

# CODE OF CONDUCT



## **An employee's guide to proper professional conduct**



International Bureau  
Universal Postal Union

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## **I. Introduction**

The UPU is a specialized agency of the United Nations. As such, it is an integral part of the United Nations family. The United Nations and the specialized agencies embody the highest aspirations of the peoples of the world. The international civil service bears responsibility for translating these ideals into reality. It relies on the great traditions of public administration that have grown up in member States: competence, integrity, impartiality, independence and discretion.

These values are reflected in a code of conduct, which is strictly adhered to by the entire organization. The code is based on a number of building blocks, which have been developed through the years of existence of the UN and the UPU. They provide the foundation for what applies to the IB and all of its employees. These basic rules are described in the following documents:

1. The Charter of the United Nations.
2. The Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service, published by the International Civil Service Commission.
3. The UPU Staff Regulations (Chapter 1: Duties, Obligations and Privileges).
4. The rules applicable to short-term contracts (Chapter 1: Duties, Obligations and Privileges).

This document provides a single source which contains an overview of the rules that together encompass the Code of Conduct of the UPU. It is not intended to replace the detailed texts of the documents mentioned above. These documents remain the valid legal basis to describe the expected behaviour of the organization and all of its employees. However, the UPU considers this publication to be an excellent opportunity to express the important values that the UPU represents, and the way it is implementing and monitoring these values.

This Code of Conduct applies to the entire staff of the UPU, independently of their source of financing, their category or the duration of their contracts. The term “International civil servant” is therefore used in a wide sense, and applies equally to men and women.



## **II. The Foundation: the United Nations Charter**

The foundation for the existence and actions of the United Nations as a whole is described in the UN Charter. The Charter of the United Nations was signed on 26 June 1945, in San Francisco, at the conclusion of the United Nations Conference on International Organization, and came into force on 24 October 1945. It is on the basis of this charter that the United Nations

and all of its individual organizations base their activities. The UN Charter can therefore also be considered as part of the foundation on which the Universal Postal Union has been built.

The purposes of the United Nations, as documented in the Charter, provide a good introduction for the UPU Code of Conduct too:

*“The Purposes of the United Nations are:*

- 1 to maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace;*
- 2 to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace;*
- 3 to achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion; and*
- 4 to be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends.”*

The UN charter specifically addresses international economic and social cooperation. From the UPU's point of view, this is an important aspect of the Charter. Article 55 reads as follows:

*“With a view to the creation of conditions of stability and well-being which are necessary for peaceful and friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, the United Nations shall promote:*

- a higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development;*
- b solutions of international economic, social, health, and related problems; and international cultural and educational cooperation;*
- c universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.”*

The specialized agencies of the United Nations cover specific areas of activity. While being part of the UN system, they are independent inter-governmental organizations which carry out work relating to specific fields such as trade, education, health and agriculture. The Universal Postal Union is one of the 14 specialized agencies that exist. The mission of the Universal Postal Union is to foster the sustainable development of quality universal,

efficient and accessible postal services in order to facilitate communication among the people of the world. The UN Charter recognizes the special role of the specialized agencies in article 57:

*“The various specialized agencies, established by intergovernmental agreement and having wide international responsibilities, as defined in their basic instruments, in economic, social, cultural, educational, health, and related fields, shall be brought into relationship with the United Nations I...I.*

*Such agencies thus brought into relationship with the United Nations are hereinafter referred to as specialized agencies.”*

The independence and international character of the United Nations is emphasized in article 100:

*“In the performance of their duties the Secretary-General and the staff shall not seek or receive instructions from any government or from any other authority external to the Organization. They shall refrain from any action which might reflect on their position as international officials responsible only to the Organization.*

*Each Member of the United Nations undertakes to respect the exclusively international character of the responsibilities of the Secretary-General and the staff and not to seek to influence them in the discharge of their responsibilities.”*

### **III. Standards of Conduct**

The UPU Staff Rules and Regulations describe, amongst other things, the rules of conduct of the staff of the UPU. These rules are in accordance with the Standards of Conduct of the International Civil Service, which apply to all organizations that are part of the United Nations, and therefore also to the UPU.



