

Annex 3

CODE OF ETHICS
PROPOSAL

Prepared by the Department of Human Resources

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I. INTRODUCTION

In modern professional world, it is considered more and more necessary that the Organization or institution develops a set of norms, specific to its environment, that are envisioned to be representative not only of the organizational culture, but that also, and foremost, can provide moral guidelines to the staff in moments when a right decision may be difficult to reach.

The following Code is meant also accomplish that purpose: to reflect the culture of the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (GS/OAS) and help its staff members to meet the challenges of every day work life. For that purpose the Code includes not only guiding ethical principles, but also provides a framework of general organizational values and principles, information as to ethical decision making, as well as consequences for violating the code and morality that it represents.

In terms of its design, the Code encompasses also applicable norms that are already established in numerous regulatory OAS documents such as Charter, General Standards, Staff Rules, several executive orders and others.

FORMAT

The Code will be available both electronically and in hard copy. Electronic version will allow for linking appropriate sections of the Code with corresponding provisions in OAS regulatory documents.

II. CODE OF VALUES, ETHICS AND BEST PRACTICES

STATEMENT OF VALUES AND FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

Main Guiding Principles of the Organization of American States:

- Strict adherence to international law as well as to the laws of Member States
- Respect for the personality, sovereignty, and independence of Member States
- Condemnation of war and aggression
- Promotion of solidarity among the Member States
- Advocacy for peaceful resolution of any kind of conflicts and controversies
- Devotion to social justice and security
- Promotion of economic cooperation in the region
- Respect for diversity (race, culture, ethnicity, religion, gender)
- Respect for the shared cultural values of the region
- Advocacy for education of peoples that is directed toward justice, freedom, and peace

Main Guiding principles for staff members of the General Secretariat of the OAS.

Commitment & Dedication

Integrity & Honesty

Fairness & Good Judgment

Accountability & Transparency of Actions

Efficiency & Competence

Creativity & Innovation

Respect for Diversity and Individual Differences

Teamwork

Client orientation

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LETTER(S) FROM THE LEADERSHIP

INTRODUCTION – PROLOGUE

Why is the Code important?

There are times when a person is faced with a workplace situation which can be solved in a multitude of ways and each can evoke a different intuitive feeling. Although many of those ways can lead to the same final outcome, not all of them are morally correct or desirable. In those, often ambiguous, situations when a person may feel internally torn between different courses of action, this document can hopefully serve as a guideline.

This document provides information regarding most fundamental GS/OAS values, including those agreed upon years ago when our great Organization was founded and those cultivated during more than sixty years of its actions, as well as guiding principles and cornerstones of ethical behavior. It is not, however, intended to provide ready-to-use answers or recipes for moral success in everyday actions.

This Code intends to provide guidelines as to the most moral and ethical conduct in face of every day situations and thus should be viewed as an ethical framework rather than as specific solutions to problems.

The purpose and the scope of the Code

This code is meant not only to serve as recognition by GS/OAS staff of its moral responsibilities and obligations, but also, and foremost, to help to create and maintain an environment in which ethical behavior is a norm and a practice of all.

The Code does not intend to regulate private conduct of the GS/OAS staff members, unless this conduct interferes with, or impairs, a person's ability to successfully perform his/her job duties or affects the GS/OAS workplace, or is detrimental to the general image of the Organization.

This Code consists of a catalog of moral and ethical imperatives that are formulated as statements of personal responsibility, and identifies the elements of such a commitment, thoughtfulness and accountability. It contains many, but not all, issues that GS/OAS staff members are likely to face in their everyday work and life.

The Code, that expands upon the principal governing documents such as the OAS Charter, Staff Rules and General Standards, is intended to be a 'living' document that will be regularly adapted to organizational changes and arising needs.

It is understood that some words and phrases in a Code of Ethics are subject to varying interpretations, and that one ethical principle may conflict with other ethical principles in specific situations. For the purpose of this Code, however, the concept of *ethics* is considered to be a "voluntary assumption of

self-discipline above and beyond the requirements of the law", as well as a "philosophy of human conduct, with emphasis on right and wrong which are moral questions."

Questions related to ethical dilemmas can best be answered by thoughtful consideration of fundamental principles and by consultation with appropriate GS/OAS officials, rather than reliance on detailed regulations. For more guidance please contact >>>

To whom does the Code apply?

