

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES



Photo: WFP/Rein Skullerud

ETHICS IN WFP



October 2022

ETHICS IN WFP

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INTRODUCTION

At WFP, we are committed to the highest standards of conduct and integrity to effectively reach the people and communities we serve. Our actions are based on, and driven by core WFP and UN values, principles and standards. It is crucial to the work of WFP that employees uphold the [United Nations Charter](#), adhere to the [Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service](#), and embody the ethical principles outlined in the [WFP Code of Conduct](#).

WFP VALUES

COLLABORATION	Working together toward a shared vision
INTEGRITY	Living up to the highest standards
HUMANITY	Improving the lives of the people we serve and each other
COMMITMENT	Delivering on our promises to each other
INCLUSION	Respecting each other's unique contributions

CODE OF CONDUCT

The recently updated [WFP Code of Conduct](#) (see the full version on page 18) outlines the ideals, values, principles and standards of behavior that WFP employees commit to apply and promote every day. The latest version of the Code issued in June 2022 introduces important updates such as the expectation for every employee to honor WFP corporate values and act at all times with respect, tolerance, and professional behavior.

HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES

Our humanitarian response is rooted in the core humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and operational independence. Together, these principles are crucial for WFP to effectively reach the people and communities we serve and to maintain the trust of our stakeholders.

Humanity

WFP will seek to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it is found and respond with food assistance when appropriate. It will provide assistance in ways that respect life, health and dignity.

Neutrality

WFP will not take sides in a conflict and will not engage in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature. Food assistance will not be provided to active combatants.

Impartiality

WFP's assistance will be guided solely by need and will not discriminate in terms of ethnic origin, nationality, political opinion, gender, race or religion.

Operational independence

WFP will provide assistance in a manner that is operationally independent of the political, economic, military or other objectives that any actor may hold with regard to areas where such assistance is being provided.



THE ETHICS OFFICE

Through guidance and advice, the Ethics Office helps employees worldwide to navigate ethical challenges when WFP values, principles, and standards of conduct are at stake or threatened. It also supports employees in making the right choices by finding solutions to ethical dilemmas and conflicts of interest. **Making an ethical decision is not always about right and wrong, it is about making informed choices that nurture a foundation of trust** with WFP colleagues, the people we serve and our external stakeholders. Building this trust is a responsibility of each employee.

The Ethics Office is an independent and formal office and an integral part of the WFP internal justice system.

It **is available to all employees worldwide**—national and international staff, consultants, interns, service contract holders, special service agreement holders, staff on secondment, junior professional officers, United Nations volunteers (UNVs), WFP volunteers, interns and fellows—regardless of

contract type or duration.

The Ethics Office guides employees to think through ethical dilemmas more clearly and encourages a “speak up” culture, without fear of retaliation. **The Ethics Office is also WFP’s focal point for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA).**

In addition, through membership in the **Ethics Panel of the United Nations (EPUN)** and the **Ethics Network of Multilateral Organizations (ENMO)**, **IASC Results Group 2 on Accountability and Inclusion** and the **UN SEA Working Group**, as well as coordination with the ethics offices of the other Rome-based Agencies, the Ethics Office fosters UN harmonization and coherence and shares best practices and policies with partners.

The Director of the Ethics Office reports directly to the Executive Director and is also a member of the Oversight and Policy Committee (OPC) in an advisory capacity.



MANDATE



ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

Providing consistent, timely and practical advice is one of the most critical components of the work of the Ethics Office. This includes a range of issues, including but not limited to conflicts of interest, political activities, pre- and post-employment issues. More on page 6.

ANNUAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE PROGRAMME

The Annual Disclosure Programme is a mechanism for the disclosure of actual, perceived and potential conflicts of interest (an incompatibility between the private interests and the official duties of employees). More on page 8.

STANDARD SETTING AND POLICY ADVOCACY

The Ethics Office advocates for the incorporation of ethical standards into organizational policies, practices, and operations, which ultimately contributes to giving a voice and empowering employees. More on page 10.

