

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION

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INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION

INSTRUCTION No. IN/15

SUBJECT:

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

4 June 2002

The attached document contains Standards of Conduct for IOM staff members. Its promulgation reflects IOM's commitment to maintaining the highest standards of professionalism and to fostering a broad understanding among its staff members of the relation between their conduct and the success of the Organization. It is designed to provide IOM staff members with concise and readily accessible guidelines for their conduct that reflect their status as international civil servants and that enhance and advance the objectives of the Organization. The text draws on IOM's staff regulations and rules, the efforts of the International Civil Service Commission, the United Nations and other relevant institutions, as well as the many constructive comments offered by staff members on drafts of this document.

These Standards of Conduct will be updated and revised, as necessary, in the light of future developments. In addition, more detailed guidance will be developed on a number of important issues addressed in a more general way in this document.

The Director General

IOM STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Foreword

1. IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society alike. To ensure orderly management of migration, IOM:
 - assists States in meeting the operational challenges of migration,
 - advances understanding of migration issues ,
 - encourages social and economic development through migration, and
 - upholds the dignity and well-being of migrants.
2. In implementing its mandate, IOM is not only bound to observe its Constitution, but must also ensure that the conduct of its staff members contributes to achieving its aims. Throughout the years of its existence, IOM has consistently maintained a reputation for efficiency and excellence. This tradition is based on staff members' high ethical and professional standards; such standards must be preserved and, where possible, enhanced. The issuance of a document articulating or consolidating standards is a means of reaffirming for IOM staff members the high standards of conduct and professionalism they are expected to uphold as international civil servants.
3. The IOM Standards of Conduct below are largely inspired by the efforts of various international organizations to adapt the 1954 International Civil Service Commission code of conduct to today's challenges; they are intended to reflect IOM specificities and to address its particular needs. As such, they are intended to: reaffirm certain important principles already contained in the Constitution and in the Staff Regulations and Rules; better define and illustrate these principles; provide an overall framework for conduct; serve as a reminder of the role that IOM staff members are called upon to play as international civil servants in contributing to the promotion of humane migration and social and economic progress, as well as cooperation among States.
4. These standards will assist IOM staff members, including executive heads, in applying, interpreting and developing the Staff Regulations and Rules.

Core values and guiding principles

5. Values are enduring beliefs that influence attitudes, actions and the choices made by international civil servants. International civil servants should be guided in all of their actions by a commitment to fundamental human rights, social justice and the dignity and worth of all persons.
6. International civil servants take pride in sharing the broad vision of IOM by working efficiently for the realization of its goals. It is of paramount importance that international civil servants affirm loyalty to IOM and place its interests above their own. It is essential that they commit themselves to demonstrating integrity, truthfulness and honesty in all their actions and that they pledge to use the

resources of the Organization in a responsible manner, cognizant that they are trusted to safeguard those resources and use them wisely.

7. International civil servants should do their utmost to promote and practice tolerance, understanding and respect for all, without distinction as to race, gender, religion, colour, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, age, physical disability or political conviction. They should also foster a climate of impartiality, fairness and objectivity and work towards the creation of a working environment that is sensitive to the needs of all.

Fundamental requirements

8. The fundamental requirements to be met by international civil servants are integrity, loyalty, independence, impartiality and an international outlook.

Integrity

9. Integrity is enshrined in Article 20 of the IOM Constitution and should be judged on the basis of the total behaviour of the person concerned. It includes such basic qualities as honesty, truthfulness, loyalty, probity, impartiality and rejection of corruption.

Loyalty

10. Loyalty entails placing the good of the Organization above personal, national or other interests.

Independence

11. IOM staff members must, in the exercise of their functions, remain independent of any authority outside the Organization, and their conduct should at all times reflect such independence. Staff members undertake not to seek or accept instructions relating to the performance of their duties from any Government, person or entity external to the Organization; they understand that they are not, in any sense, representatives of a Government or proponents of a national policy. These responsibilities also apply to IOM staff members seconded from Governments.

Impartiality

12. IOM staff members, in the exercise of their functions, must be impartial by exhibiting objectivity, lack of bias, tolerance and restraint, particularly when disputes or differences arise. Without impartiality on the part of staff members, international organizations could not gain public acceptance and confidence. IOM staff members' personal views and convictions remain inviolable, but staff members, unlike private individuals, do not have the freedom to publicly take sides or express their convictions on matters of a controversial official nature since such behaviour might give the impression of partiality.

