

**INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE
OFFICE OF THE ETHICS OFFICER**



**PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT FOR STAFF OF THE
INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE**



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Message from the Ethics Officer

Service with the International Labour Office is subject to the highest standards and principles of conduct and integrity, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of the International Labour Organization and the United Nations Charter.

These standards and principles have great importance. Strict observance of these standards and principles is essential for the reputation of the Office, of each official within the Office, as well as for the respect and trust that the ILO should be afforded by its Member States, Workers' and Employers' organizations and the public at large.

This booklet outlines and elaborates the standards and the principles and will assist staff in maintaining the highest standards of conduct.

All ILO officials are encouraged to read attentively the principles reflected in this publication with the explanations accompanying them and to use them as a guide.

This booklet, which will be an important element in the implementation of training programmes on ethical issues, contains 10 Principles. Each Principle is annotated by a number of explanations. The Principles aim at addressing the major ethical challenges which each of us, as ILO official, may be confronted with.

As explained in the text, the Principles are not supposed to replace the relevant formal texts, which will remain the sole legal source in these matters.¹ They are a tool aimed to help staff members in recognizing

¹ These formal texts are, basically, the ILO Constitution, in particular its Article 9, the ILO Staff Regulations (Chapter 1), the Standards of Conduct in the International Civil Service, 2001 and various Circulars and rules, in particular the Financial Rules and Circular Series 6, No. 605 of 24 February 2000, Harassment in

ethical issues in a number of situations and in responding to them in the right way, thus maintaining the standard of conduct expected by international civil servants.

The Ethics Officer remains at the disposal of all colleagues, at the Headquarters and in the Regions, to assist and advise them on ethical issues. Inquiries may be addressed to: ethics@ilo.org.

The extremely relevant and rich material prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on these issues was an invaluable source of inspiration for the preparation of the booklet. I would like to acknowledge, with gratitude, the UNHCR's willingness to permit the ILO to draw on this material.

Guido Raimondi

Ethics Officer

the workplace; Series 6, No. 630 of 10 July 2002, Inappropriate use of employment contracts in the Office ; Series 6, No. 543 (rev.1) of 29 September 2004, Sexual harassment policy and procedures ; Series 6, No. 662 of 26 April 2006, Ethics in the Office ; Series 6, No. 666 of 4 April 2007, Employment and other types of contracts with close relatives of ILO officials ; Series 6, No. 667 of 27 April 2007, Register of financial interests; Series 6, No. 668 of 17 August 2007, Rules and approval procedures governing outside activities; Series 1, No. 627 of 19 September 2007, Anti-fraud policy. Consult the website of the Ethics Office: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/ethics/>.

Purpose of the Booklet

This booklet, which is not to replace any formal rules, is designed as a staff resource to

- Serve as an easy reference
- Provide a first point of clarification about ethical questions
- Draw together information about ethical behaviour.

How This Booklet Came About

The Principles of Conduct are designed to help staff interpret and apply the 10 Principles at the ILO.

A renewed interest in ethics has sparked a debate at all levels of society on ways of responding to ethical challenges. This obviously applies to the global context of the UN reform.

This booklet translates and explains ethical standards in accordance with the ILO Constitution, the ILO Staff Regulations (Chapter 1), various Circulars and rules and the Standards of Conduct in the International Civil Service, 2001.

This booklet does not replace these texts, nor does it reflect their content in detail, which staff members are, in any event, expected to be familiar with and practice. It is a tool aimed to assist staff members to recognize major areas of ethical concern and to help them to conduct themselves in the correct way.

Why Principles of Conduct?

As an International Civil Servant each ILO staff member is expected to live up to these standards at all times. The Principles of Conduct will assist staff to be even more conscious about their behaviour in carrying out their every day work.

The ILO is a value-based organization. The strength of the relationship between core organizational values and how they are reflected in everyday behaviour also affects the image of each official within the Office, the ILO among its Constituents and the public at large.

To Whom do the Principles Apply?

They apply to all staff members under any terms of engagement.

Organizational Values

The core values at the International Labour (ILO) reflect those of the UN system:

Integrity, Professionalism, Respect for Diversity, Teamwork.

ILO is a value-based organization meaning that the values that inspire and promote its mandate must be reflected in the everyday actions of staff. This concept has been part of the ILO philosophy since 1919.