COMMUNICATIONS, EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Knowledge and active internalization of values, standards and principles are essential components for understanding and ensuring compliance. To increase knowledge and skills on the integrity expected of all employees, the Ethics Office engages in regular training and outreach activities, as well as internal communication campaigns. More on page 12.

PROTECTION AGAINST RETALIATION

The Whistleblower Protection Policy aims, on one hand, to enable employees to report misconduct and wrongdoings and cooperate with authorized audits, inspections, investigations, proactive integrity reviews and evaluations without fear of retaliation and, on the other, to safeguard WFP against forms of misconduct or wrongdoings that are harmful to its public interests. More on page 14.

A woman wearing a blue vest with the WFP logo and a polka-dot headscarf is speaking to a group of people. The scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent orange filter. The text "Advice and Guidance" is centered on the right side of the image.

Advice and Guidance

The Ethics Office assists employees in navigating complex situations. Ethical decision-making is key. We guide staff on issues of concern, identify applicable rules and regulations and relevant policies, ways to examine their options, and understand the potential consequences. The aim is to empower employees to make their own ethical decisions, which do not harm themselves, the people we serve, or WFP.

OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES

Remunerated or not, some external employment and activities, may interfere with the ability of employees to serve WFP, or may be incompatible with their status as international civil servants. They may also conflict with the best interests of the organization.

For these reasons, **employees can engage in outside activities only after approval has been granted through the reporting line.** The role of the Ethics Office is advisory in nature. Management has the authority to approve outside activities. The individual pursuit of studies, advancing education or training are considered compatible outside activities, and also encouraged. However, these too could present some conflicts of interest risks, and thus may need prior approval.

TO REQUEST THE REVIEW OF A PROPOSED OUTSIDE ACTIVITY, complete the [Request for Review of Outside Activity Form](#) and return to the Ethics Office via confidential e-mail: wfp.ethics@wfp.org.

The Ethics Office reviews the information provided and may consult with HR and others as needed, then advise management.

GIFTS

Employees are called to promptly and politely decline any gifts they may be offered from sources external to WFP (such as vendors, suppliers, private sector partners, donors, governments, inter/non-governmental organizations, etc.).

However, if declining or returning a gift would cause embarrassment, be offensive or otherwise unsuitable to WFP, gifts may be accepted on behalf of the organization. In such exceptional circumstances, employees should:

- Promptly disclose the gift through the electronic gifts register, located on the [WFP Self-Service Portal](#). This will send automated notifications to the recipient, the employee's supervisor, the RD/CD and the Ethics Office.
- Turn over the gift to WFP through the Ethics Office or their RD/CD.

HOSPITALITY

Employees should not accept hospitality from external parties, except for courtesies which constitute part of normal social relations, infrequent working lunches, dinners, government, diplomatic or other functions, which staff are occasionally invited to attend as part of their functions.

In all cases, the scale of hospitality accepted should not be significantly greater than the hospitality WFP and its employees would be likely to provide in return.

AWARDS AND HONORS

Employees should not seek individual recognition (awards, honors, etc.) for WFP duties. They should also avoid being placed in a position where they might be/appear to be influenced in making, delaying or omitting any official act, including business decisions, as a consequence of accepting a recognition. **If an award or honor is anticipated, employees should seek prior approval. The Ethics Office can assist you in this process.**



A large, leafy tree stands in the center of the image. At its base, a group of people, mostly women wearing colorful headscarves, are sitting on the ground. The background shows a flat, open landscape under a clear sky. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent green filter.

Annual Conflicts of Interest and Financial Disclosure Programme

ANNUAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE PROGRAMME



Photo: WFP/Damilola Onafuwa

There are times when employees may be faced with an incompatibility between their private interests and their official tasks. However, it is the duty of employees to avoid or mitigate these conflicts of interest, in order to preserve both their and the organization's integrity, independence and impartiality.

