



## Fact Sheet: Welcome

As United Nations staff members, we are called upon by the United Nations Charter to uphold the highest levels of efficiency, competence and integrity. This commitment is reflected in the Oath of Office we all took when began our UN careers.

### **UN Oath of Office**

*I solemnly declare and promise to exercise in all loyalty, discretion and conscience the functions entrusted to me as an international civil servant of the United Nations, to discharge these functions and regulate my conduct with the interests of the United Nations only in view, and not to seek or accept instructions in regard to the performance of my duties from any Government or other source external to the Organisation. I also solemnly declare and promise to respect the obligations incumbent upon me as set out in the Staff Regulations and Rules.*

The Ethics Office helps staff members perform their functions in consistence with the highest standards of integrity and promotes an ethical organisational culture, based on the Organisation's values and principles of integrity, accountability, transparency and mutual respect. The UN Ethics Office serves the Global Secretariat, including duty stations in New York, Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi; all regional commissions, peacekeeping operations, special political missions; and other designated offices.

### **WHAT WE DO**

**Ethics Advice & Guidance** – The Ethics Office provides guidance and gives confidential advice to staff members on UN standards of conduct and workplace conflicts of interest situations (i.e., outside employment and activities; gifts, honours, awards; personal financial interests; post-employment restrictions; corporate compliance standards in vendor management and due diligence; etc.).

**Ethics Training & Outreach** – The UN promotes ethical awareness and decision-making through training, which helps us to better fulfil the UN's mission as well as understand and apply the high expectations set by the UN for our workplace conduct. Our training and outreach work includes mandatory online courses, the annual Leadership Dialogue, visits and customized briefings in cooperation with other UN offices.

**Protection Against Retaliation** – UN staff members have a duty to report any violation of the Organisation's rules and regulations and staff members are expected to cooperate with official UN audits and investigations. The Ethics Office administers the UN policy on Protection Against Retaliation, which protects staff members, interns and volunteers from retaliation as a consequence of reporting misconduct or cooperating with an authorized investigation or audit. We do not receive allegations of misconduct.

**Financial Disclosure Programme** – The UN Ethics Office oversees the UN Financial Disclosure Programme (FDP), designed to identify, resolve and mitigate conflict of interest risks arising from staff members' personal financial assets, liabilities, investments, and outside activities. Under the FDP, participants, selected based on their roles and responsibilities, are required to complete a confidential electronic annual disclosure of assets, liabilities, outside activities, and affiliations for themselves, their spouses and dependent children.

The UN established the Ethics Office in 2006 to secure the highest standards of integrity of staff members, in accordance with [Article 101](#), paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations.



# United Nations Ethics Office

*Integrity begins with me*

**Enquiries to the Ethics Office are confidential.** When you are unsure about the right course of action, step up and ask for advice. The Ethics Office will listen to your concerns and guide you. We provide confidential guidance on ethical issues. We're here to help – contact us to schedule an appointment.

**Ethics Helpline:** +1 (917) 367-9858

**E-mail:** [ethicsoffice@un.org](mailto:ethicsoffice@un.org)

**Website:** [www.un.org/en/ethics](http://www.un.org/en/ethics)

**Address:** United Nations Ethics Office, 323 E. 44<sup>th</sup> St., DC2-0612, New York, NY 10017, USA

## References

- [ST/SGB/2005/22](#), Ethics Office establishment and terms of reference

**Need Ethics Advice?  
Talk to us!**

MAY I?  
SHOULD I?  
MUST I?

**CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**  
EXPECTATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS  
POLITICAL ACTIVITIES  
POST EMPLOYMENT RESTRICTIONS  
OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES  
GIFTS AND AWARDS  
USE OF RESOURCES  
MAINTAIN IMPARTIALITY  
PERSONAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENTS & ASSETS  
PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS IN THE WORK PLACE

**UN ETHICS OFFICE**  
Independent & Confidential

UNITED NATIONS ETHICS OFFICE

+ 1-917-367-9858  
[WWW.UN.ORG/EN/ETHICS](http://WWW.UN.ORG/EN/ETHICS)  
[ETHICSOFFICE@UN.ORG](mailto:ETHICSOFFICE@UN.ORG)



## Fact Sheet: Financial Disclosure

The UN Financial Disclosure Programme (FDP) is designed to identify, resolve and mitigate conflict-of-interest risks arising from staff members' personal financial assets, liabilities, investments, and outside activities. The adoption of public and corporate governance best practices of transparency and disclosure contributes to public confidence. Financial disclosure is a well-established practice in financial institutions, governments, and other public and private sector organisations.