These Standards of Conduct are reproduced below. Wherever paragraphs from the UPU Staff Rules and Regulations are inserted in the text below, these are indented and shown in italics. A reference to the relevant article from the UPU Staff Rules and Regulations is then also included.

Throughout the pages below, notes (identified by the word “Note:”) have been added wherever it was felt appropriate to further clarify particular rules.

#### ***Status of staff members***

*(UPU Staff Regulations, Regulation 1.1)*

*Staff members of the Bureau are international civil servants. Their responsibilities are not national but exclusively international. By accepting appointment, they pledge themselves to discharge their functions and to regulate their conduct with the interests of the*

*Union only in view, in accordance with the guiding principles of the international civil service.*

## **Guiding principles**

The values that are enshrined in the United Nations organizations must also be those that guide international civil servants in all their actions: fundamental human rights, social justice, the dignity and worth of the human person and respect for the equal rights of men and women and of nations great and small.



International civil servants should share the vision of their organizations. It is loyalty to this vision that ensures the integrity and international outlook of international civil servants; it guarantees that they will place the interests of their organization above their own and use its resources in a responsible manner.

The concept of integrity enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations embraces all aspects of behaviour of an international civil servant, including such qualities as honesty, truthfulness, impartiality and incorruptibility. These qualities are as basic as those of competence and efficiency, also enshrined in the Charter.

### **Conduct**

*(UPU Staff Regulations, Regulation 1.5, § 1)*

*Staff members of the Bureau shall conduct themselves at all times in a manner befitting their status as international civil servants. They shall conduct themselves with the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity. The concept of integrity includes, but is not limited to, probity, impartiality, independence, fairness, honesty and truthfulness in all matters affecting their work and status.*

Tolerance and understanding are basic human values. They are essential for international civil servants, who must respect all persons equally, without any distinction whatsoever. This respect fosters a climate and a working environment sensitive to the needs of all. To achieve this in a multicultural setting calls for a positive affirmation going well beyond passive acceptance.

International loyalty means loyalty to the whole United Nations system and not only to the organization for which one works; international civil servants have an obligation to understand and exemplify this wider loyalty. The need for a cooperative and understanding attitude towards international civil servants of other United Nations organizations is obviously most important where international civil servants of several organizations are serving in the same country or region.

If the impartiality of the international civil service is to be maintained, international civil servants must remain independent of any authority out-

side their organization; their conduct must reflect that independence. In keeping with their oath of office, they should not seek nor should they accept instructions from any Government, person or entity external to the organization. It cannot be too strongly stressed that international civil servants are not, in any sense, representatives of Governments or other entities, nor are they proponents of their policies. This applies equally to those on secondment from Governments and to those whose services have been made available from elsewhere. International civil servants should be constantly aware that through their allegiance to the Charter and the corresponding instruments of each organization, member States and their representatives are committed to respect this independent status.

### **Loyalty**

*(UPU Staff Regulations, Regulation 1.4)*

*In the performance of their duties, staff members shall neither seek nor accept instructions from any government or from any other authority external to the Union. /.../.*

Impartiality implies tolerance and restraint, particularly in dealing with political or religious convictions. While their personal views remain inviolate, international civil servants do not have the freedom of private persons to take sides or to express their convictions publicly on controversial matters, either individually or as members of a group. This can mean that, in certain situations, personal views should only be expressed with tact and discretion.

This does not mean that international civil servants have to give up their personal political views or national perspectives. It does mean, however, that they must at all times maintain a broad international outlook and an understanding of the international community as a whole.

