



Executive Director's Circular

ETHICS OFFICE

Date: 31 January 2008
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Revises:
Amends:
Supersedes:

Establishment of Ethics Office in WFP

1. Introduction

1.1. For the purpose of securing the highest standards of integrity of staff members, in accordance with the Standard of Conduct for the International Civil Service, the Executive Director has established an Ethics Office in WFP. This circular provides the terms of reference and other arrangements of the Ethics Office.

2. Objectives

2.1. The objective of the Ethics Office is to assist the Executive Director in ensuring that all staff members observe and perform their functions in consistency with the highest standards of integrity, as required by the Charter of the United Nations, and in accordance with the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service.

3. Appointment of the head of the Ethics Office

3.1. The head of the Ethics Office shall be appointed by and be accountable to the Executive Director and shall report directly to her/him.

4. Main responsibilities

The main responsibilities of the Ethics Office will be as follows:

4.1. Policy/advocacy. The Ethics Office will be responsible for formulating, reviewing and disseminating policies, standard-setting, training and guidance related to all ethical issues (conflicts of interest, outside activities, etc.) in accordance with the Standards of Conduct for The International Civil Service or other applicable code of ethics in coordination with Human Resources and other divisions as appropriate.

4.2. Advice to Management. The Ethics Office will provide guidance to management on embedding ethical considerations in WFP's rules, policies,

procedures and practices to ensure that WFP's rules, policies, procedures and practices reinforce and promote the standards of integrity called for under the Charter of the United Nations.

- 4.3. Prevention and Outreach. The Ethics Office will be the focal point for raising staff awareness within the Programme on ethical standards and expected behaviour in close cooperation with the Oversight Services and Human Resources Divisions.
- 4.4. Advice to Staff. The Ethics Office will be responsible for providing Staff with advice in confidence regarding ethical behaviour and standards, when requested by staff.
- 4.5. Protection Against Retaliation. The Ethics Officer will undertake responsibilities assigned to it in the WFP "Whistleblower" Protection Policy.
- 4.6. Financial and Conflict of Interest Disclosure Programme. The Ethics Office will be responsible for the development and administration of the WFP Financial and Conflict of Interest Disclosure programme.
- 4.7. Additional Responsibilities. The Ethics Office will undertake all responsibilities assigned to it in the Secretary General's Bulletin on Ethics Officer of Funds and Programmes.

5. Confidentiality

- 5.1. The Ethics Office will maintain confidential records of advice given by it and reports made to it.
- 5.2. In respect of its advisory functions as set out in section 4.4 above, the Ethics Office shall not be compelled by any WFP official or body to testify about concerns brought to its attention.
- 5.3. All staff shall be informed of the manner in which they can bring matters of concern to the attention of the Ethics Office. No person who brings such a matter to the attention of the Ethics Office or provides information to it shall be subjected to reprisals because of such action.

6. Reporting

- 6.1. The Ethics Office will provide reports regularly to the Executive Director. The reports will include an overview of the activities of the office and any evaluations and assessments conducted by it relating to such activities. While not disclosing the identity of persons who consult the ethics office, the reports will note the types of issues raised and patterns and trends identified.

- 6.2. The Ethics Office shall provide an annual report on its work to the Executive Director. The Executive Director will forward a summary of this report to the Executive Board.

7. Relationships with other offices

- 7.1. The Ethics Office will not replace any existing mechanisms available to staff for the reporting of misconduct or the resolution of grievances. For example, if a case of misconduct were reported to the ethics office, it would refer the matter to the Oversight Services Division for investigation. If the concern raised by a staff member related to an interpersonal problem within a particular office, the ethics office would advise the staff member concerned of the existence of the Office of the Ombudsman, as well as the other informal mechanisms of conflict resolution in the Programme.
- 7.2. The Ethics Office will develop working relationships with other offices and departments, including the Oversight Services Division, the Human Resources Division, the Legal Affairs Division and the Office of the Ombudsman, to ensure satisfactory coordination, consistent advice on law and policy and the making of appropriate referrals and/or recommendations.
- 7.3. The head of Ethics Office shall be a member of UN Ethics Committee chaired by the Director, UN Ethics Office, pursuant to the Secretary General's Bulletin ST/SGB/2007/11 dated 30 November.

8. Duty of Staff on Ethics

- 8.1. All offices and staff members shall cooperate with the Ethics Office and provide access to all records and documents requested by it. The exceptions to this are medical records that are not available without the express consent of the staff member concerned and Oversight Services Division records that are subject to confidentiality requirements.
- 8.2. Nothing in the present bulletin shall limit the duty of staff members to report misconduct.

9. Access to internal recourse mechanisms

- 9.1. Nothing in the present bulletin shall limit the ability of staff members to seek redress through the internal recourse mechanisms.

10. Additional provisions

- 10.1. The Ethics Office will issue appropriate directives for the implementation of the Ethics function in WFP.

11. Effective Date

11.1. This Circular will take effect immediately.

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Executive Director