The Ethics Office administers a mandatory disclosure programme annually to identify, mitigate and address actual, perceived and potential conflicts of interest. It does this through the disclosure of relationships and financial holdings. Eligible employees include:

- Senior management
- Oversight, Investment (Treasury),

Procurement and Legal

- Others with material procurement authority
- Employees on vendor management committees or with regular access to confidential procurement information/ documents, and more.

Eligible employees are required to complete and submit a questionnaire disclosing relevant information (pertaining to the applicable reporting period) about themselves, their spouse/recognized domestic partner, and relatives, as necessary.

The Annual Disclosure Programme is not a tool to uncover fraud or unjust personal enrichment, but a commitment to transparency and public confidence-building.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

An actual, perceived or potential incompatibility between an individual's private interests and either his/her official duties or the interests of WFP. It includes, but is not limited to, circumstances in which an employee, directly or indirectly, would appear to benefit improperly, or allow a third party to benefit improperly, from his/her association in the management or the holding of a financial interest in an enterprise that engages in any business or transaction with WFP.

A white flag with a blue emblem and text, set against a blue background. The emblem features a central figure surrounded by a laurel wreath. The text 'M.E.P.' is visible at the top and 'M.A.P.' at the bottom of the emblem. The title 'Standard Setting and Policy Advocacy' is overlaid in white text.

Standard Setting and Policy Advocacy

STANDARD SETTING AND POLICY ADVOCACY

Fostering a culture of ethics, accountability and transparency, requires frequent and consistent advocacy.

The Ethics Office provides guidance to management and advocates for the incorporation of ethical standards into the policies, practices, and operations of the organization.

Guidance is provided for circulars, policies, standards and other administrative issuances and documentation and on a range of topics, such as protection from abusive conduct, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, anti-fraud and anti-corruption, privacy data protection and confidentiality.

The Ethics Office is also responsible for the administration of Executive Director's Circulars on ethics and standards of conduct, such as: [WFP](#)

[Code of Conduct](#); [Conflicts of Interest and the Annual Conflicts of Interest and Financial Disclosure Programme](#); [Outside activities, honours, decorations, favours, gifts or remuneration](#); [WFP Whistleblower Protection Policy](#); and [Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse](#).

The Ethics Office makes proactive recommendations to enhance standards and policies, many of which originate from advisories, concerns or suggestions formulated by employees themselves. We can help make employees' voices heard. **Please do contact us with any ideas or proposals you may have regarding existing or possible policies, practices or standards.**



A photograph of a destroyed building with rubble and two children walking in the foreground, overlaid with a red tint. The image shows a multi-story building that has been severely damaged, with large sections of its facade missing and debris scattered on the ground. Two children, a girl and a boy, are walking away from the viewer on a street in the foreground. They are both wearing blue traditional-style clothing. The girl is carrying a book or folder. The overall scene is one of devastation and hardship.

Communications, Education and Outreach

COMMUNICATIONS, EDUCATION AND OUTREACH



WHY

The first step in building and maintaining an organizational culture of ethics is **awareness**. Knowledge and active internalization of values, standards and principles are essential components for understanding, and thus, ensuring compliance.

WFP employs a diverse, multicultural workforce, located in over 120 countries worldwide, many in high-risk contexts. As such, the Ethics Office employs **creative and dynamic ways** to reach a decentralized, geographically dispersed, multi-cultural and diverse number of employees.

How

To support employees in understanding their responsibilities, as well as enhance an organization-wide ethical and a “speak-up/listen” culture, the Ethics Office engages in regular, active **training and outreach activities**, as well as internal **communication campaigns** throughout the year.

Where possible, the Ethics Office approaches communication and outreach not as stand-alone

projects, but rather as mainstreamed across mandated areas, as well as into new and existing employee-centered initiatives by other divisions.