### **Conduct**

*(UPU Staff Regulations, Regulation 1.5, § 2)*



*Staff members of the Bureau shall not engage in any activity that is incompatible with the proper discharge of their duties with the Union. They shall avoid any action and in particular any kind of public pronouncement which may adversely reflect on their status, or which is incompatible with the interests of the Union and of the other United Nations organizations. While they are not expected to give up their national sentiments or their political and religious convictions, they shall at all times behave with the reserve and tact incumbent upon them by reason of their international status.*

The independence of the international civil service does not conflict with, or obscure, the fact that it is the member States that collectively make up (in some cases with other constituents) the organization. Conduct that fur-



thers good relations with individual member States and that contributes to their trust and confidence in the secretariat strengthens the organization and promotes its interest.

International civil servants who are responsible for projects in particular countries or regions may be called upon to exercise special care in maintaining their independence. At times they might receive instructions from the host country but this should not compromise their independence. If at any time they consider that such instructions threaten their independence, they must consult their supervisors.

An international outlook stems from an understanding of and loyalty to the objectives and purposes of the international organization itself as set forth in its legal instruments. It implies, inter alia, respect for the right of others to hold different points of view and follow different cultural patterns. It requires a willingness to work without bias with persons of all nationalities, religions and cultures; it calls for constant sensitivity to how proposals, events and statements may look to others. It requires punctilious avoidance of any expressions that could be interpreted as biased or intolerant. Working methods can be different in different cultures. International civil servants should not be wedded to the attitudes, working methods or work habits of their own country or region.

Freedom from discrimination is a basic human right. International civil servants are expected to respect the dignity, worth and equality of all people without any distinction whatsoever. Assumptions based on stereotypes must be assiduously avoided. One of the main tenets of the Charter is the equality of men and women, and organizations should therefore do their utmost to promote gender equality.

### ***Working relations***



Managers and supervisors are in positions of leadership and it is their responsibility to ensure a harmonious workplace based on mutual respect; they should be open to all views and opinions and make sure that the merits of staff are properly recognized. They need to provide support to them; this is particularly important when they are subject to criticism arising from the carrying out of their duties.

Managers are also responsible for guiding and motivating their staff and promoting their development.

It is natural for managers to be seen as role models and they have therefore a special obligation to uphold the highest standards of conduct. It would be quite improper for them to solicit favours, gifts or loans from their staff; they must act impartially, without intimidation and favouritism. In matters relating to the appointment or career of others, no international civil servant should try to influence colleagues for personal reasons.

It is naturally incumbent on managers and supervisors to communicate effectively with their staff and share information with them. International

civil servants have a reciprocal responsibility to provide all pertinent facts and information to their supervisors and to abide by and defend any decisions taken, even when these do not accord with their personal views.

International civil servants have to follow the instructions they receive in connection with their official functions and if they have doubts as to whether an instruction is consistent with the Charter or any other constitutional instrument, decisions of the governing bodies or administrative rules and regulations, they should first consult their supervisors. If they cannot agree, the international civil servant may ask for written instructions. These may be challenged through the proper institutional mechanisms, but any challenge should not delay carrying out the instruction. International civil servants may also record their views in official files. They should not follow verbal or written instructions that are manifestly inconsistent with their official functions or that threaten their safety or that of others.

It must be the duty of international civil servants to report any breach of the organization's rules and regulations to a higher level official, whose responsibility it is to take appropriate action. An international civil servant who makes such a report in good faith has the right to be protected against reprisals or sanctions.

### **Harassment**

Harassment in any shape or form is an affront to human dignity and international civil servants must avoid it. They should not engage in any form of harassment and must be above any suspicion of it. International civil servants have the right to an environment free of harassment. It is the responsibility of organizations to explain their interpretation of the term and to establish rules and provide guidance on what constitutes harassment and how it will be dealt with.