International outlook

13. While IOM staff members are not expected to give up their national sentiments, or their political and religious convictions, they ensure that those views and convictions do not adversely affect their official duties or the interests of IOM. They must also bear in mind the reserve and tact incumbent upon them by reason of their status as international civil servants. They conduct themselves at all times in a manner befitting their status as international civil servants and do not engage in any activity that is incompatible with the proper discharge of their duties in IOM. They refrain from any action and in particular avoid any kind of public pronouncement that may adversely reflect on their status, or on the integrity, independence and impartiality that are required by that status.

Commitment to the standards

14. These standards of conduct are based on those core values, guiding principles and fundamental requirements. IOM staff members are expected to take a positive and active approach in upholding these standards of conduct. They should feel personally responsible for contributing to the broad ideals to which they dedicate themselves in joining the Organization.

Freedom from discrimination

15. International civil servants are expected to respect at all times the dignity, worth and equality of all people, without regard to race, gender, religion, colour, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, age, physical disability or political conviction. Assumptions about capabilities based on stereotypes are to be avoided.

Freedom from harassment

16. Harassment in any form is an affront to human dignity. International civil servants should not engage in any form of harassment. Equally, they have the right to an environment free of harassment, which the Organization has a duty to provide. Any form of discrimination or harassment, including sexual or gender harassment, as well as physical or verbal abuse at the workplace or in connection with work, is prohibited. Staff members shall not threaten, intimidate or otherwise engage in any conduct intended, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the ability of other staff members to discharge their official duties. Staff members shall not use their official function for personal reasons to prejudice the positions of colleagues they do not favour. The conduct of staff members must be free from intimidation or personal favouritism.

Gender equality

17. IOM should endeavour to uphold the equality of men and women and contribute to remove all barriers to gender equality.

Hierarchical relationship

18. It is essential for all staff members and in particular those in leadership positions to cultivate a harmonious workplace environment characterised by mutual

respect and understanding. Supervisors should therefore fully consider all views and opinions, including those that differ from their own. In addition, they should ensure that the accomplishments and merits of IOM staff members are recognized and provide support to them at all times, particularly when they are subject to criticism arising from actions consistent with the exercise of their functions. Further, those in leadership positions are responsible for guiding and motivating their staff and facilitating their development.

19. Those in leadership positions should communicate effectively with their staff and as a general practice share information with them. Where a decision is to be taken, all relevant facts and information should be taken into consideration. Staff members have a reciprocal responsibility to provide all relevant facts and information to their supervisors and to abide by and defend any decisions taken so long as they conform to the policies of IOM.
20. IOM staff members should follow directions and instructions received from the Director General and their supervisors. In cases where a staff member has serious doubt as to the compatibility of an instruction received with IOM's policies, regulations and rules, it is his or her duty to place this concern before the supervisor. In case the staff member's view is rejected, s/he may ask for written confirmation, refer the matter to the Director General and, ultimately, challenge the instruction through the established institutional mechanisms.
21. IOM staff members have a duty to report any breach of the Organization's rules and regulations to a higher-level official, who should be accountable for taking appropriate action, including referring the matter for enquiry. A staff member submitting such a report in good faith has the right to be protected against reprisals or sanctions. IOM is committed to protecting staff members from retaliation or fear thereof as a result of reporting in good faith allegations of breach. Allegations made in bad faith with the intention to harm shall result in disciplinary measures.

Conflict of interest

22. IOM staff members are called upon to exercise particular care to avoid any conflict of interest. The term "conflict of interest" refers to circumstances in which the private interests of an international civil servant, or those of his/her family or friends or a favoured person conflict or appear to conflict with the interests of the Organization. In this regard, IOM staff members involved in procurement matters should exercise particular care. All IOM staff members should perform their official duties and conduct their private affairs in such a manner that public confidence and trust in their integrity, objectivity and impartiality and that of the Organization are preserved and enhanced.
23. IOM staff members shall not offer or promise any favour, gift, remuneration or any other personal benefit to another staff member or to any third party with a view to causing him or her to perform, fail to perform or delay the performance of any official act. Similarly, IOM staff members shall neither seek nor accept any favour, gift, remuneration or any other personal benefit from another staff member or from any third party in exchange for performing, failing to perform or delaying the performance of any official act.

