation of *quid pro quo* (sex/actions in exchange for favors) workplace dynamics in both formal and informal sectors as well as in horizontally structured working relations. Inept attempts at ensuring fairness, transparency and accountability in law, policy and socio-cultural contexts have unleashed a culture of impunity. African feminists also note that the gender and labor market power distribution is divided along lines of patriarchy which maintain male privilege in the workplace to the detriment of equality and equity principles.

A discussion on the possibilities of an African regional model law also takes place within the global legal context of a plethora of norms addressing gender-based violence broadly, and most recently ILO Convention on Violence and Harassment (190), which conceptualizes gender-based violence and harassment (GBV/H) in the world of work. The global agenda raises pertinent questions as to how the African agenda to eradicate sexual harassment can shape its narrative uniquely and yet still in recognition of the broader global dynamics.





Against this complex backdrop, AESHI is issuing out a call for abstracts on contributions towards its “Africa Book Project on Sexual Harassment and the Law” and participation in the first regional conference on sexual harassment and the law in Africa.

Abstracts should preferably focus on the development of sexual harassment laws in their specific countries and/or regions and should accentuate the gaps, challenges and opportunities for improving sexual harassment laws with a comparative analysis from within and outside Africa. Papers should be sent to aeshiconf@gmail.com and aeshiconf2@gmail.com on the due date highlighted on page 5.

Suggested topics can include

1. Assessing the term sexual harassment in country specific contexts with accompanying recommendations for further expansion.
2. Barriers to reporting and disclosing, and preventing sexual harassment in specific countries, and/or development/humanitarian sectors with solutions based focus.
3. Contracts/ non-disclosure agreements in assessing the risk for women’s safety in the workplace.
4. Vicarious liability of the employer including challenges and solutions to expanding on the definitions of employer and employee.
5. Sexual harassment and third party liability (contract workers/consultants)
6. State responsibility of nationals engaging in sexually harassing acts in foreign countries and emerging international law norms





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7. Aligning the impact of macro-economic policies on fostering gender inequality and its subsequent contributory effect to sexual harassment.
8. Sexual harassment in public spaces.
9. The intersection between sexual harassment and health rights.
10. Best practice models at regional and national levels on supporting survivors whilst ensuring alleged perpetrators are afforded due process.
11. Examples of regional, institutional and community based initiatives and best practices implemented to address sexual harassment and the lessons learnt. Examples of models that have achieved success in approaches to prevention of sexual harassment.

Any specific enquiries can be made to the following AESHI team members

Ms Rose Kariuki	+254 772485215	Kenya
Ms Hilda Stuart	+255 756749 446	Tanzania
Ms Fundi Nzimande	+ 2773 853 6934	South Africa

Selected authors will be invited to present their full papers at the AESHI inaugural conference on Sexual Harassment and the Law in Africa. Abstracts should be between 500 to 700 words and must also include full names, institutional affiliations and summarized resumes of the authors.

The papers for this conference shall undergo a double-blind peer review and selected contributions will be published in an edited book and others in a special edition of an accredited journal.





AESHI

AFRICA END SEXUAL HARASSMENT INITIATIVE

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The following timelines apply;

15 December 2019: Deadline for receiving abstracts

31 February 2020: Notification of selected and accepted abstracts

30 April 2020: Cut-off date for completed draft conference papers

01 June 2020: Deadline for revised conference papers

24 – 26 June 2020: Conference

31 June -31 July Peer-review process

From 01 August 2020: Editing and compilation for publication

Limited funding is available with full funding considered on a case by case basis.