#### **Note:**

*Every staff member has the right to be treated with dignity and respect, free from abuse or harassment. Within this framework, the UPU will not tolerate any type of harassment, and particularly sexual harassment, within the workplace or associated with work performed on behalf of the Organization. Conduct which is determined to constitute harassment will be subject to appropriate administrative or disciplinary action or dismissal.*

*Sexual harassment is any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favour, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, when it interferes with work, is made a condition of employment, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment. In all cases it refers to conduct that is clearly unwanted by the recipient. When behaviour of this kind is engaged in by any official who is in a position to influence career or employment conditions (including hiring, assignment, contract renewal,*

*performance evaluation or promotion) of the recipient of such attentions, it also constitutes an abuse of power.*

*Three categories of conduct are generally considered to be covered by this definition:*

- *physical conduct of a sexual nature such as unwanted physical contact of varying degrees of intimacy;*
- *verbal conduct of a sexual nature such as unwelcome sexual advances, persistent yet unwelcome suggestions for social activity outside the workplace, and offensive flirtations or comments;*
- *non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature such as the display of pornographic or sexually suggestive material, or making sexually suggestive gestures.*



*Staff shall be free to refuse such conduct or advances without fear of negative consequences or retaliatory action. Sexual harassment is distinguished from other forms of contact by its unwelcome, unreciprocated and imposed nature. Mutually acceptable behaviour is not sexual harassment regardless of the employment relationship.*

*All staff bear responsibility for the maintenance of a harmonious working environment; this implies that, in accordance with the standards of conduct of the international civil service and the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules, they shall conduct themselves in a way which will ensure that the workplace is free of intimidation, hostility or offence and, in this context, of any form of harassment, and in particular sexual harassment. Managers should make this clear: (a) by their example; (b) by clearly communicating this policy to all their staff; (c) by enhancing a positive working environment in which harassment, and particularly sexual harassment, does not occur; and (d) by ensuring prompt attention to the adherence to the policy.*

*All staff are equally responsible, however, for complying with this policy and for helping to create a working environment in which dignity is fully respected.*

*Staff members who believe they are being harassed, and particularly sexually harassed, should immediately inform the alleged harasser of the unwelcome nature of his or her behaviour and express their expectation that it will cease. In the event that the offensive behaviour does not cease, or where the circumstances are such that it is too difficult for the staff member to approach the alleged harasser directly, resort may be had to both informal and formal means of resolving the problem. Staff members who believe they are being harassed should not hesitate to contact the Human Resources Directorate. In all cases allegations of harassment, and particularly sexual harassment, will be fully, fairly and promptly investigated and dealt with in a confidential manner. Any retaliation or threat of retaliation against individuals making formal or informal complaints of harassment,*

*and particularly sexual harassment, or assisting in the investigation of complaints will be considered as a violation of these standards of conduct and will result in severe disciplinary action or dismissal.*

### **Conflict of interest**

It can happen that international civil servants are confronted with a question entailing a conflict of interest; such questions can be very sensitive and need to be treated with care. Conflict of interest includes circumstances in which international civil servants, directly or indirectly, would appear to benefit improperly, or allow a third party to benefit improperly, from their association in the management or the holding of a financial interest in an enterprise that engages in any business or transaction with the organization.

There can be no question but that international civil servants should avoid assisting private bodies or persons in their dealings with their organization where this might lead to actual or perceived preferential treatment. This



is particularly important in procurement matters or when negotiating prospective employment. At times, international civil servants may be required to disclose certain personal assets if this is necessary to enable their organizations to make sure that there is no conflict. They should also voluntarily disclose in advance possible conflicts of interest that

arise in the course of carrying out their duties. They should perform their official duties and conduct their private affairs in a manner that preserves and enhances public confidence in their own integrity and that of their organization.

### **Role of the secretariat**

International organizations are constituted by member States, and their secretariats have the responsibility for providing services to them. The main function of the secretariat is to assist legislative bodies in their work and to carry out their decisions. The executive head is responsible for directing and controlling the work of the secretariat. Accordingly, when submitting proposals or advocating positions before a legislative body or committee, international civil servants are presenting the position of the executive head, not that of an individual or unit.

