



Secretariat

19 April 2017

Secretary-General's bulletin*

To: Members of the staff
From: The Secretary-General
Subject: **Code of conduct for staff members of the International Seabed Authority**

The Secretary-General, with a view to implementing Article I of the Staff Regulations of the International Seabed Authority promulgates the following Code of Conduct for the staff members of the International Seabed Authority.

Section 1 Introduction

1.1 The International Seabed Authority (ISA) shares the United Nations ideals of peace, respect for fundamental rights, economic and social progress, and international cooperation. In its operations, the ISA relies on the great traditions of public administration that have grown up in Member States: competence, integrity, impartiality, independence and discretion.

1.2 The values and principles that are enshrined in the relevant provisions of the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Charter of the United Nations are reflected in the Staff Regulations and Rules of the ISA. These values and principles must guide all staff members in their behaviours, in their relations with others, and in the performance of their duties.

1.3 This code of conduct is based upon the *Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service* issued by the International Civil Service Commission in 2013.

Section 2 Values and Principles

2.1 Staff members are international civil servants. Their responsibilities as staff members are not national but exclusively international. Staff members at all levels are accountable and answerable for all actions carried out, as well as decisions taken, and commitments made by them in performing their functions. Staff members shall uphold the highest standards of efficiency, competency and integrity, and abide by the values and principles set out in this code of conduct:

* Issued without formal editing.



(a) Commitment

Staff members must be committed to the work of the ISA and show loyalty to its vision and to that of the United Nations. Staff members should show perseverance when faced with difficult problems or challenges.

(b) Competence

Competence is the combination of skills, attributes and behaviours required to perform a job successfully. Staff members should demonstrate sound knowledge of subject matter and keep abreast of new developments.

(c) Cultural awareness

Cultural awareness is the acknowledgement and understanding of different beliefs and customs. Staff members must respect the right of others to hold different points of view and follow different cultural practices. Staff members must be sensitive to how proposals, events and statements may look to others, and examine own behaviours to avoid stereotypical responses.

(d) Discretion

Staff members are responsible for exercising discretion in all matters of official business. They must not divulge confidential information without appropriate and formal authorization. Staff members should not use information to personal advantage that has not been made public and is known to them by virtue of their official position. Staff members shall not disclose, even after the termination of their functions, any industrial secret, proprietary data which are transferred to the Authority or any other confidential information coming to their knowledge by reason of their employment with the Authority.

(e) Efficiency

Staff members must be conscientious in meeting commitments, observing deadlines and achieving results.

(f) Impartiality

Staff members should not take sides or express their personal convictions publicly on controversial matters, either individually or as members of a group, irrespective of the medium used. Staff members should exercise restraint, particularly in public dealings with political or religious convictions and when using social media. Staff members should avoid assisting third parties in their dealing with the ISA where this might lead to actual or perceived preferential treatment.

(g) Independence

Staff members should not seek nor should they accept instructions from any Government, person or entity external to the ISA. This independence does not conflict with conduct that furthers good relations with individual Member States and that contributes to their trust and confidence in the secretariat, strengthens the ISA and promotes its interest. Staff members who are responsible for projects in particular countries or regions may be called upon to exercise special care in maintaining their independence. The staff shall have no financial interest in any activity relating to exploration and exploitation in the Area.

(h) Integrity

Staff members must demonstrate honesty and place the interests of the ISA above their own. Staff members must use assets, property, information and other resources for authorized purposes only and in a responsible manner. Limited personal use of IT and communication resources may be permitted.

(i) Professionalism

Staff members should take ownership of all responsibilities, honour commitments, and show pride in work and achievements. Staff members are expected to remain calm in stressful situations.

(j) Respect for diversity and gender

Staff members must respect the dignity, worth and equality of all people, without any distinction whatsoever. Staff members must work effectively and without bias with persons of all nationalities, religions and cultures. Any behaviour that is not acceptable in a particular cultural context must be avoided.

Section 3**Working Relations**

3.1 Managers and supervisors are in positions of leadership and it is their responsibility to:

- (a) Ensure a harmonious workplace based on mutual respect;
- (b) Be open to all views and opinions;
- (c) Act impartially, without intimidation or favouritism;
- (d) Make sure that the merits of staff are properly recognized;
- (e) Provide support to staff;
- (f) Guide and motivate their staff and promote their development;
- (g) Communicate effectively with their staff;
- (h) Share relevant information with their staff.

3.2 Managers and supervisors serve as role models and therefore have an obligation to uphold the highest standards of conduct. They should not solicit favours, gifts or loans from their staff. In matters relating to the appointment or career of others, managers and supervisors should not try to influence colleagues for personal reasons.

3.3 Staff members must follow the instructions they receive in connection with their official functions and, if they have doubts as to whether an instruction is consistent with any legal instruments, decisions of the governing bodies or administrative rules and regulations, they should first consult their supervisors. Staff members may ask for written instructions and these may be challenged through the proper institutional mechanisms, but any challenge should not delay carrying out the instruction. Staff members should not follow verbal or written instructions that are manifestly and patently inconsistent with their official functions or that threaten their safety or that of others.

3.4 It is the responsibility of staff members to:

- (a) Provide all pertinent facts and information to their supervisors;

(b) Abide by and defend any decisions taken, even when those do not accord with their personal views;

(c) Report any breach of the ISA's regulations and rules to the official or entity within the ISA whose responsibility it is to take appropriate action; and

(d) Cooperate with duly authorized audits and investigations.

