



## **Women Working Worldwide Statement on recent disclosures of sexual harassment and discrimination in the international aid sector**

**8 March 2018**

Women Working Worldwide supports women working in global supply chains to claim their rights and gain decent wages for their work. For more than 30 years we have worked in partnership with international development agencies in the UK and overseas. We are proud of these relationships, which are co-operative in spirit and constructive in outcome. However, we are appalled at the recent revelations and allegations of sexual exploitation, harassment and misconduct that have come to light in international development organisations and aid agencies.

Many of the organisations affected have already taken important steps to address these issues. But it remains clear that increased governance and safeguarding measures must be put in place and that those guilty of abusing their positions are held to account for their actions.

We know that the vast majority of people working in international development are committed to bringing about positive change, and improving the lives of the poor and vulnerable – and we do not believe they should be tarnished by association with those who have committed crimes, or exploited their positions of trust and power. We also firmly maintain that this is not the time for the government to cut the UK's aid spend, or for citizens to stop supporting international development charities.

This is a turning point for all international development organisations. They are now being forced to scrutinise and repair the kinds of power imbalances within their own organisations that many assumed were only to be found in other sectors. However, as our work can testify – no sector is safe.

We believe that the values and honesty of these organisations will drive greater openness and transparency across the entire development sector. The outcome of these investigations will improve the situation for all those working in development, and all those receiving international aid.

*Caroline Downey Executive Director; Linda Shaw, Chair; Hannah Lerigo, Vice Chair; Penny Street, Secretary; Gerry Reardon, Treasurer; Abbie Huff, Trustee; Clare Wiley, Trustee; Marion Sharples, Trustee.*