24. IOM staff members shall not be actively associated with the management of an enterprise that engages in business or transactions with the Organization. A staff member who is called upon to deal in an official capacity with a matter involving an enterprise or other concern in which he or she holds a financial interest, directly or indirectly, shall disclose the measure of that interest to the Director General and, except as otherwise authorized by the Director General, shall either dispose of that financial interest or formally withdraw from participating in the relevant official matter.
25. IOM staff members shall not use their office or knowledge gained from their official functions for private gain, financial or otherwise, or for the private gain of any third party, including family, friends and those whom they favour.
26. IOM staff members who are negotiating prospective employment outside IOM, when a potential conflict of interest may be involved, should refrain from participating in transactions on behalf of IOM with the prospective employer.

Use of property and assets

27. IOM staff members shall use the property and assets of the Organization only for official purposes and shall exercise reasonable care when utilizing such property and assets. They shall not, with the intent to destroy evidentiary material, alter, misplace or render useless any official document, record or file entrusted to them by virtue of their functions, which document, record or file is intended to be kept as part of the records of the Organization.
28. IOM staff members shall cooperate fully with requests for information from staff members tasked to investigate possible misuse, waste or abuse of funds.

Staff-management relations

29. Relations between management and staff should be guided by mutual respect. Staff representatives play an essential role in the consideration of issues relating to terms and conditions of employment and work, as well as staff welfare. In accordance with the principle of freedom of association, IOM staff members may form and join associations, unions or other groupings to promote and defend their interests.
30. Staff representatives should be fully involved in and consulted on matters affecting staff members, and they should actively contribute to decisions on such issues. Staff representatives should not be the subject of discriminatory or prejudicial treatment based on their status or activities as staff representatives both during the term of office and after it has ended.

Relations with Governments

31. By virtue of being civil servants staff members should avoid any action which would conflict with or undermine the policies of the Organization by impairing its relations with Governments. Nor should staff members interfere in the policies or affairs of Governments. IOM staff members shall not individually or collectively criticize or attempt to discredit a Government.

32. IOM staff members are not representatives of their own Governments, nor do they have general authority to act as agents of liaison between the Organization and their Governments. In cases wherein the Director General requests that a staff member serves in a liaison capacity, such is a unique role demanding international loyalty and objectivity.
33. By accepting appointment as international civil servants, staff members pledge themselves to discharge the functions and to regulate their conduct only with the interest of the Organization in view. Their responsibilities as staff members are not national but exclusively international.
34. Governments and the Organization shall not place staff members in a position where their international and national loyalties may conflict.
35. In the performance of their duties, IOM staff members 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 adversely reflect on their position as international civil servants answerable only to the Organization.
36. IOM staff members shall not seek to influence Member States or Observers in order to obtain a reversal of an internal decision taken by the Director General, including decisions relating to the financing of programmes or those connected with professional career advancement or personal status.

Relations with the public

37. IOM staff members have an important and continuing responsibility to contribute to the broad understanding and support of the objectives and activities of IOM since the success of the Organization depends to a large extent on this support. IOM staff members should be knowledgeable about the achievements and activities of IOM. IOM staff members shall not air personal grievances or publicly criticize the Organization.

Contact with the media

38. Openness and transparency in relations with the media are effective means of communicating IOM's message to key audiences. The Policy Guidance and Media Unit (PGM) is the principal channel for communications with the press. Nonetheless, other staff members may be called upon to speak to the media in furtherance of the interests of the Organization. In such a case, s/he may do so only within his/her area of expertise and must avoid personal references and views. If the staff member is unable to coordinate with PGM before communicating with the press on behalf of IOM, s/he must thereafter report to PGM on the details of the content of such communication. Under no circumstances may a staff member use the media to further his/her own interests, to air personal grievances, reveal unauthorized information or attempt to influence policy decisions facing the Organization.

Use and protection of information

39. IOM staff members should exercise the utmost discretion with regard to all matters of official business, and should not divulge confidential information

without authorization from the Director General. Disclosing confidential information may seriously jeopardize the efficiency and credibility of the Organization. IOM staff members should not use to private advantage information which has not been made public and is known to them by virtue of their official position. These obligations do not cease upon separation from service.

Respect for local cultures and customs

40. IOM staff members should respect the cultures, customs and habits of all countries. They should make every effort to avoid behaviour that is not acceptable in a particular cultural context.