3.5 A staff member who reports a breach of the regulations and rules in good faith or who cooperates with an audit or investigation has the right to be protected against retaliation for doing so.

Staff-management relations

3.6 Management should maintain continuous dialogue with staff, and build relations guided by mutual respect.

3.7 Elected staff representatives have an important role in identifying and examining issues relating to staff welfare including conditions of employment and work. Elected staff representatives enjoy rights that derive from their status. These rights should be exercised in a manner that is consistent with the relevant provisions of the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea, 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 criticism of the ISA.

3.8 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

3.9 It is not appropriate for staff members to prepare for Government or other international civil service representatives any speeches, arguments or proposals on questions under discussion without approval of the Secretary-General. It could, however, be quite appropriate to provide factual information, technical advice or assistance with such tasks as the preparation of draft resolutions.

3.10 Staff members are not representatives of their countries, nor do they have authority to act as liaison agents between the ISA and their Governments.

3.11 It is entirely improper for staff members 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.

3.12 Staff members should not accept supplementary payments or other subsidies from a Government or any other source prior to, during or after their assignment with the ISA if the payment is related to that assignment.

Relations with the public and media

3.13 Staff members should not air personal grievances or criticize the ISA in public. They should endeavour at all times to promote a positive image of the international civil service, in conformity with their oath of loyalty.

3.14 In speaking to the media, staff members should regard themselves as speaking in the name of the ISA and avoid personal references and views. Staff members should not use the media to further their own interests, to air their own grievances, to reveal unauthorized information or attempt to influence the ISA's policy decisions.

Section 4

Harassment and abuse of authority

4.1 The ISA prohibits any form of discrimination, harassment (including sexual harassment), and abuse of authority. Staff members must not abuse their authority or use their power or position in a manner that is offensive, humiliating, embarrassing or intimidating to another person. Conduct which is determined to constitute harassment will be subject to appropriate administrative or disciplinary action or dismissal, regardless of whether the prohibited conduct takes place in the workplace, in the course of official travel or an official mission, or in other settings in which it may have an impact on the workplace.

Section 5

Conflict of Interest and Discretion

5.1 Conflict of interest may occur when a staff member's personal interests interfere with the performance of his/her official duties or call into question the qualities of integrity, independence and impartiality required of an international civil servant. Conflicts of interest include circumstances in which staff members, directly or indirectly, may benefit improperly, or allow a third party to benefit improperly, from their association with the ISA. If a conflict of interest or possible conflict of interest does arise, the conflict shall be disclosed, addressed and resolved in the best interest of the ISA. The staff shall have no financial interest in any activity relating to exploration and exploitation in the Area. Subject to their responsibilities to the Authority, they shall not disclose, even after the termination of their functions, any industrial secret, proprietary data which are transferred to the Authority or any other confidential information coming to their knowledge by reason of their employment with the Authority.

5.2 Violations of the obligations of a staff member of the Authority set forth above shall, on the request of a State Party affected by such violation, or an sponsored person or entity affected by such violation, be submitted by the Authority against the staff member in accordance with the rules, regulations and procedures of the Authority.

5.3 Staff members may, owing to their position or functions, be required to disclose certain personal assets if deemed necessary to enable the ISA to make sure that there is no conflict of interest.

Outside employment and activities

5.4 Staff members' primary obligation is to devote their energies to the work of the ISA. It is improper for staff members to engage, without prior authorization, in any outside activity, whether remunerated or not, that interferes with that obligation or is incompatible with the international civil servant status or conflicts with the interests of the ISA. Prior authorization is also required for staff members on leave, with or without pay.

5.5 Staff members may be allowed to participate in professional activities that foster contacts with private and public bodies and thus serve to maintain and enhance their professional and technical competencies.

5.6 Staff members should not participate in political activities, such as standing for or holding local or national political office. In general, staff members 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.

Post-employment

5.7 After leaving service with the ISA, former staff members should not take advantage of their former position, including through unauthorized use or distribution of privileged or confidential information. Former staff members should not attempt to influence the decisions of third parties in the interest or at the request of third parties with a view to be employed by such third parties.

**Section 6
Personal Conduct**

6.1 Staff members must 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 ISA. This can also result from the conduct of members of a staff member's household, and it is the responsibility of staff members to make sure that their households are fully aware of this.

6.2 Staff members must observe local laws, and must not ignore private legal or financial obligations. Acts that are generally recognized as offences by national criminal laws will normally also be considered violations of the code of conduct.

6.3 Staff members must comply with all instructions designed to protect their safety and that of their family members.

6.4 Staff members must not accept, without authorization from the Secretary-General, any honour, decoration, gift, remuneration, favour or economic benefit of more than nominal value from any source external to the ISA.

**Section 7
Final Provision**

7.1 The attainment of the code of conduct for staff members requires the highest commitment of all parties. Staff members must be committed to the values, principles and code set forth herein. They are expected to uphold them in a positive and active manner. The ISA has the obligation to implement this code of conduct through its policy framework, including rules, regulations and other administrative instruments. For their part, Member States are expected, through their membership to the ISA, to preserve the independence and impartiality of the international civil service.