Commitment to ethical professional conduct is expected of every staff member, regardless of the duty station, grade or type of contract the individual holds with the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States.

Making ethical decisions

A framework for ethical decision making as developed at the Santa Clara University

Recognize an Ethical Issue

1. Is there something wrong personally, interpersonally, or socially? Could the conflict, the situation, or the decision be damaging to people or to the community?
2. Does the issue go beyond legal or institutional concerns? What does it do to people, who have dignity, rights, and hopes for a better life together?

Get the Facts

3. What are the relevant facts of the case? What facts are unknown?
4. What individuals and groups have an important stake in the outcome? Do some have a greater stake because they have a special need or because we have special obligations to them?
5. What are the options for acting? Have all the relevant persons and groups been consulted? If you showed your list of options to someone you respect, what would that person say?

Evaluate Alternative Actions From Various Ethical Perspectives

6. Which option will produce the most good and do the least harm?

Utilitarian Approach: The ethical action is the one that will produce the greatest balance of benefits over harms.

7. Even if not everyone gets all they want, will everyone's rights and dignity still be respected?

Rights Approach: The ethical action is the one that most dutifully respects the rights of all affected.

8. Which option is fair to all stakeholders?

Fairness or Justice Approach: The ethical action is the one that treats people equally, or if unequally, that treats people proportionately and fairly.

9. Which option would help all participate more fully in the life we share as a family, community, and society?

Common Good Approach: The ethical action is the one that contributes most to the achievement of a quality common life together.

10. Would you want to become the sort of person who acts this way (e.g., a person of courage or compassion)?

Virtue Approach: The ethical action is the one that embodies the habits and values of humans at their best. Make a Decision and Test It

11. Considering all these perspectives, which of the options is the right or best thing to do?
12. If you told someone you respect why you chose this option, what would that person say? If you had to explain your decision on television, would you be comfortable doing so?

Act, Then Reflect on the Decision Later

13. Implement your decision. How did it turn out for all concerned? If you had it to do over again, what would you do differently?

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CODE PROVISIONS

Professional Responsibility

As GS/OAS staff members, we are responsible for adding value to the Organization that we serve, and for contributing to the OAS' ethical environment. We accept professional responsibility for our individual decisions and actions. We also understand our responsibility to strictly adhere to international and national laws of the countries in which the General Secretariat operates.

In addition to complying with pertinent provisions of OAS governing documents, as a GS/OAS staff member, I will:

1. Adhere to the highest standards of ethical and professional behavior.
2. Encourage ethical decision-making and professional responsibility among my colleagues.
3. Be ethical; act ethically in every professional interaction.
4. Regardless of personal interests, support decisions made by the Organization that are both ethical and legal.
5. Seek guidance if ever in doubt about the ethical propriety of a situation.
6. Comply with the laws: those of the Organization and of the country where I work and live.

Commitment to the Organization

As GS/OAS staff members, we understand that our responsibility as employees and representatives of the Organization of American States is to perform our duties in accordance to the nature, purposes and interests of the General Secretariat. We consider ourselves advocates for the mission of the Organization and strive to engage in activities that enhance OAS' credibility and value.

In addition to complying with pertinent provisions of OAS governing documents, as a GS/OAS staff member, I will:

1. Work consistently upholding the values of the Organization.
2. Conduct myself only in a way that is compatible with my position as an international officer responsible only to the GS/OAS in accordance with the nature, purposes and interests of the Organization.
3. Enhance the respect, credibility and strategic importance of the Organization of American States within Member States and the communities in which I work.
4. Inform and educate current and future clients we serve about the principles and practices of the OAS.

Accuracy of the Records & Fiscal Responsibility

As GS/OAS staff members, we believe that in order to ensure its continuing success, it is crucial that the Organization maintains the most accurate and reliable records that meet applicable legal, financial, regulatory and management requirements. We believe that each staff member has a responsibility to ensure all GS/OAS records, such as accounts, reports, bills, invoices, work and timekeeping records, and correspondence are accurate and maintained in accordance with the applicable document and data retention policies of his/her respective business area. All the information that is entered or retrieved must not only reflect the best business practices but, first and foremost, must be in strict compliance

with OAS's policies and rules of operation. We understand that inaccurate or erroneous records may lead to misguided managerial decisions or the mismanagement of organizational resources.