### **From the Staff Regulations**

*"A conflict of interest occurs when, by act or omission, a staff member's personal interests interfere with the performance of his or her official duties and responsibilities or with the integrity, independence and impartiality required by the staff member's status as an international civil servant. When an actual or possible conflict of interest does arise, the conflict shall be disclosed by staff members to their head of office, mitigated by the Organization and resolved in favour of the interests of the Organization."*

We as UN staff members must avoid situations where we benefit personally or allow others to benefit from the decisions we make on behalf of the Organisation. This is especially important in matters related to financial interests. As staff members, regardless of whether we participate or not in the FDP, we must refrain from managing or holding financial interests in any business, if either the individual or the business has the opportunity to benefit from such an association. We should seek guidance from the Ethics Office if we believe we have a possible financial conflict of interest.

Under the FDP, participants -- selected based on their roles and responsibilities -- are required to complete a confidential online annual disclosure of assets, liabilities, outside activities, and affiliations for themselves, their spouses and dependent children.

### **Participants and Filing Information**

The following staff members must file an annual financial disclosure statement. **Your head of office identifies which staff members must file, following [ST/SGB/2006/6](#):**

- level D-1 or higher;
- procurement officers, or whose principal occupational duties are the procurement of goods and services for the United Nations;
- whose principal occupational duties relate to the investment of the assets of the UN, the UN Joint Staff Pension Fund or of any accounts for which the United Nations has fiduciary or custodial responsibility;
- with direct access to confidential procurement or investment information that warrants the filing of a financial disclosure statement; and
- in the Ethics Office.

Participants use their user Unite ID and password to access the secure online electronic filing system. Information can only be submitted online via this filing system. The information provided by staff is encrypted to preserve confidentiality. Returning participants can review and update a draft statement based on the previous year's data, provided that the previous year's submission was reviewed and closed.

Once statements are received, external reviewers confidentially analyse information to identify any conflicts of interest risks related to financial holdings and outside activities of staff members, their spouses and dependents. Participants may be required to respond to questions related to the statements. If a conflict of interest is identified, the external review team proposes measures to resolve the situation. Mitigation measures may include divestiture, placing assets in a blind or diversified qualified trust, or recusal from matters affecting the concern, among others.



## Voluntary Public Disclosure

Both the Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary-General have posted their reviewed Financial Disclosure Programme financial disclosure statements publicly since 2007. While public disclosure is not a requirement of the FDP, the Secretary-General has encouraged UN senior officials at the grades of Under Secretary-General and Assistant Secretary-General to voluntarily publish their confidential financial disclosure statements as well.

The Secretary-General considers public disclosure to be an important voluntary initiative, as it assures the public and Member States that UN staff members — in the discharge of their official duties — will not be influenced by any consideration associated with their private interests.

Links to the statements of those senior UN officials who have elected to participate in the Voluntary Public Disclosure initiative are available on the Secretary-General's website under the "[Ethical Standards](#)" section.

**Enquiries to the Ethics Office are confidential.** When you are unsure about the right course of action, step up and ask for advice. The Ethics Office will listen to your concerns and guide you. We provide confidential guidance on ethical issues. We're here to help – contact us to schedule an appointment.