WHAT

Our activities range from **annual internal awareness-raising campaigns** to **training sessions** for HQ, regional, country and liaison offices; to **on-site and on-demand refreshers sessions** and face-to-face and webinar trainings, including “train-the-trainer” modules for Respectful Workplace Advisors (RWAs) in their role as “Ethics Ambassadors” and knowledge and skill -building for Risk Compliance Advisors.

In 2023, the Ethics Office will release a new version of the **mandatory e-learning on ethics and standards of conduct** which completion will continue to be integrated into the personal Performance and Competency Enhancement Assessments (PACE) of each employee for the purpose of compliance. We are here to assist and guide employees, so **do contact us for any ethics-related capacity-building needs**.

A woman in a white vest and dark pants stands next to a white trailer. The trailer has 'W.F.P.' written on its side in large, bold letters. The background is a clear blue sky.

Protection against Retaliation

WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION

The Protection against Retaliation Policy (or Whistleblower Protection Policy) has been established with a twofold aim to:

- provide protection against retaliation to employees who, in good faith, engage in a protected activity; and
- safeguard WFP against forms of misconduct or wrongdoing.

The Policy applies to any person currently or formerly employed by WFP, regardless of contract type or duration.

TO REQUEST PROTECTION AGAINST RETALIATION

If you believe you have been the subject of retaliation or a threat of retaliation for engaging in a protected activity, you can submit a request for protection against retaliation to the Ethics Office. Fill

in the [Protection from Retaliation Form](#) (available on WFPgo) and submit it to the Ethics Office through the confidential mailbox global.etopar@wfp.org, along with the relevant documentation and information available to you to support your request.

Requests for protection against retaliation should be:

- made as soon as possible and no later than one year after the alleged acts of retaliation have taken place; and
- in good faith (an honest belief, on reasonable grounds, that the report is true).

If you have any doubts, please don't hesitate to reach out to the Ethics Office.

DEFINITIONS

MISCONDUCT is a failure by a WFP employee to comply with his/her duties and obligations under WFP General Regulations and Rules, applicable Staff Regulations and Rules, Executive Director's circulars, WFP Financial Regulations and Rules, or any other relevant norms and administrative issuances and organizational policies, or to observe the standards of conduct expected of a WFP employee, including, but not limited to, the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service and the WFP Code of Conduct.

PROTECTED ACTIVITY The following are considered protected activities under the Whistleblower Policy: reporting alleged wrongdoing or misconduct, cooperating with duly authorized audits, inspections, investigations, proactive integrity reviews or evaluations.

RETALIATION is a direct or indirect detrimental action which has been recommended, threatened or taken toward an employee because that employee engaged in a protected activity.

WRONGDOING is any action or inaction performed by an individual, whether WFP employee or not, that, if established, would be materially harmful to WFP's interests or operations.



Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (PSEA)

1 SEA constitute acts of gross misconduct and are grounds for termination of employment.

NO SECOND CHANCES

2 Sexual activity with children (<18 year of age) is prohibited

NO SEX WITH CHILDREN

3 Exchange of money, employment, goods for services for sex is prohibited, including hiring prostitutes.

DON'T HIRE/BRIBE ANYONE FOR SEX

4 Any sexual relationship with beneficiaries that involves improper use of position is prohibited.

NO SEX WITH BENEFICIARIES

5 Humanitarian workers (including WFP suppliers) are obligated to report any concerns regarding SEA by fellow workers.

ALWAYS REPORT SEA

6 Humanitarian workers (including suppliers) are obligated to create and maintain an environment which prevents SEA.

DISCOURAGE SEA AROUND YOU

Adapted from the IASC 6 Core Principles relating to SEA, September 2019

PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) refers to acts committed by WFP employees (and those associated to the work of WFP) **against beneficiaries and communities served by WFP.**

WFP POLICY

WFP has a zero tolerance policy for sexual exploitation and abuse, committed both at and away from the workplace, and during or outside working hours. This applies to:

- All WFP employees, regardless of contract type or duration;
- All WFP partners, suppliers, contract workers and external service providers.