In providing services to a legislative or representative body, it goes without saying that international civil servants should serve only the interests of the organization. It would not be appropriate for international civil servants to prepare for government or other international civil service representatives any speeches, arguments or proposals on questions under discussion. It could, however, be quite appropriate to provide factual information, technical advice or assistance with such tasks as the preparation of draft resolutions.

It is entirely improper for international civil servants to lobby or seek support from government representatives or members of legislative organs to obtain advancement either for themselves or for others or to block or reverse unfavourable decisions regarding their status. By adhering to the Charter and the constitutions of the organizations of the United Nations system, Governments have undertaken to safeguard the independence of the international civil service; it is therefore understood that government representatives and members of legislative bodies will neither accede to such requests nor intervene in such matters. The proper method for an international civil servant to address such matters is through administrative channels; each organization is responsible for providing these.

### **Loyalty**

*(UPU Staff Regulations, Regulation 1.4)*

*...I Staff members shall refrain from approaching representatives of a government or any other national body and seeking their assistance in respect of their personal situation or that of another staff member.*

### **Staff management relations**

Relations between management and staff should be guided by mutual respect. Elected staff representatives have a cardinal role to play in the consideration of conditions of employment and work, as well as in all matters of staff welfare. Freedom of association is a fundamental human right and international civil servants have the right to form and join associations, unions or other groupings to promote and defend their interests. Continuing dialogue between staff and management is indispensable. Management should facilitate this dialogue.

Elected staff representatives enjoy rights that derive from their status; this may include the opportunity to address legislative organs of their organization. These rights should be exercised in a manner that is consistent with the Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the international covenants on human rights and does not undermine the independence and integrity of the international civil service. In using the broad freedom of expression they enjoy, staff representatives must exercise a sense of responsibility and avoid undue criticism of the organization.

Staff representatives must be protected against discriminatory or prejudicial treatment based on their status or activities as staff representatives, both during their term of office and after it has ended.

### **Relations with member States and legislative bodies**

It is the clear duty of all international civil servants to maintain the best possible relations with Governments and avoid any action which might impair this; they should certainly not interfere in the policies or affairs of Governments. It is unacceptable for them, either individually or collectively, to criticize or try to discredit a Government. At the same time, it is understood

that international civil servants may speak freely in support of their organizations' policies. Any activity, direct or indirect, to undermine or overthrow a Government constitutes serious misconduct.

International civil servants are not representatives of their countries, nor do they have authority to act as liaison agents between international organizations and their Governments. The executive head may, however, request an international civil servant to undertake such duties, a unique role for which international loyalty and integrity are essential. For their part, neither Governments nor organizations should place international civil servants in a position where their international and national loyalties may conflict.



### ***Relations with the public***

For an international organization to function successfully, it must have the support of the public. All international civil servants therefore have a continuing responsibility to promote a better understanding of the objectives and work of their organizations. This requires them to be well informed of the achievements not only of their own organizations but of the United Nations system as a whole. The opportunity to provide information to the public can arise at any time.

There is a risk that on occasion international civil servants may be subject to criticism from outside their organizations; in keeping with their responsibility as international civil servants, they should respond with tact and restraint. They have the right to be defended by their organizations against criticism for actions taken in fulfilment of their duties and they should be confident that this will be done.



It would not be proper for international civil servants to air personal grievances or criticize their organizations in public. International civil servants should endeavour at all times to promote a positive image of the international civil service, in conformity with their oath of loyalty.

### ***Relations with the media***

Openness and transparency in relations with the media are effective means of communicating the organizations' messages, and the organizations should have guidelines and procedures for this purpose. Within that context, the following principles should apply: international civil servants should regard themselves as speaking in the name of their organizations and avoid personal references and views; in no circumstances should they use the media to further their own interests, to air their own grievances, to reveal unauthorized information or to attempt to influence policy decisions facing their organizations.

**Note:**

The UPU has developed specific guidelines on dealing with the media. The most important guideline is that – apart from the Director General and Deputy Director General – no staff member is allowed to talk to the media in a professional capacity without prior consultation with the Communication Programme. The guidelines are documented in the “Media relations” part of the UPU Communications Strategy.