Personal conduct of IOM staff members

41. IOM staff members should conform to high standards of personal conduct. They should bear in mind that their conduct and activities outside the workplace, even if unrelated to official duties, should not compromise the interests of IOM, bring it into discredit or offend the community in which they live or work. Particular care must be exercised to avoid personal conduct that is incompatible with IOM programmes or policies, and especially those programmes or policies that comprise the official duties of the staff member concerned. This conduct includes affiliation with any person suspected of being involved in an activity that violates national or international law or human rights standards, such as trafficking in human beings; IOM staff members should therefore adopt exemplary standards of personal behaviour to ensure IOM is contributing to such matters as combating trafficking in human beings and not exacerbating the problem.

42. Humanitarian assistance and services are to be provided in a manner that protects against and prevents sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse of staff members and beneficiaries. Exploitative and abusive sexual activities by staff and implementing partners are absolutely prohibited and perpetrators will be held accountable. Any forced sexual activity including those obtained by the threat of exchange or withholding of humanitarian assistance or services is, by definition, exploitative and abusive, particularly in a camp environment when beneficiaries are at their most vulnerable. As sexual exploitation and abuse are grounded in gender insensitivity and lack of respect of human rights, staff must endeavour to ensure that humanitarian activities are conducted in a gender-sensitive manner and that the views, perspectives, and needs of women, girls and all vulnerable groups are adequately considered.

43. Privileges and immunities enjoyed by some IOM staff members are granted in the interests of the Organization. They furnish no excuse to such staff members for non-performance of their private obligations or failure to observe national laws and regulations. The Director General has the right to waive a staff member's immunity and determine its scope.

44. Staff members must neither request nor expect from Governments privileges that are not provided for in agreements between the Organization and the Government concerned. The negotiation of such agreements is under the responsibility of Headquarters.

Outside employment and activities

45. International civil servants should devote their energies fully to the work of IOM. Therefore, it is improper for IOM staff members to engage without prior authorization in any outside activity, whether remunerated or not, that interferes with that obligation or is incompatible with their status. Queries in that regard should be referred to the Director General.
46. The Director General shall decide whether the undertaking of such office or employment is compatible with the proper discharge of the duties of the staff member with the Organization, including whether the activity is permitted by local law at the duty station or where the activity occurs. Activities such as teaching, speaking engagements or producing books or articles for publication on matters of official concern are governed by this same consideration and are to be approved, in advance, by the Director General or the External Relations Department as appropriate, taking into consideration General Instruction No.618 "Attendance and Accreditation at External Meetings" of 17 June 1998.

Political activities

47. Although IOM staff members are free to exercise their right to vote, they may not be candidates for public office, whether at a national or local level. The holding of a political party office, membership of any political campaign committee, acceptance or solicitation of any financial contribution for political purposes is also improper. Similarly, staff members should exercise discretion in their support of a political party, political candidate or political issue and refrain from delivering public speeches, statements to the press or articles on such matters.
48. IOM staff members may maintain membership in a political party so long as its prevailing views, and the obligations imposed on its members, are consistent with the declaration of service at IOM.

Gifts, honours and remuneration from outside sources

49. No staff member shall accept any honour, decoration, favour, gift or remuneration from any Government or non-governmental source offered because of the staff member's official position without first obtaining the approval of the Director General. If refusal of an unanticipated honour, decoration, favour or gift from a Government would cause embarrassment to the Organization, the staff member may receive it on behalf of the Organization and then report and entrust it to the Director General, who will either retain it for the Organization or arrange for its disposal for the benefit of the Organization or for a charitable purpose.
50. IOM staff members may occasionally accept, without prior approval, minor gifts of essentially nominal value having regard to the duty station concerned, provided that all such gifts are promptly disclosed to the head of the office, who may direct that the gift be entrusted to the Organization or returned to the donor.
51. The Director General may authorize IOM staff members to accept from a non-governmental source or a university, academic awards, distinctions and tokens of a commemorative or honorary character, such as scrolls, certificates, trophies or other items of essentially nominal monetary value.

52. IOM staff members may not accept supplementary payments or other subsidies from Governments or any other source which are at variance with IOM's Constitution and other applicable rules and regulations of IOM.
53. Some staff members are expected to attend governmental or other functions such as meals and diplomatic receptions. Such attendance is not considered as receipt of a favour, gift or remuneration. Staff members participating in authorized activities organized by an IOM counterpart may receive accommodation, travel and subsistence allowances consistent with those payable by the UN. In this instance, staff members are required to declare these so that the travel subsistence allowance that may otherwise be payable by IOM can be reduced as specified in IOM's travel regulations.

Conclusion

54. The attainment of the standards of conduct for IOM staff members requires the highest commitment. Together, IOM staff members and Member States are jointly responsible and accountable for upholding these standards. 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 Organization.

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