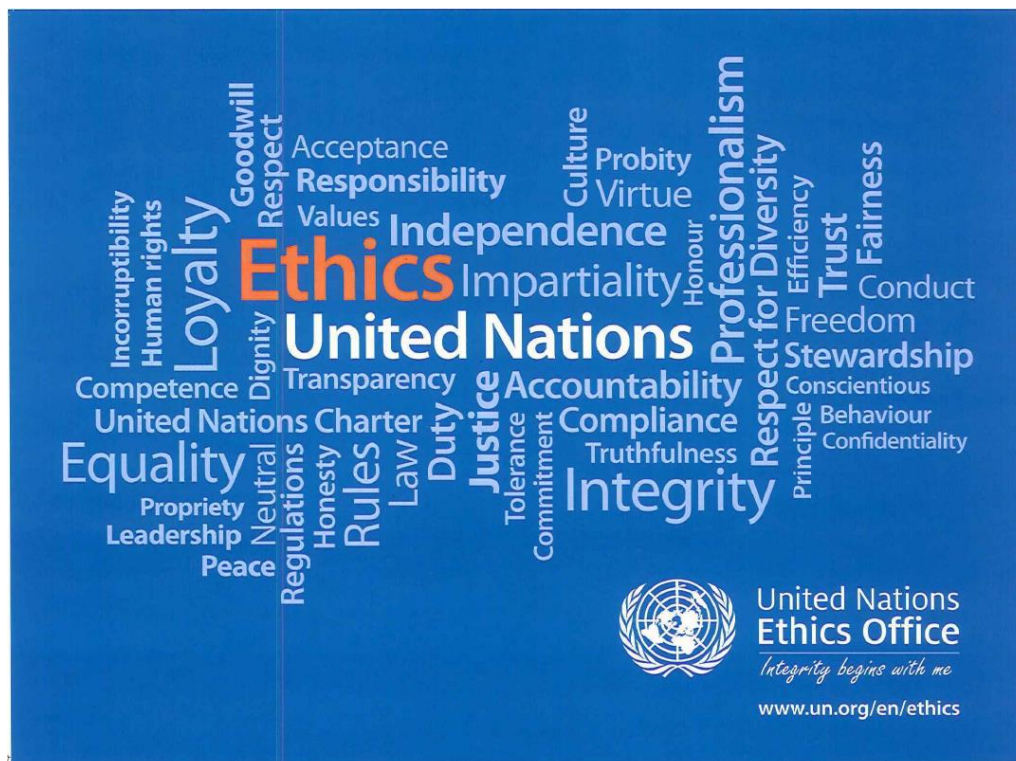
**Ethics Helpline:** +1 (917) 367-9858

**E-mail:** [unfdp.ethics@un.org](mailto:unfdp.ethics@un.org)

**Address:** United Nations Ethics Office, 323 E. 44<sup>th</sup> St., DC2-0612, New York, NY 10017, USA

## References

- [ST/SGB/2018/1](#), *Staff Regulation 1.2 (m), (n)*
- [ST/SGB/2006/6](#), *Financial Disclosure and Declaration of Interest Statements*





## Fact Sheet: The Protection Against Retaliation Policy

The UN's protection against retaliation policy ensures that the Organization functions in an open, transparent and fair manner and enhances protection for those who report misconduct (any violation of the Organisation's rules and regulations by staff members), wrongdoing (by any person that is harmful to the interests, operation or governance of the United Nations), or cooperate with duly authorized audits or investigations.

The reports and cooperation are considered "protected activities" under the policy.<sup>1</sup> In order to receive protection, any report should be made as soon as possible, in good faith and not later than six years since you became aware of the original misconduct. To be considered a protected activity, a report of misconduct must include information or evidence to support a reasonable belief that misconduct occurred.

**Retaliation means any direct or indirect detrimental action that adversely affects your employment or working conditions, where such action has been recommended, threatened or taken for the purpose of punishing, intimidating or injuring you because you engaged in a protected activity.** You must submit a request for protection to the Ethics Office within six months of becoming aware of the retaliation.

Under the policy, the Ethics Office maintains the confidentiality of all communications received from complainants who request protection. We will not discuss your matter with third parties without receiving your consent first. Seeking protection from the Ethics Office does not preclude you from seeking recourse from other UN offices, when applicable.

Retaliation for activities that are not "protected" under this policy (e.g. requesting management evaluation, testifying before a UN administrative tribunal, seeking the assistance of the Ombudsman, disagreeing with management decisions, etc.) may amount to prohibited conduct or misconduct, if proven, and may be protected or remedied under other policies.