In addition, we understand that GS/OAS' financial resources shall be used only for the purposes intended, that are agreed in advance and are in strict adherence to organizational goals and in furtherance of OAS' mission. Organizational funds should be used responsibly, efficiently and in the manner that avoids excess.

In addition to complying with pertinent provisions of OAS governing documents, as a GS/OAS staff member, I will:

1. Ensure the best possible accuracy of GS/OAS records and books.
2. Ensure the truthfulness of the information that is entered into the record.
3. Pay particular attention that the GS/OAS funds are used in accordance to organizational policies and principles.
4. Make sure that the funds are processed only through mechanisms that are appropriate to the type of transaction.

Prevention of Harassment

The General Secretariat is committed to providing a work environment free from harassment, intimidation, and coercion based on or related to race, sex, religion, ethnicity, age, disability, or any other classification protected by law. As GS/OAS staff members, we firmly believe that harassment of any kind seriously undermines both the integrity of the employment relationship and respect for human dignity, and that each staff member, regardless of the position or type of contract, has a responsibility to uphold the OAS' commitment to provide a workplace free from harassment of any kind.

In addition to complying with pertinent provisions of OAS governing documents, as a GS/OAS staff member, I will:

1. Avoid any type of behavior that others might find unwelcome, even though it might be perfectly acceptable in some cultures.
2. Treat my colleagues with respect and no regard to their gender, race, religion, ethnicity or disability.
3. Educate others regarding their right to work in an environment that is free of harassment and intimidation.

Internal disclosure – whistle-blowing

In its continuing commitment to organizational culture based on accountability and integrity, the GS/OAS has established a policy of "Protection of Whistleblowers, Informants and Witnesses". The policy sets forth guidelines for reporting instances of financial and administrative misconduct.

In addition to complying with pertinent provisions of OAS governing documents, as a GS/OAS staff member, I will:

1. Report instances of financial or administrative misconduct that I witness or have reasonable belief has occurred.
2. Encourage others to report instances of financial or administrative misconduct that they have witnessed or have reasonable belief has occurred.

Respect for Diversity

Diversity of our staff is considered one of the greatest assets of the Organization of American States. As GS/OAS staff members, we consider it particularly important that all staff members, regardless of their gender, race, ethnicity, or religion, are treated in accordance with the highest moral standards governing our Organization.

In our everyday actions we strive to promote diversity, inclusiveness, and understanding in the workplace by valuing the individuality and creativity that every employee brings to the Organization. We make every effort to show the utmost respect to all persons with whom we interact in our every day activities. We believe that every person, regardless of their position or opinions, deserves to be treated in a manner that is respectful and that appreciates their individuality.

In addition to complying with pertinent provisions of OAS governing documents, as a GS/OAS staff member, I will:

1. Treat people with dignity, respect and compassion to foster a trusting work environment free of harassment, intimidation, and unlawful discrimination.
2. Respect the uniqueness and intrinsic worth of every individual.
3. Assure an environment of inclusiveness and a commitment to diversity in the department I serve.
4. Be sensitive to cultural differences between my coworkers.

Fair Treatment of Colleagues

The GS/OAS considers principles such as fairness and transparency to be examples of its most fundamental cornerstones. Consequently, the Organization is greatly committed to maintaining and enhancing a work environment that is characterized by the fair, impartial and equitable treatment of GS/OAS's staff, clients and suppliers. In particular, we strongly feel that no one should take undue advantage of anyone through manipulation, concealment, abuse of privileged information, misrepresentation of material facts, or any other unfair-dealing practices.

In addition to complying with pertinent provisions of OAS governing documents, as a GS/OAS staff member, I will:

1. Always treat my colleagues, clients and all persons I deal in every day activities in most fair, equitable, and impartial way.
2. Make sure that GS/OAS policies and principles are applied consistently and fairly to GS/OAS staff members.
3. Place and promote staff on the basis of their ability and merit.
4. Evaluate employees on a fair and consistent basis that is based on just and impartial assessment of their work and regular, bias-free observations.
5. Refrain from engaging in degrading public or private tirades or in threatening or insulting comments, whether oral or written.