**Use and protection of information**

The disclosure of confidential information may seriously jeopardize the efficiency and credibility of an organization. International civil servants are responsible for exercising discretion in all matters of official business. They must not divulge confidential information without authorization. Nor should international civil servants use information that has not been made public and is known to them by virtue of their official position to private advantage. These are obligations that do not cease upon separation from service. It is necessary for organizations to maintain guidelines for the use and protection of confidential information, and it is equally necessary for such guidelines to keep pace with developments in communications technology. It is understood that these provisions do not affect established practices governing the exchange of information between the secretariats and member States, which ensure the fullest participation of member States in the life and work of the organizations.



**Communication of information**

*(UPU Staff Regulations, Regulation 1.7)*

*Staff members shall exercise the utmost discretion in regard to all matters of official business. Except in the course of their duties or by authorization of the Director General, they shall at no time communicate to any person any information which is known to them by reason of their official position and has not been made public, nor shall they use such information to private advantage. These obligations shall not cease upon separation from service with the Union.*

**Respect for different customs and culture**

The world is home to a myriad of different peoples, languages, cultures, customs and traditions. It is self-evident that a genuine respect for them all is fundamental for an international civil servant. Any behaviour that is not acceptable in a particular cultural context must be avoided. However, if a tradition is directly contrary to any human rights instrument adopted by the United Nations system, the international civil servant must be guided by it. International civil servants should avoid an ostentatious lifestyle and any display of an inflated sense of personal importance.

## **Security and safety**

While an executive head must remain free to assign staff in accordance with the exigencies of the service, it is the responsibility of organizations to make sure that the health, well-being and lives of their staff, without any discrimination whatsoever, will not be subject to undue risk. The organizations should take measures to protect their safety and that of their family members. On the other hand, it goes without saying that it is incumbent on international civil servants to comply with all instructions designed to protect their safety.

## **Personal conduct**

The private life of international civil servants is their own concern and organizations should not intrude upon it. There can be situations, however, in which the behaviour of an international civil servant can reflect on the organization. International civil servants must therefore bear in mind that their conduct and activities outside the workplace, even if unrelated to official duties, can compromise the image and the interests of the organization. This can also result from the conduct of members of international civil servants' households and it is the responsibility of international civil servants to make sure that their households are fully aware of this.

The privileges and immunities that international civil servants enjoy are conferred upon them solely in the interests of the organizations. They do not exempt international civil servants from observing local laws, nor do they provide an excuse for ignoring private legal or financial obligations. It should be remembered that only the executive head is competent to waive the immunity accorded to international civil servants or to determine its scope.

Violations of law can range from serious criminal activities to trivial offences, and organizations may be called upon to exercise judgment in the light of the nature and circumstances of individual cases. A conviction by a national court will usually, although not always, be persuasive evidence of the act for which an international civil servant was prosecuted, and acts that are generally recognized as offences by national criminal laws will normally also be violations of the standards of conduct for the international civil service.

### **Note:**

*The abovementioned respect specifically applies to the need to foster good relations between the organisation and the host country. Document JIU/REP/2006/4 of the UN's Joint Inspection Unit describes it as follows:*

*"...mutual respect and mutual understanding are of the foremost importance in the successful implementation of the headquarters agreements concluded by the United Nations organizations and their respective host countries. On the one hand, United Nations organizations and their staff must understand that all the facilities, privileges and immunities granted by*



*host countries are not meant for the personal benefit of staff, but for the purposes of facilitating their work and discharging the professional duties entrusted upon them. Executive heads of all United Nations organizations should constantly remind their officials and staff members of their duty to respect the laws, regulations, traditions and habits of the host countries."*

### **Outside employment and activities**

The primary obligation of international civil servants is to devote their energies to the work of their organizations. It is therefore improper for international civil servants to engage, without prior authorization, in any outside activity, whether remunerated or not, that interferes with that obligation or is incompatible with their status or conflicts with the interests of the organization. Any questions about this should be referred to the executive head.