### ETHICS OFFICE ROLE

The Ethics Office's mandate includes:

- Receiving retaliation complaints and conducting preliminary reviews;
- Referring prima facie cases of retaliation to OIOS for investigation;
- Recommending interim protection measures to protect complainants during an investigation;
- Referring complainants to the Ombudsman or other informal conflict resolution resources or heads of department/office for managerial problems, as appropriate; and
- Recommending final, post-investigation corrective measures when a case of retaliation has been established and recommending referrals for disciplinary action, as appropriate.

The Ethics Office does not receive reports of misconduct or wrongdoing; staff members must report to one of the following established internal mechanisms:

- [reporting wrongdoing to Office of Internal Oversight Services \(OIOS\)](#),
- the head of department or office concerned, or
- the focal point appointed to receive reports of sexual exploitation and abuse.

---

<sup>1</sup> Under very specific and limited conditions, protection against retaliation may be extended to individuals who report misconduct through external mechanisms.



# United Nations Ethics Office

*Integrity begins with me*

All staff members, interns, UN volunteers and individual contactors or consultants are protected from retaliation under the policy. If you feel you were subjected to retaliation because you reported misconduct or wrongdoing, or cooperated with an audit or investigation, contact the Ethics Office. Complete the Ethics Office's [Protection against Retaliation Form](#).

If the Ethics Office finds that there is no prima facie case of retaliation and you wish to have the matter reviewed further, you must request review from the [Alternate Chair of the Ethics Panel of the United Nations](#) within 30 days of notification.

**Ethics Helpline:** +1 (917) 367-9858

**E-mail:** [ethicsoffice@un.org](mailto:ethicsoffice@un.org)

**Website:** [www.un.org/en/ethics](http://www.un.org/en/ethics)

**Address:** United Nations Ethics Office, 323 E. 44<sup>th</sup> St., DC2-0612, New York, NY 10017, USA

## References

- [ST/SGB/2005/22](#), *Ethics Office establishment and terms of reference*
- [ST/SGB/2017/2/Rev. 1](#), *Protection against retaliation for reporting misconduct and for cooperating with duly authorized audits or investigations*
- [ST/AI/2017/1](#), *Unsatisfactory conduct, investigations and the disciplinary process*
- [ST/SGB/2019/8](#), *Addressing discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment and abuse of authority*
- UN Ethics Office's [Protection against Retaliation Form](#)

UNITED NATIONS  
ETHICS OFFICE

BUREAU DE LA  
DÉONTOLOGIE DE L'ONU

**YOU ARE  
PROTECTED**

IF YOU ARE CONCERNED  
ABOUT RETALIATION,  
CONTACT US

**VOUS ÊTES  
PROTÉGÉ**

SI VOUS ÊTES PRÉOCCUPÉ AU  
SUJET DES RÉPRÉSAILLES,  
CONTACTEZ - NOUS

**+1-917-367-9858**  
**ETHICSOFFICE@UN.ORG**  
**WWW.UN.ORG/EN/ETHICS**



## Fact Sheet: Conflicts of Interest

A conflict of interest occurs when our private interests, such as outside relationships or financial assets, interfere—or appear to interfere—with the interests of the UN, making it difficult for us to fulfil UN duties impartially. Our professional decisions must be based solely on the UN's needs, and we have a duty to avoid even an appearance of a conflict between our personal interests and those of the UN. We are expected to arrange our private affairs so that we can provide our loyalty first to the UN.

### RESTRICTIONS

#### **Political Activities**

As international civil servants, we do not have the freedom that private persons have to take sides or to publicly express our convictions on controversial matters. Staff members may vote and belong to political parties, but we must balance our personal activities with the UN's status as an independent and impartial Organisation and avoid activities that could reflect adversely or diminish the Organisation's status. Staff members are prohibited from running for public office, at any level.

#### **Personal Financial Interests**

As UN staff members, we must avoid situations where we benefit personally or allow others to benefit personally from the decisions we make on behalf of the Organisation. This is especially important in matters related to financial interests. Staff must refrain from managing or holding financial interests in any business, if either the individual or the business has the opportunity to benefit from such an association by way of the staff member's position with the United Nations. When faced with a possible financial conflict of interest, seek assistance from the Ethics Office.

