

## **Chapter 11. Grievance Redressal Proceedings:**

### **STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVE AND REASONS**

The People's Health Movement (PHM) is a network where individuals and groups from diverse backgrounds work together to meet a common objective. In such a network, differences of opinion are likely to occur from time to time, and inconveniences and conflicts may arise, leading to dissatisfaction. This is also true for the PHM Global Secretariat, where dissatisfaction can occur among the network's employees, including paid consultants. Dissatisfaction can occur when certain expectations (real or perceived) are not met in the job. Unaddressed dissatisfaction is the cause of grievance. Prompt and effective handling of grievances is key to a fruitful and comfortable work environment.

This policy provides a procedure to resolve grievances as they might arise, including steps and structures to raise and resolve formal complaints, in order to avoid loss of motivation, loss of concentration and efficiency, or conflict that may result from unaddressed dissatisfaction.

The basic concepts referred to in this procedure, including the description of the Global Secretariat, the Global Coordinator, their main tasks and responsibilities, and relationship is defined in Chapter 7 of this Handbook, "Global Secretariat".

### **WHAT IS A GRIEVANCE?**

A grievance is any objection, complaint or feeling of injustice, which originates from the working situation, conditions of service or working relationships, and cannot be resolved through bilateral mediation. Thus, it becomes serious enough to justify the attention of PHM governing bodies.

Therefore, a grievance is related to the work, and it can arise on account of:

- (a) Personal or individual problems which flow from the work itself or the physical working environment (reward, assault, supervision, facilities and so forth)
- (b) The application of an individual contract or a collective agreement arrived at through a collective negotiations process that involves the employees and the Global Coordinator, who acts as the director of the Global Secretariat team as described in Chapter 7 of this Handbook (e.g. the scheduling of overtime) and
- (c) Unfair labour practices (victimisation).

### **WHY A GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE?**

PHM would like to have a happy and satisfied staff, whose working conditions reflect the ideals of the movement. Therefore, frankness is encouraged and the Grievance Procedure provides employees with the opportunity to discuss and resolve any problem, complaint or grievance.

An unresolved grievance can prevent the employee from excelling and has a detrimental effect on the relationship between Global Secretariat staff and their immediate director, i.e. the Global Coordinator or Head of Secretariat office.

Therefore, it is important for the employer to pay attention to any grievance in good time.

A grievance procedure creates formal channels for members of staff to bring their problems to the attention of the Global Coordinator, the Head of Secretariat Office, or other relevant PHM structures. It also ensures uniformity in processes to address grievances.

## **SCOPE**

This policy applies to all workers and offices that constitute PHM's Global Secretariat as described in Chapter 7, independently of the country where they are physically located. In case the standards set in this policy are lower than national laws of the country where the office is located, national laws will apply.

Gender based grievance, including grievances concerning gender-based discrimination and harassment, does not fall under the scope of this policy, as there is a separate identified policy for it.

Only employees can raise grievances. The Global Coordinator can raise dissatisfaction with the performance or attitude of employees as part of a pre-defined performance appraisal process, defined in a procedure separate from the Grievance Redressal Procedure.

In case the workers' grievance concerns disciplinary measures or expressed dissatisfaction with workers' performance by the Global Coordinator, the Global Grievance Redressal Committee (GGRC) will deliberate whether the case falls under scope of this policy. In case the GGRC concludes this is the case, they will consider the grievance following the guidelines below.

This policy will enter into force after adoption by the PHM Steering Council.

## **GROUNDS**

The grounds of grievance may be any measure or situation that concerns relations within the Secretariat, including relations between employer and employee(s), staff manager and employee(s), or between two employees, which affects or may affect the conditions of employment of one or several workers.

Such measures or situations might arise when:

- a) provisions of an applicable collective agreement or of an individual contract of employment are neglected or infringed; or
- b) national work rules, laws or regulations are neglected or infringed; or
- c) national custom or usage is neglected or infringed; or
- d) personal issues that appear on account of the organisation of work or interpersonal communication in the Secretariat

## **EXPRESSION OF DISSATISFACTION**

Dissatisfaction needs to be articulated in order to be addressed. The employee is expected to articulate his/her dissatisfaction with the Global Coordinator or Head of Secretariat Office. In case the grievance concerns the Global Coordinator or the Head of the Secretariat Office, the employee can raise the grievance with the Co-Chairs of PHM's Steering Council.

Before formally raising a grievance, the employee should try to find a solution informally, either with the person concerned or with their immediate manager, i.e. the Global Coordinator of the Head of Secretariat Office. The articulation can be in oral or in writing. This does not yet form a formal complaint. On filing a grievance, the employee must indicate whether they have attempted this, and if not, what the reasons are.

While trying to resolve the issue informally, the employee can seek support from colleagues, or individuals part of PHM's governance structures, including the Steering Council.

The Global Coordinator, Head of Secretariat Office, or Co-Chairs are expected to take notice of the grievance, assess it, and address it in case the assessment gives grounds to do so.

## **FORMAL COMPLAINT**

In cases where steps to address the grievance have not been taken within 2 months of being expressed, the employee can file a formal complaint with the Global Grievance Redressal Committee (GGRC) defined under this policy.

The GGRC shall meet within 10 days of receiving a formal complaint to assess it and decide of the next steps. The GGRC shall provide a formal communication to the employee with an update on the status of the formal complaint within a month of receiving it.

It is expected that the GGRC will have addressed complaints within 3 months of receiving them. The GGRC will provide a formal (oral or written) communication on complaints received and their status to the CoCo within three months of the formal complaint being received.

The deliberations of the GGRC shall be confidential.

## **GLOBAL GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL COMMITTEES**

PHM's Global Grievance Redressal Committee will be empowered to consider formal complaints raised by all employees of all offices of the PHM Secretariat.

The GGRC will have either 3 or 5 members. At least half of the committee (at least 2 or 3 respectively) will be constituted by PHM activists who have a background or grounding in/ labour issues. At least half of the members of the committee will be women.

The GGRC will be constituted within 3 months of the adoption of this policy. The CoCo shall be entrusted with constituting the GGRC and replacing members when required.

On request of the CoCo, SC members will be invited to propose members. A proposed member has to be seconded by two other SC members to be nominated. In case of several proposals, the CoCo shall facilitate the process of selection and confirmation of the final GGRC panel.

In the case that a member of GGRC are themselves involved in a case leading to the grievance, or the worker expresses a serious concern with them evaluating the

grievance in question, the worker will be invited to suggest a temporary replacement for the member of GGRC in question. The member themselves will be asked to temporarily step down. The proposed change will be taken up and confirmed by CoCo.

Temporary replacements in GGRC will be accepted on a case-by-case basis. Once a grievance redressal process, which involved a temporary replacement, is concluded, the GGRC will return to its original composition.

#### **FAILURE TO ADDRESS BY GGRC**

If an employee feels that the GGRC has not addressed its formal complaint adequately within 6 months, the CoCo shall have the authority to hear and decide on the grievance. The employee can choose to send a written communication or request for an opportunity to address the CoCo at its regular meeting. The CoCo shall hear the aggrieved party and later deliberate on the matter without the presence of the concerned parties.

The CoCo shall communicate its decision to the concerned parties within two months.

The deliberations of the CoCo on the matter shall be confidential.