#### **Outside activities and interests**

*(UPU Staff Regulations, Regulation 1.6, § 1–4)*

- 1 *Staff members shall not engage in any continuous or recurring occupation or employment outside the Union without the prior approval of the Director General.*
- 2 *No staff member may be actively associated with the management of, or hold a financial interest in, any business concern if it were possible for him to benefit from such association or financial interest by reason of his official position with the Union.*
- 3 *A staff member who has occasion to deal in his official capacity with any matter involving a business concern in which he holds a financial interest shall disclose the measure of that interest to the Director General.*
- 4 *The mere holding of shares in a company shall not constitute a financial interest within the meaning of this provision unless such holding constitutes a substantial control.*



Subject to the above, outside activities may, of course, be beneficial both to staff members and to their organizations. Organizations should allow, encourage and facilitate the participation of international civil servants in professional activities that foster contacts with private and public bodies and thus serve to maintain and enhance their professional and technical competencies.

International civil servants on leave, whether with or without pay, should bear in mind that they remain international civil servants in the employ of their organization and are still subject to its rules. They may, therefore, only accept employment, paid or unpaid, during their leave with proper authorization.

## **Outside activities and interests**

*(UPU Staff Regulations, Regulation 1.6, § 5)*

*Staff members shall not, except in the normal course of official duties or with the prior approval of the Director General, perform any one of the following acts, if such act relates to the purpose, activities or interests of the Union:*

- a Issue statements to the Press, radio or other agencies of public information.*
- b Accept speaking engagements.*
- c Take part in film, theatre, radio or television productions.*
- d Submit articles, books or other material for publication.*  
*(UPU Staff Rules and Regulations, Regulation 1.6, § 5)*

*Note:*

*The UPU Provident Scheme has introduced specific rules regarding the necessity to adhere to certain ethical principles, and loyalty in asset management in particular. These new provisions requires persons and institutions responsible for managing assets of a provident institution to confirm in writing that they follow the legal and regulatory provisions with regard to loyalty, and have transferred to the provident institution any commission or other personal economic benefits they may have received.*

*It lays down conditions to be met by persons and institutions responsible for investments and asset management. It also defines the persons and institutions that are required to provide confirmation of loyalty. This includes in particular members of the Investment Committee and members of the Management Board of the UPU provident scheme.*

*Note:*

*UN rules include an obligation for staff from certain levels upwards to annually submit a financial disclosure and declaration of interest. Within the United Nations, the following rule applies:*

*"Staff Regulation 1.2 (n) requires that all staff members at the Assistant Secretary-General level and above shall file financial disclosure statements on appointment and, thereafter at annual intervals, as prescribed by the Secretary-General, covering, inter alia, any substantial transfers of assets and property to spouses and dependent children from the staff member or from any other source that might constitute a conflict of interest situation. In addition, staff members who are procurement officers, or whose principal duties are the procurement of goods and services for the United Nations, and staff members whose principal duties relate to the investment of the assets of the United Nations, /...../ or of any accounts for which the United Nations has fiduciary or custodial responsibility, shall also file financial disclosure statements".*

*The UPU will also apply these rules on the basis of an Administrative Instruction.*

**Note:**

*The Cooperation between the Business Community and the United Nations in general, and the UPU in particular, has been important since the inception of the UN in 1945. This cooperation has intensified in recent years. In order to facilitate the formulation and implementation of cooperation between the UPU and the business community in a manner that ensures the integrity and independence of the UPU, a set of guidelines has been adopted. The United Nations guidelines in this area have for that purpose been supplemented by guidelines that have been adapted to the mandate and specific activities of the UPU.*

In view of the independence and impartiality that they must maintain, international civil servants, while retaining the right to vote, should not participate in political activities, such as standing for or holding local or national political office. This does not, however, preclude participation in local community or civic activities, provided that such participation is consistent with the oath of service in the United Nations system. It is necessary for international civil servants to exercise discretion in their support for a political party or campaign, and they should not accept or solicit funds, write articles or make public speeches or make statements to the press. These cases require the exercise of judgment and, where there is any doubt, should be referred to the executive head.