INTEGRITY	PROFESSIONALISM	RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY	TEAMWORK
<p>Each ILO Staff member</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates the values of the United Nations and of the ILO, including its Decent Work Agenda, in daily activities • Acts without consideration of personal gain • Resists political pressure in decision-making • Stands by decisions in the Organization's interest even if they are unpopular • Takes prompt and relevant action in cases of 	<p>Each ILO Staff member</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows pride in his/her work and achievements • Demonstrates professional competence and mastery of subject matter • Is conscientious and efficient in meeting commitments, observing deadlines and achieving results • Is motivated by professionalism rather than personal concerns • Shows persistence when faced with difficult problems or 	<p>Each ILO Staff member</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works effectively with people from all backgrounds • Treats all people with dignity and respect • Treats men and women equally • Examines own biases and behaviors to avoid stereotypical responses • Does not discriminate against any individual group 	<p>Each ILO Staff member</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborates with colleagues for set goals • Values ideas and expertise of others, • Is willing to learn from others • Respects team agenda before personal one • Supports & acts in accordance with group decisions even when personal position is different • Shares credit for team accomplishments and accepts joint responsibility

unprofessional
or unethical
behaviour

challenges

- Remains calm
in stressful
situations

for team
shortcomings

Guiding Principles and Values

Principle 1

Commit to core value-based concepts and principles enshrined in the ILO Constitution and in the UN Charter.

We are expected to ensure that our conduct is consistent in treating all persons equally without distinction and in a manner that reflects respect, tolerance and understanding for:

- Basic human values
- Fundamental human rights
- Social justice and human dignity
- Eliminating discrimination including equality for men and women
- Decent work, including internationally recognized labour rights
- Discretion and confidentiality.

Cultural Diversity

We are further expected to ensure that we show respect for different customs and cultures by:

- Behaving in ways that are culturally appropriate
- Maintaining a lifestyle that is in harmony with the socio-economic surroundings
- Avoiding inappropriate displays of self-importance.

Principle 2

Uphold the integrity of the ILO by ensuring that personal and professional conduct is, and is seen to be, a reflection of the concepts enshrined in the ILO Constitution and in the Charter of the United Nations, rules, regulations, policies and guidelines.

We are expected to ensure that all aspects of our professional and personal behaviour embrace those expected of ILO staff as international civil servants, including:

- **Good Civic Conduct**

We are expected to

- Observe local laws
- Meet our private legal and financial obligations
- Not take advantage of privileges or immunities conferred in the interest of the Organization
- Aim to ensure that members of our household conduct themselves in a manner that reflects favourably on the image of the ILO.

- **Impartiality and Independence**

We are expected to

- Remain independent of any authority outside ILO
- **Not** seek instructions from sources external to the organization
- **Not** accept instructions from any government, person or entity
- Refrain from publicly expressing convictions on controversial matters
- Express our personal and political views with tact and discretion
- Show tolerance and restraint in dealing with diverse political convictions
- Show tolerance and restraint in dealing with diverse religious convictions
- Resist political pressure in decision making
- Maintain an international outlook and understanding towards the international community.

- **Integrity**

We are expected to

- Show loyalty to the ILO and to the UN system
- Report any breach of the Organization's rules or regulations to the appropriate authority.

Principle 3

Commit to performing our official duties and conducting our private affairs in a manner that avoids conflicts of interest to ensure the enhancement and preservation of public confidence in the ILO.

We are expected to :

- Make disclosure of personal and financial interests when required
- Voluntarily disclose possible conflicts of interest arising in carrying out our duties
- Use good judgment, even in the absence of specific rules, in view of maintaining our personal credibility within the Office and preserving public confidence in the ILO
- Act responsibly when contracting or engaging persons or entities for services or products
- Not participate in certain political activities, e.g. stand for or hold political office, campaign or be active in political debates
- Neither seek nor take instructions from entities outside the ILO
- Avoid assisting private persons or companies in their dealings with the ILO in a partial or inappropriate manner
- Abide by the rules and guidelines governing contracts with family members at the ILO
- Carefully and consciously evaluate our actions so that they are free of any consideration of personal gain.

Personal Relationships

Should we find ourselves in a relationship with a colleague, other person or family member which we consider may raise a conflict of interest.

We are expected to:

- Report this to the supervisor and resolve this conflict of interest immediately.

Working Relations Principles

Principle 4

Contribute to building a harmonious workplace based on team spirit, mutual respect and understanding, and constructive dialogue.