#### **Use of UN Assets, Property and Information**

We have a duty to carry out the work of the Organisation with integrity and accountability. As such, we must only use UN assets – that is human (including our time), financial, and material resources such as facilities, equipment, supplies, proprietary information, and other organisational resources – carefully, in the interest of the Organisation, and only for purposes directly related to official objectives and duties.

We must carefully protect sensitive or confidential information to safeguard the interests of the Organisation, our clients, partners and staff. Confidential information must never be disclosed or used improperly for personal or other private gain. The obligation to protect confidential information remains after we separate from the Organisation.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) resources should be used only for official UN purposes. However, limited and reasonable personal use of ICT resources is permitted. Use of ICT resources to obtain or distribute pornography, engage in gambling, or download illegal audio or video files are examples of unacceptable use of UN resources.

Staff members must cooperate with requests for information related to possible misuse of funds, waste or abuse.

#### **Impartiality**

As international civil servants, we have a duty to carrying out our work impartially and objectively, with only the interests of the Organisation and its mission in mind.

When we make decisions based only on the best interests of the Organisation, we only hire the person best suited for a position, avoiding involvement in hiring decisions involving friends or family, as it can potentially bias our judgement and creates, at minimum, the appearance of a conflict of interest. Disclosure and recusal in such situations will help avoid giving the impression of favouritism.



### **Post-Employment Activities and Restrictions**

Former staff members who resigned, have been terminated, or retired and participated in the UN procurement process may not seek or accept employment with any UN contractor or vendor for one year or engage in UN lobbying for two years.

In-service staff members involved in the procurement process are restricted from soliciting or accepting offers of future employment from any UN contractor or vendor. In the event such an offer is received, the staff member is required to report the incident and recuse himself or herself from any further dealing with that contractor or vendor. See Secretary-General's bulletin [ST/SGB/2006/15](#) for a list of activities that constitute "participating in the procurement process".

See also **Outside Activities** fact sheet and **The Gift Policy** fact sheet.

### **TAKING ACTION**

- Anticipate and avoid situations where you may face competing interests that risk impacting our impartiality.
- Avoid situations where you are seen to benefit, directly or indirectly, or allow a third party to benefit, from the decisions you make.
- If you think that you have a possible conflict of interest, seek assistance from the Ethics Office.

**Enquiries to the Ethics Office are confidential.** When you are unsure about the right course of action, step up and ask for advice. The Ethics Office will listen to your concerns and guide you. We provide confidential guidance on ethical issues. We're here to help – contact us to schedule an appointment.

**Ethics Helpline:** +1 (917) 367-9858

**E-mail:** [ethicsoffice@un.org](mailto:ethicsoffice@un.org)

**Address:** United Nations Ethics Office, 323 E. 44<sup>th</sup> St., DC2-0612, New York, NY 10017, USA

### **References**

- [ST/SGB/2018/1](#), *Staff regulation 1.2 (m), (n)*
- [ST/SGB/2018/1](#), *Staff rule 1.2 (q)*
- [ST/SGB/2016/9](#), *Status, basic rights and duties of United Nations staff members*
- [ST/SGB/2006/6](#), *Financial disclosure and declaration of interest statements*
- [ST/AI/2010/1](#), *Reporting, Retaining and Disposing of Honours, Decorations, Favours, Gifts or Remuneration from Governmental and Non-Governmental Sources*
- [ST/AI/2000/13](#), *Outside activities*
- [ST/IC/2006/30](#), *Outside activities*
- [ST/SGB/2006/15](#), *Post Employment Restrictions (under review)*
- [ST/SGB/2006/5](#), *Acceptance of pro bono goods and services*
- [ST/AI/2002/8](#), *Official Hospitality*
- [ST/SGB/2007/6](#), *Information sensitivity classification and handling*





## Fact Sheet: Outside Activities

Outside employment and external activities, paid or unpaid, may be incompatible with our status as international civil servants, conflict with the best interests of the Organization, or interfere with our ability to serve the UN. We must avoid activities that can adversely impact the Organization or contravene our status as international civil servants. We must devote our time and energy to the mission of the Organisation.

The UN permits staff members' participation in those outside activities which are beneficial to both the Organisation and its staff members, such as the development of professional and technical skills.