If you observe or suspect SEA is committed by a WFP employee and those associated with the work of WFP, you are obligated to report it.

HOW TO REPORT

Contact one of the following:

- **The Office of Inspections and Investigations**

Direct: +39 06 6513 3663

FoodSat: 1301 3663

investigationsline@wfp.org

Online portal:

<https://newgo.wfp.org/services/oigi-hotline>

- **The designated PSEA Focal Point**

at the country or field office levels, or his/her alternate. They will refer the matter to the Office of Inspections and Investigations (OIGI).

The Ethics Office is the organizational focal point for PSEA and administers a network of over 400 PSEA Focal Points and alternates. Your **PSEA Focal Point** can be found on [WFP intranet](#).

DEFINITIONS

SEXUAL ABUSE The actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting financially, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. Engaging prostitution services is also considered a form of sexual exploitation. Please consult the [“Ethics Guide about the Prohibition on Engaging Prostitution Services”](#) on WFPGo for more information.



CODE OF CONDUCT

I AM COMMITTED TO WFP'S MISSION

I COMMIT TO:

- Serve the ideals of the United Nations, including peace, respect for fundamental human rights, respect for the dignity and worth of every person;
- Carry out my duties and conduct myself, both in my public and private life, with the highest ethical standards, including following WFP's values of integrity, humanity, commitment, inclusion and collaboration;
- Conduct myself with competence, integrity, impartiality, independence and discretion;
- Be independent and impartial, to protect the best interests of WFP and to act with loyalty to WFP and without consideration of personal gain;
- Demonstrate at all times respect, tolerance and professional behaviour towards my colleagues and others, both within and outside of the organization, and show respect for all persons equally.

I ABIDE BY ALL REGULATIONS, RULES AND POLICIES APPLICABLE TO ME AND THE TERMS OF MY CONTRACT.

I AM ACCOUNTABLE AND ANSWERABLE FOR ALL MY ACTIONS, DECISION AND COMMITMENTS IN THE PERFORMANCE OF MY FUNCTIONS.

I UPHOLD THE VALUES, PRINCIPLES AND ETHICAL CONDUCT INCLUDED IN THE CODE OF CONDUCT, INCLUDING:

- I will treat the people we serve with dignity and respect and will not engage in any act of sexual

exploitation or sexual abuse (SEA) and I will promptly report any concern and/or suspicion of SEA;

- I will do my part to promote respectful and inclusive workplace environments. I will not engage in, or condone, inappropriate or abusive conduct, and I will consider speaking up about concerns of inappropriate or abusive conduct as soon as possible;
- I will not engage in, condone or facilitate, or appear to condone or facilitate, any fraud, corruption, collusive, coercive, obstructive practices, money laundering and financing of terrorism in the course of the activities and operations of WFP and I will promptly report any reasonably suspected practice or attempt thereof;
- I will speak out about wrongdoing and I understand I have a right to be protected from retaliation;
- I will perform my duties and conduct my private affairs in a manner to avoid and/or mitigate conflicts of interest and I will promptly disclose them;
- I will disclose outside activity opportunities and I will disclose and/or not accept gifts, offers of gifts, honours, decorations, favours and hospitality;
- I will ensure safe data protection practices and I will not use information, to which I have access because I am a WFP employee, for any unauthorized purposes or in any way that may harm another employee, WFP, or those to whom the information pertains;
- I will safeguard all resources entrusted to me and I will use them with care and for authorized purposes only.

WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

Via Cesare Giulio Viola 68/70,
00148 Rome, Italy
T +39 06 65131 wfp.org



ETHICS OFFICE

Confidential mailbox: wfp.ethics@wfp.org

Requests for protection against retaliation: global.etopar@wfp.org

Intranet: <https://newgo.wfp.org/about/ethics-office>



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