STATEMENT · UPR PRE-SESSION

Sexual Harassment in the World of Work in Papua New Guinea

Delivered by **PNG Business Coalition for Women (BCFW)**

Thematic area **Gender-based violence and women's rights**

Prior recommendations **144.17 · 144.19 · 144.130 · 144.132**

Geneva · 25 August 2026 ·

Who We Are and Why We Are Here

WHO WE ARE

PNG Business Coalition for Woman (BCFW) is a not-for-profit organisation advancing gender equity, empowerment and the safety of women in PNG. This is BCFW's first UPR Pre-session.

EVIDENCE BASE

Legislation review, policy documents, parliamentary reports, BCFW published research, media reports and publicly available information.

OUR FOCUS

Violence in the world of work, with a specific focus on sexual harassment, and PNG's implementation of Third Cycle recommendations (2021).

Legal Gaps: Limited Protection against Sexual Harassment, Weak Enforcement and Inadequate penalties, absence of comprehensive Gender-based discrimination protections, and lack of workplace measures addressing workplace violence.

New Developments Since the Last Review

PROGRESS ACKNOWLEDGED

- National GBV Secretariat reporting on safe houses, and funding for GBV programmes delivered by civil society organisations
- Increased political attention to gender-based violence and women's rights
- Medium-Term Development Plan IV (2023) names 'Population, Youth and Women Empowerment' as strategic priority area 11
- Alignment with Sustainable Development Goal 5 on women's equal access to economic resources, employment and leadership

THE REMAINING GAP

No specific commitment yet addresses violence that occurs in the world of work.

The Employment Act 1978 remains silent, leaving workers without a clear legal definition, employer duty, or reporting pathway.

The Evidence: Sexual Harassment at the Workplace

PNG BCFW survey, 2026

16.3%

of employees surveyed experienced sexual harassment in their current workplace.

46.1%

had witnessed or been informed about incidents in their workplace.

20.1%

of women and 10.9% of men reported experiencing sexual harassment.

Over half

of victims did not report the incident at all due to concern about losing job, fear of retaliation, being threatened or pressured not to report, and concern about damaging relationships (BCFW, 2026).

A CASE IN POINT — 2022

A senior government official was convicted on three counts of sexual harassment against three female employees in a government department. The conviction shows accountability mechanisms can function, but underscores the power imbalances women face and the need for prevention, reporting systems, survivor protection and enforcement in both the public and private sectors.

Our Recommendations to the Government of PNG

We strongly urge that sexual harassment at the workplace be raised in the upcoming review, with the highest priority given to amending the Employment Act 1978.

a Reform the Employment Act 1978 to include sexual harassment provisions

b Include a clear definition of sexual harassment in the Act

c Clearly outline employers' obligations to address sexual harassment

d Establish a mechanism to report incidents occurring in workplaces

Thank you for your consideration and attention.