### RESTRICTIONS

Prior approval from the Secretary-General is required for UN staff members to engage in outside employment and external activities, including teaching or speaking.

Staff members do not require prior authorization from the Secretary-General to engage in an outside activity provided that it is a private, unpaid social or charitable activity with no relation to official responsibilities or the Organisation; compatible with our status as international civil servants; does not create a conflict of interest or interfere with our ability to serve the UN; and takes place outside work hours. Consult the Ethics Office if you wish to serve on any external panels, advisory bodies or committees. **Board membership with fiduciary duty (involving duty of care, the duty of loyalty and the duty of obedience) is most often not compatible with our status as international civil servants.**

Staff members may vote and belong to political parties, but we must balance our personal activities with the UN's status as an independent and impartial Organisation and avoid activities that could reflect adversely or diminish the Organisation's status. We are prohibited from running for public office, at any level. As international civil servants, we do not have the freedom that private persons have to take sides or to publicly express our convictions on controversial matters.

### **TAKING ACTION**

- Be sure to inform the activity organizer that you are participating in a personal capacity and not as a UN representative (UN business cards or email should not be used).
- Do not represent anyone seeking a business relationship with the UN (i.e. provide services, sell products, etc.), even if informally.
- Consult the Ethics Office if you wish to serve on any external panels, advisory bodies or committees.
- Seek approval for an outside activity - review [ST/AI/2000/13](#). The process starts by completing a written description of your proposed activity, for initial review by your supervisor and the Executive Officer or local chief of personnel.



**Enquiries to the Ethics Office are confidential.** When you are unsure about the right course of action, step up and ask for advice. The Ethics Office will listen to your concerns and guide you. We provide confidential guidance on ethical issues. We're here to help – contact us to schedule an appointment.

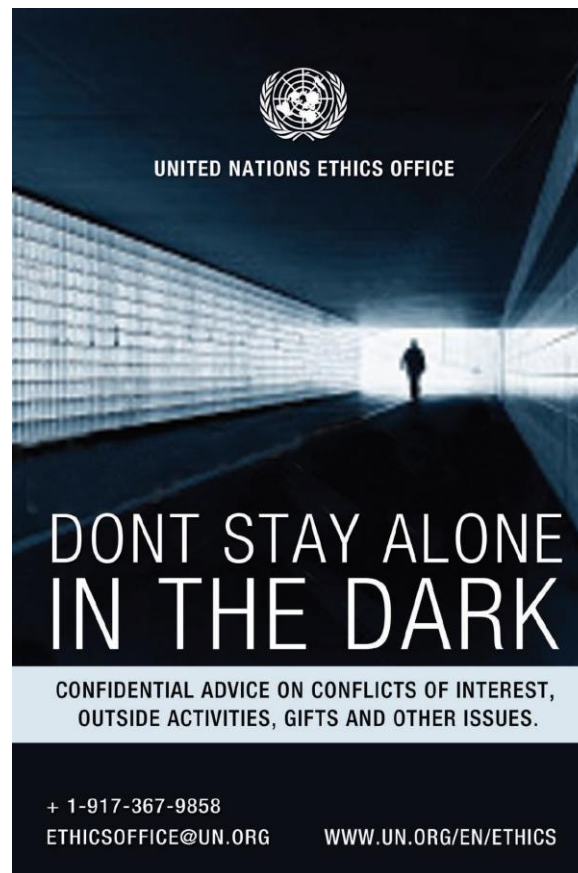
**Ethics Helpline:** +1 (917) 367-9858

**E-mail:** [ethicsoffice@un.org](mailto:ethicsoffice@un.org)

**Address:** United Nations Ethics Office, 323 E. 44<sup>th</sup> St., DC2-0612, New York, NY 10017, USA

### **References**

- [ST/SGB/2018/1](#), *Staff Regulations* 1.2 (o), (p)
- [ST/AI/2000/13](#), *Outside Activities* (to be revised)
- [ST/IC/2006/30](#), *Outside Activities* (In effect until further notice)





## Fact Sheet: The Gift Policy

As international civil servants, we must avoid situations and activities that may reflect adversely on the Organisation or compromise operations. Accepting gifts, honours and favours in connection with official duties may give rise to a real or apparent conflict of interest, as it may be seen to create an obligation. Accepting gifts, honours or other tokens of appreciation can impact our independence and impartiality.