In the workplace and especially in our team,

We are expected to:

- Show respect to all colleagues, including interns, regardless of status or position
- Foster mutual respect and an open approach among all staff
- Allow all colleagues to have their views heard
- Allow all colleagues to contribute knowledge and experience
- Ensure that the merits of the staff are properly recognized
- Communicate openly and share relevant information with colleagues
- Endeavour to respond to queries in a timely manner
- Avoid misinformation
- Respect our colleagues' privacy
- Take the appropriate initiatives in order to prevent or solve problems in the best interest of the Organization
- Follow instructions in connection with our official duties. These instructions may be requested in writing.

Additional Managerial Principles

When supervising others,

We are expected to:

- Provide feedback to colleagues we supervise
- Act as a role model by upholding the highest standards of conduct and professionalism
- Support those we supervise particularly when they are subject to criticism for carrying out their tasks
- Avoid taking advantage of our managerial position in order to obtain any personal profit or benefit.

Security and Safety Principles

Principle 5

Promote the safety, health and welfare of all ILO staff as a necessary condition for effective and consistent performance.

We are expected to remain aware of and comply with all instructions designed to:

- Protect our health, welfare and safety
- Consider the safety of staff in operational decisions
- Report any instruction or situation threatening our safety to the appropriate authority
- Report any instruction or situation threatening the safety of other persons to the appropriate authority.

Additional Managerial Principles

We are expected to:

- Respect staff entitlements
- Ensure the health and well being of staff and their families and, in this context, to promote a healthy work-life balance for staff.

Use and Protection of Information and Resources Principles

Principle 6

Safeguard and make responsible use of the information and resources to which we have access by reason of our employment with ILO.

We are expected to:

- Exercise due care in all matters of official business
- Respect all ILO Regulations, Rules, Circulars, guidelines and procedures in using resources
- Manage, protect and utilize efficiently and effectively
Human
Financial and
Material resources.

Unless authorized or unless information is already public,

We are expected to:

- Maintain confidential all information related to colleagues,
- Maintain confidential all information related to workplace processes and projects
- Maintain confidential all other information related to workplace matters.

Relations with the media

When dealing with the media we are expected normally to refer to the Department of Communication and Public Information. If authorized to speak,

We are expected to:

- Consider ourselves as speaking on behalf of the Organization
- Avoid personal references and views
- Not use the media to further personal interests.

Protection of Persons and of the image and interests of the ILO Principles

Principle 7

Prevent, oppose and combat exploitation and abuse of persons. We are expected to refrain from criminal activity, unethical activities and activities that contravene human rights or activities that compromise the image or interests of the ILO.

We are expected not to take part in any:

- Illegal, exploitive or abusive activities
- Acts that are generally recognized as offences by national laws
- Engage in sexual activities with any person under the age prescribed by relevant national laws
- Engage in activities that may compromise the image or interests of the ILO.

Harassment Principles

Principle 8

Refrain from any form of harassment, discrimination, physical, or verbal abuse, intimidation or favouritism in the workplace.

We are expected not to engage in or tolerate any form of harassment in the workplace including:

- Sexual harassment
- Managerial harassment
- Retaliation against whistleblowers
- Abuse of power
- Lack of respect for staff and interns
- Innuendo and gossip that could harm the reputation of colleagues or be misinterpreted.

Gifts, Honours, Remuneration from Outside Sources Principles

Principle 9

Protect the ILO from any appearance of impropriety.

Without prior authorization of the Director General, we will not accept from any government, commercial firm or other entity any of the following, if more than of nominal value:

- Honours
- Gifts
- Favours
- Decoration
- Remuneration
- Economic benefits.

Outside Activities Principles

Principle 10

The ILO encourages its staff to undertake outside activities that are beneficial for the enhancement of their professional skills. However, the primary obligation of ILO staff is to devote their energies to the work of their organization. It is improper for ILO staff to engage in any outside activity, whether remunerated or not, without prior authorization, if required.

We are expected not to engage in any outside activity, whether authorized or not, that:

- Interferes with our obligations to the ILO
- Is incompatible with our status as an International Civil Servant
- Conflicts with the interests of the Organization

Membership of a Political Party

We are entitled to be members of a political party of our own country, provided that its prevailing views and obligations are consistent with the values of the ILO and the United Nations and that we stick to the principles referred to above.

In particular, we are expected to express our personal and political views with tact and discretion, to show tolerance and restraint in dealing with diverse political convictions and not participate in certain political activities, e.g. stand for or hold political office, campaign or be active in political debates.