

# CODE OF ETHICS



**World  
Meteorological  
Organization**  
Weather • Climate • Water

# CODE OF ETHICS

## World Meteorological Organization

### WMO Vision, Core Values and Guiding Principles

1. The World Meteorological Organization, as a specialized agency of the United Nations, is part of a group of international organizations that embody the highest aspirations of the peoples of the world. The WMO and its staff are dedicated, in a changing world, to improving understanding of weather, water and climate; protecting life, property and the environment and contributing to social and economic development. The WMO has a special calling to promote international cooperation in pursuit of these objectives.
2. This Code of Ethics follows from the staff's own consideration of the WMO vision and values and is intended to reflect best practice in standards of conduct in a manner relevant in that context. It is addressed to all WMO staff wherever they serve.
3. It is incumbent on each staff member to share this vision of the WMO and the following core values:
  - a) Commitment and loyalty in international service;
  - b) Professionalism, objectivity, impartiality, excellence and team spirit;
  - c) Integrity;
  - d) Mutual respect, cultural sensitivity and non-discrimination.
4. WMO staff members are bound to adhere to the highest standards of conduct. These include the basic set of standards applicable to all international civil

servants in the UN system, embodied in the ICSC Standards of Conduct, as well as the WMO specific standards set out in this Code of Ethics.<sup>1</sup>

5. WMO staff members endeavour to raise awareness among those who interact with the Organization about these values and standards so as to ensure that they will understand and respect them.

## **I. Commitment and loyalty in international service**

6. Members of the WMO staff serve the Organization with commitment. They are dedicated to achieving the aims and objectives of the WMO and seek to do so with energy, enthusiasm and pride.

7. Staff members carry out their duties and regulate their conduct with loyalty. They:

- a) Bear in mind and respect the interests of the WMO;
- b) Conduct themselves in a manner befitting their status as members of the WMO staff, an international civil service;
- c) Exercise tact and discretion; and
- d) Refrain from any act, whether in carrying out their functions or otherwise, which would harm the reputation of the WMO or its staff.

8. Given the international nature of their function, WMO staff remain independent of any authority outside the Organization. They do not seek, accept or allow themselves to be influenced by instructions from any Government or from any person or entity external to the Organization. They are aided in this by the commitment of Member States, pursuant to the World Meteorological Convention, to respect and safeguard the independence and neutrality of the WMO staff.

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<sup>1</sup> These duties flow from the general duties set out in Article 1 of the Staff Regulations and are expressly incorporated by reference in the Staff Rules of the WMO. The duties of WMO staff members expressed in this Code of Conduct prevail over the terms of the ICSC Standards of Conduct in the event of any inconsistency.

9. Staff members assist the legislative bodies and committees of the WMO and carry out their other functions serving only the interests of the WMO, under the authority and control of the Secretary-General. They:
  - a) Support the positions and policies of the Secretariat as a whole, as determined by or under the authority of the Secretary-General;
  - b) Express any dissent or criticism in a reasoned manner and exclusively within the appropriate Secretariat channels;
  - c) Address their disputes relating to the WMO through the channels of the Organization or those made available by it, which include informal mechanisms, internal administrative procedures and ultimate appeal to the competent international administrative tribunals, and not by other outside means such as national courts; and
  - d) Refrain from lobbying or seeking support from government representatives in differences they may have with the WMO.
  
10. Notwithstanding the above, staff members have the right of association as well as the right of participation in UN Staff bodies (FICSA, CCISUA, etc.) to protect the rights of the staff, and seek the assistance and support of these bodies when needed, in accordance with the principles set forth in the United Nations Charter.

### **Relations with the public, including the media**

11. In relations with the public, including the media, WMO staff members endeavour at all times to promote a positive image of the Organization and its staff. They:
  - a) Represent and seek to advance the WMO's views and policies rather than their own;
  - b) Refrain from airing personal grievances or criticizing the WMO; and
  - c) Protect non-public information they are not authorized to disclose.

## **Personal conduct and outside activities**

12. Staff members' private lives are their own affair in which the WMO does not intrude. Staff members do not engage in an outside activity that is incompatible with their status as WMO staff, could damage the reputation of the WMO, impair their ability to properly perform their functions or otherwise conflict with the interests of the WMO, and are aware that such conduct would not be an entirely private matter.
13. Given the international nature of their position, members of the WMO staff exercise tact and discretion in their political and other actions and public statements and avoid any which might reflect adversely on or impair their ability to function effectively as a WMO staff member. They exercise judgement in the role they play in support of a political party or campaign and are aware that visible political roles such as fund solicitation, writing articles or making public statements should be avoided. They do not seek or hold public office without authorization of the Secretary-General.