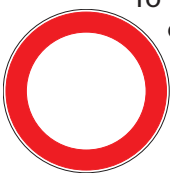
**Political activities**

*(UPU Staff Regulations, Regulation 1.9)*

*Staff members may exercise the right to vote, but shall not engage in any political activity which is inconsistent with, or might reflect upon, the independence and impartiality required by their status as international civil servants.*

The significance of membership in a political party varies from country to country and it is difficult to formulate standards that will apply in all cases. In general, international civil servants may be members of a political party provided its prevailing views and the obligations imposed on its members are consistent with the oath of service in the United Nations system.

**Gifts, honours and remuneration from outside sources**



To protect the international civil service from any appearance of impropriety, international civil servants must not accept, without authorization from the executive head, any honour, decoration, gift, remuneration, favour or economic benefit of more than nominal value from any source external to their organizations; it is understood that this includes Governments as well as commercial firms and other entities.

It is not proper for international civil servants to accept supplementary payments or other subsidies from a Government or any other source prior to,

during or after their assignment with an international organization if the payment is related to that assignment.

Balancing this requirement, it is understood that Governments or other entities should not make or offer such payments, recognizing that they are at variance with the spirit of the Charter and the constitutions of the organizations of the United Nations system.

### **Honours and gifts**

*(UPU Staff Regulations, Regulation 1.8)*

*No staff member shall accept any honour, decoration, favour, gift or remuneration from any source external to the Union without first obtaining the approval of the Director General. Approval shall be granted only where such acceptance is not incompatible with the terms of Staff Regulation 1.2 and with the staff member's status as an international civil servant.*

### **Oath or declaration**

*(UPU Staff Regulations, Regulation 1.11)*

- 1 *Staff members of the Bureau shall be required to make and sign the following oath or declaration:  
"I solemnly swear (undertake, affirm, promise) to exercise in all loyalty, discretion and conscience the functions entrusted to me as an international civil servant of the Universal Postal Union, to discharge these functions and regulate my conduct with the interests of the Union only in view, and not to seek or accept instructions in regard to the performance of my duties from any government or other authority external to the Union."*
- 2 *Staff members of the Bureau shall make and sign this oath or declaration before the Director General or his authorized representative.*
- 3 *The oath or declaration made by a staff member shall not prevent his collaboration with any organization or administration to which his services may be temporarily loaned.*

### **Disciplinary principles**

*(UPU Staff Regulations, Regulation 10.1)*

*A staff member who has failed to perform his duties either intentionally or through negligence or carelessness shall be liable to disciplinary action corresponding to the seriousness of the fault.*

## **Disciplinary Committee** (UPU Staff Rules, Rule 110.1)

*A Disciplinary Committee shall be established and shall be available to advise the Director General at his request in disciplinary cases involving staff members of the Bureau. In cases referred to it, the Committee shall advise the Director General what disciplinary measures, if any, should be taken.*

## **IV. Conclusion**

The attainment of the standards of conduct for the international civil service requires the highest commitment of all parties. International civil servants must be committed to the values, principles and standards set forth here. They are expected to take a positive and active approach in upholding them. They should feel responsible for contributing to the broad ideals to which they dedicated themselves in joining the United Nations system. International organizations have a particular responsibility to ensure that the necessary guidance or rules are adopted to implement these standards. For their part, member States are expected, through their allegiance to the Charter and other constituent instruments, to preserve the independence and impartiality of the international civil service.

For these standards to be effectively applied, it is essential that they be widely disseminated, and that measures be taken to ensure that their scope and importance are understood throughout the international civil service, the member States and the organizations of the United Nations system.

Respect for these standards assures that the international civil service will continue to be an effective instrument in fulfilling its responsibilities and in meeting the aspirations of the peoples of the world.