Such situations may compromise both our integrity and the UN's reputation. We may not receive any gifts or other incentives that could induce us—or be perceived to induce us—to make decisions that are not independent or impartial. Staff members carrying out functions in sensitive areas such as procurement and investment management must be particularly attentive to this risk; they are held to an even higher standard, in relation to the discharge of their duties and responsibilities.

### RESTRICTIONS

#### **From Governments**

We are prohibited from accepting any honours, decorations, favours, remuneration or gifts (“gifts”) from Government sources. However, if refusal of an unanticipated gift would cause embarrassment, we may accept it on behalf of the Organization and immediately report and entrust it to the Secretary-General.

#### **From non-governmental sources**

While the receipt of honours, favours, gifts or remuneration from non-governmental sources may be permitted with the prior approval of the Secretary-General, approval will only be granted in exceptional cases.

#### **From any source having or seeking a contractual relationship**

Accepting gifts from a person or entity doing business with the UN or seeking to have any sort of contractual relationship with the UN is prohibited. We may not accept anything from such sources.

#### **Offering or promising gifts**

Staff members may exchange gifts with one another, provided that the intention is not to influence the recipients' performance or decision-making. Staff members in supervisory roles should avoid accepting gifts from staff they supervise. Gifts from supervisors to reporting staff members should be given in a transparent, fair and equitable manner. This guidance does not preclude staff members from contributing to group gifts. However, we cannot pressure or require colleagues to contribute towards any gift.

### **TAKING ACTION**

- Inform vendors and contractors of the UN's gift policy.
- Accepting meals, tickets, travel expenses, or other hospitality from UN vendors or contractors is prohibited.
- Register and dispose of gifts that arrive unexpectedly and cannot be returned in accordance with [ST/AI/2010/1](#).
- Do not distribute business cards, brochures, or any other type of business solicitation on behalf of an external entity.
- Never take a gift accepted on behalf of the Organization for your personal use.
- Never accept cash, or equivalents such as gift cards, as a gift in your official capacity from any person or entity, for any reason.



**Enquiries to the Ethics Office are confidential.** When you are unsure about the right course of action, step up and ask for advice. The Ethics Office will listen to your concerns and guide you. We provide confidential guidance on ethical issues. We're here to help – contact us to schedule an appointment.

**Ethics Helpline:** +1 (917) 367-9858

**E-mail:** [ethicsoffice@un.org](mailto:ethicsoffice@un.org)

**Address:** United Nations Ethics Office, 323 E. 44<sup>th</sup> St., DC2-0612, New York, NY 10017, USA

### References

- [ST/SGB/2018/1](#), *Staff regulations 1.2 (j), (k) and (l)*,
- [ST/SGB/2018/1](#), *Staff rules 1.2 (k), (l), (m), (n), (o), (p) and (w)*
- [ST/SGB/2016/9](#), *Status, basic rights and duties of United Nations staff members*
- [ST/AI/2010/1](#), *Reporting, Retaining and Disposing of Honours, Decorations, Favours, Gifts or Remuneration from Governmental and Non-governmental Sources*
- [ST/SGB/2006/5](#), *Acceptance of Pro Bono Goods & Services*
- [ST/SGB/2013/4](#), *Financial Rules and Regulations, Sect. III C, Reg. 3.11*
- [ST/SGB/2006/6](#), *Financial Disclosure, Section 3, paragraph (e)*

The poster features the United Nations logo at the top center, with the text 'UNITED NATIONS ETHICS OFFICE' below it. The background is a dark, long hallway with a person walking away from the viewer towards a bright light at the end. The main title 'DON'T STAY ALONE IN THE DARK' is written in large, white, bold letters. Below the title, in smaller white text, it reads 'CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE ON CONFLICTS OF INTEREST, OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES, GIFTS AND OTHER ISSUES.' At the bottom, contact information is provided: '+ 1-917-367-9858', 'ETHICSOFFICE@UN.ORG', and 'WWW.UN.ORG/EN/ETHICS'.