## **II. Professionalism, objectivity, impartiality, excellence and team spirit**

14. The success of the WMO depends upon the high professionalism and performance of its staff. Staff members:
  - a) Carry out their functions with objectivity and impartiality;
  - b) Perform their tasks thoroughly and with rigor, in pursuit of excellence;
  - c) Utilize their time on duty and the other public resources made available by the Member States efficiently and effectively for the purposes and in the best interest of the WMO;
  - d) Are intellectually honest and realistic in their work, e.g., assure that statements are properly supported by data and evidence; seek, accept and offer honest criticism; acknowledge and correct errors and give proper credit to the contributions of others;
  - e) Strive to contribute to a harmonious, pleasant and productive working atmosphere, e.g. by engaging in constructive dialogue to assure that goals and objectives are understood and shared, and to avoid or resolve problems; and

- f) Serve with dedication, bearing in mind the need to balance work and personal lives.
15. In urgent situations, such as important WMO meetings or deadlines, staff members should respond flexibly, with team spirit, and, similarly, may expect flexibility on the part of the Organization for their urgent personal and family responsibilities.
  16. Staff members should be proactive about keeping up with the best standards and practices in their field and should have appropriate encouragement and support in this from the WMO.
  17. Managers and supervisors have a special responsibility to foster and promote the professionalism, excellence and team spirit of their staff and should serve as role models regarding the values and standards of conduct of the WMO.

### **III. Integrity**

18. Integrity is fundamental. It entails honesty and adherence to the highest ethical standards in all actions as WMO staff members. It is a condition for recruitment and continued employment in the Organization.
19. Staff members do not:
  - a) Use their position within the WMO, its name, logo or any information acquired in the course of their official duties to obtain personal advantage or undue benefits for themselves or third parties, or for any other inappropriate purpose;
  - b) Solicit or accept, or knowingly permit a third person to solicit or accept, any honour, decoration, favour or gift in any way linked to their role or status as a member of the Secretariat or solicit or accept any remuneration from an outside source - except with the written authorization of the Secretary-General;
  - c) Provide inaccurate, incomplete or misleading information to the WMO for administrative matters or accept benefits and allowances for which they are not eligible;

- d) Use WMO resources for their own personal benefit or that of third parties<sup>2</sup>; or
  - e) Abuse the privileges and immunities accorded to WMO and its staff.
20. They bear in mind that privileges and immunities are accorded for the benefit of the WMO and that abuse of those privileges and immunities can harm its image and the reputation of its staff as well as that of the broader international civil service. They do not use the privileges and immunities of the Organization or of its staff either to shield themselves from private legal obligations or to obtain improper advantage, e.g., public welfare benefits to which persons with their income would not be entitled.

### **Conflict of interest**

21. Staff members avoid any conflict of interest, or appearance of conflict of interest, in the performance of their duties. They:
- a) Disclose in advance possible conflicts of interest that arise in the course of carrying out their duties;
  - b) Refrain from acting in the course of their duties with respect to a matter in which they or someone with whom they have a close relationship, or from whom they are seeking employment or other benefit or favour, has a special interest; and
  - c) Refrain from any active association with the management of and hold no financial interest in any profit seeking or other concern which might benefit by reason of their position in the WMO.
22. Officials holding senior positions and all officials with responsibility for preparing or taking procurement decisions or investing or managing financial assets make financial disclosures annually and more often as required.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> This does not preclude minimal personal use of facilities, e.g. telephones and computers, permitted in accordance with established instructions.

<sup>3</sup> The Secretary-General has established instructions for financial disclosures for senior officials and for staff members with a role in procurement and financial asset management, or any other function as he may designate.

## **Bringing Irregularities to Light and Cooperation with Investigations**

23. A staff member who has reason to believe that fraud, corruption, other breach of integrity, or waste or abuse of the Organization's resources has occurred has a duty to report it to the official responsible for taking appropriate action.<sup>4</sup> If a staff member considers that a significant problem communicated in this fashion has not been properly addressed, he or she may bring it to the attention of the Secretary-General and may thereafter bring it to the attention of the WMO's External Auditors.
24. Staff members fully cooperate with the investigation of suspected irregularities.
25. A staff member does not bring frivolous, baseless or malicious charges. This may be subject to disciplinary measures. At the same time, a WMO staff member who, in good faith, reports or cooperates in an investigation into suspected irregularities has the right to be protected against reprisals or sanctions. Such reprisals and sanctions would constitute serious misconduct, subject to disciplinary measures.

