

APWLD Grievance Policy

1. Objectives

The purpose of this document is to provide all staff and members of APWLD with a clear process through which complaints related to the workplace or to the operations of APWLD can be dealt with in a fair and consistent way.

2. Principles

APWLD aims to foster an environment of open communication in the workplace where staff is able to deal with disputes or grievances in both informal and formal channels. Sensitive to the rights of all the staff and have them work in an enabling and healthy work environment; there too is a need to provide clear and formal conflict resolution mechanisms. Having access to a clear and transparent process to address their concerns is a part of ensuring (as much as possible) a healthy work environment. No staff or member shall be intimidated or unfairly treated in anyway should they opt to maximise this policy to resolve the issue.

3. Definition

A grievance can be defined as any work-related dispute arising out of behavior, interpretation, application, administration or alleged violation of the specific terms of collective agreement including APWLD Constitution and By-laws, Operations Manual and Policies.

4. Scope

This outlines the process to be followed by staff and members working in the Secretariat in cases where they have a grievance relating to workplace processes, decisions or behaviours affecting them.

5. Dispute and Grievance procedure

a. Informal Process

Informal dispute resolution can come in the form of raising their concerns with colleagues or members. The staff should make her best attempts to address the issue with the relevant person informally, i.e. through dialogue. It is frequently in this phase of the process often resolve misunderstandings, issues of miscommunications and perceived concerns of unfair treatment. In cases where issues cannot be resolved through an informal process, the staff has an option of resolving the dispute within a formal grievance process.

Where the complaint is of a serious nature, for example allegations of harassment, fraud or hostile work environment, the matter should be raised directly with the Regional Coordinator/P&M.

b. Formal Process

Failing resolution of the matter through informal dialogue, the staff member should advise the Regional Coordinator that they wish to formalise a complaint. The formal written complaint should clearly state:

- a. Description of grievance (indicating whether its' a personal grievance or a policy grievance)
- b. Background and grievance details
- c. The resolution being sought from RC/ P&M

The Regional Coordinator with Deputy Regional Coordinator and team leader will attempt to resolve the matter, which may include investigating a complaint, mediating between colleagues and/or working with the staff member or to involve a third party to resolve a dispute relating to a management decision. The process and decisions agreed on shall be documented to facilitate evaluation of solutions and steps taken,

and should not take more than a month from receipt of request for a formal dispute resolution process to resolve. This is also to be mindful of how efficient resolution of conflict contributes to a healthy work environment.

If the matter remains un-resolved after a month, the complaint should be escalated to the Programme and Management Committee (P&M) for consideration and a final decision. The P&M may select a member of the P&M to conduct mediation to resolve the issue, or may appoint an external party (Deputy Regional Coordinator or team leader) to assist in the process. The process undertaken by the P&M and the final outcome will be formally documented and communicated to relevant parties.

At all stages of a dispute or grievance resolution, APWLD will protect the privacy of individuals and ensure confidentiality of the complaints as much as possible. Staff may elect to be accompanied by a person of their choice at any stage of the formal grievance process. Such representatives are expected to abide by the terms of this policy, and shall maintain confidentiality throughout the process.

If a complaint of serious misconduct such as harassment or fraud is made against a staff member or member, the process contained in the Disciplinary procedures (investigation of serious misconduct) will be commenced.

** Grievance against the Regional Coordinator*

While it is expected that general grievances with the Regional Coordinator (RC) should initially be discussed directly with the RC if possible (through an informal process), staff are expected to report allegations of misconduct, breach of policy, performance relating to the RC directly to the P&M in a timely manner.

The P&M in receiving a formal complaint and request for dispute resolution between a staff and the RC shall need to acknowledge the receipt of the written complaint in three days. The P&M's response with a clear advice on steps to be taken to resolve the dispute will be communicated to the staff in due time.

The dispute resolution process that the P&M is to lead should include the voice and needs of parties concerned. As conflict especially if not resolved in a healthy process can also contribute to an unhealthy work environment, it is best that the dispute resolution process does not exceed a month. If however the dispute is not resolved within the suggested time-frame then the P&M should come up with short-term solutions in consultation with all parties involved.