## **IV. Mutual respect, cultural sensitivity and non-discrimination**

26. Staff members treat colleagues, whether subordinates, peers or supervisors, as well as all others with whom they come into contact in their functions, with courtesy and respect, without harassment<sup>5</sup> or verbal or physical abuse.
27. In keeping with the WMO's international character and calling, staff members act with tolerance, sensitivity, respect and impartiality toward persons of other cultures and backgrounds. They take special care to listen well and to

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4 The Secretary-General has designated the Director of Oversight Office as the primary responsible official and has established a direct communication line for such reports. A staff member may, alternatively, bring the matter to the attention of another appropriate senior official such as a responsible Director, the Legal Counsel, the Assistant Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General or the Secretary-General.

5 As defined in internal instructions on harassment.



express themselves in a manner sensitive to potential cultural differences and language barriers.

28. Staff members respect the basic human right of freedom from discrimination and the dignity, worth and equality of all people without any distinction whatsoever. They appreciate diversity and treat it open-mindedly as a potential source of enrichment. They strive to be aware of their own potential biases and to avoid assumptions based on stereotypes.

# ANNEX

## **WMO Core Values: Definitions and Associated Key Words and Phrases<sup>1</sup>**

### **I. Commitment and loyalty in international service**

Commitment and loyalty in international service mean dedication to or strong support for the vision of the Organization and the Secretariat's objectives and independence, as well as scrupulous respect for the other requirements of international service.

The key words used by WMO Secretariat staff members in discussing "commitment" to the vision of the WMO are: enthusiasm, dedication and contribution. The key words used in relation to commitment to the Secretariat work are: efficiency, excellence, quality, performance, motivation, willingness and availability. The key words used by Secretariat members in discussing "loyalty" are: dependability, honesty, accountability, reliability and trust.

### **II. Professionalism, excellence and team spirit**

Professionalism means the conduct, aims, or qualities that mark a professional person, including the expertness, competence and skill expected of a professional in the various fields of WMO work.

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<sup>1</sup> In 2001, the Secretariat developed and adopted a set of core values together with a mission statement, in a series of workshops and a retreat. In seeking to define the values, a set of key words and phrases were identified. The present Code of Ethics draws substantial inspiration from that process.

Excellence means being extremely good or outstanding.

Team spirit means seeking the success of the group and doing so with a degree of camaraderie among the group members.

Key words and phrases used by WMO Secretariat staff members in discussing excellence include: professionalism, expertise, competence, quality, consistency, perseverance, efficiency, exceeding expectations, continuous improvement, learning, training, development, self-awareness, relations, people management, motivation, encouragement, creativity, coherence, flexibility and visibility.

Key words and phrases used in discussing team spirit include: working together, common goal, sharing responsibilities, collaboration, cooperation, consultation, coordination, mutual understanding, respect, helping each other, friendship, concern, solidarity, communication, dialogue, motivation, recognition, credit, willingness, commitment and trust.

### **III. Integrity and impartiality**

Integrity means being honest and morally upright, adhering completely to a strong code of moral values.

Impartiality means treating all equally, without bias or favour.

Key words used by WMO Secretariat staff members in discussing integrity include: moral standing and values, respect, ethics and principles, honesty, incorruptibility, accountability, objectivity and impartiality. Key words and phrases used in discussing impartiality include: objectivity, transparency, independence, neutrality, tolerance, open-mindedness, fairness, justice, honesty and absence of bias.

### **IV. Mutual respect, cultural sensitivity and diversity**

Mutual respect means due regard of two or more people for each other's rights and feelings.

Cultural sensitivity means an awareness of the patterns, traits, predominating attitudes and behaviour of various groups, communities and nationalities with which Secretariat members come into contact.

Key words and phrases used by WMO Secretariat staff members in discussing mutual respect include: listening to others, treating people fairly, good manners, consideration, concern, courtesy, empathy, respect for diversity or difference, freedom from prejudice, tolerance, acceptance, working with others, confidence, trust, contribution, capabilities, recognition, sharing workload and respecting other people's opinions, convictions and feelings.

Key words and phrases used in discussing cultural sensitivity and diversity include: equality; unity in diversity; acting without bias; abandoning prejudices; accepting that no culture is superior to another; do unto others as you would like them to do unto you; avoiding coercion; equality of men and women; balanced gender distribution; no derogatory remarks about other cultures, religions or the opposite sex; granting everyone a fair and valued place; religious belief should be a private matter.