Respect for Colleagues and Their Property

The Organization of American States considers it very important that conduit to highest-quality performance and in which each staff member is provided with a work environment that is safe and secure. Safety of the environment, in addition to that referring to individual's physical and emotional safety, also involves safety of one's belongings and property. GS/OAS strives to create an environment that is free of stealing, that is free of acts of taking without permission and without intention to return. We, the GS/OAS staff, understand that the prohibition of stealing includes property of any nature as well as work of others.

In addition to complying with pertinent provisions of OAS governing documents, as a GS/OAS staff member, I will:

1. Not steal, i.e. take undue and unlawful ownership of any property of others.
2. Not abuse the property of others, including intellectual property, nor engage in slander or libel.
3. Not injure others, their reputation or employment by false or malicious action.

Exercise of Authority

As GS/OAS staff members, we believe that no GS/OAS staff member or employee of the authority shall use his or her position in any manner that intends to induce or coerce other person(s) to provide, directly or indirectly, anything of value that shall accrue to the private advantage, benefit or economic gain of that GS/OAS staff member. A staff member engages in a prohibited use of his/her official position when he/she engages in activities other than the lawful and proper performance of his/her authority duties. It is also considered to be an undue exercise of authority, when a person uses his/her power given to them by the position they hold, to use it unlawfully or unethically against other GS/OAS staff member or client.

In addition to complying with pertinent provisions of OAS governing documents, as a GS/OAS staff member, I will:

1. Use organizational resources only for purposes furthering the mission and goals of the Organization.
2. Not use organizational resources that are available to me due to my position of authority for private or personal purposes and gain.
3. Not use my position to gain any undue private advantage, benefit or economic gain, for myself or any other person/entity.
4. Ensure that the authority and/or resources under my management are not used unlawfully or unethically against any other staff member or client.
5. Ensure that the authority and/or resources under my management are not used to advocate the election or defeat of any GS/OAS' initiative or policy.

Procurement & Recruitment

Since the GS/OAS considers its staff to be its greatest asset, the Organization is deeply committed to sustaining a professional team that is composed of qualified and diverse individuals.

In addition to complying with pertinent provisions of OAS governing documents, as a GS/OAS staff member, I will:

1. Hire staff members on the basis of their ability and merit.
2. Hire staff without regard to their gender, race, ethnicity or religion.
3. Ensure as wide as possible geographic representation among the GS/OAS staff members.
4. Refrain from giving or seeking any kind of preferential treatment, except when based on merit principles.
5. Diligently investigate a candidate's eligibility of employment at the GS/OAS in search for instances of multiple work allegiances or multiple contracts within the Organization.

Privacy

The GS/OAS is committed to protecting the privacy of its staff members. Any kind of personal information regarding GS/OAS staff members (e.g. personnel files or medical information) must be used only by authorized individuals for justifiable and appropriate purposes and are strictly protected from unauthorized use or disclosure.

In addition to complying with pertinent provisions of OAS governing documents, as a GS/OAS staff member, I will:

1. Strive to protect the privacy of GS/OAS staff members.
2. Use personal information only for purposes intended in accordance to the OAS policies.
3. Not disclose any personal information, my own or that of other staff members, to other, unauthorized parties either inside or outside of the Organization.

Interpersonal Relationship(s) in the Workplace

As GS/OAS staff members, we consider our workplace a highly professional environment in which each staff member has an opportunity to reach his/her full potential. We are aware of our individual responsibility to sustain this environment through professional decorum. This principle applies to all office interactions, including those of romantic nature.

We also understand that in cases of hierarchical intimate relationships, one of the persons involved must request to be transferred to a different unit.

In addition to complying with pertinent provisions of OAS governing documents, as a GS/OAS staff member, I will:

1. Engage only in consensual intimate relationship(s).
2. Make sure that those consensual relationships will not interfere with my work, nor with work of my colleagues.
3. Strive to ensure that my personal relationship(s) do not affect the professional atmosphere in the workplace.
4. Make a special effort to ensure that my intimate relationship(s) with coworkers do not make anybody feel uncomfortable or disadvantaged because of these relationship(s).

Violence in the Workplace

The Organization of American States is dedicated to maintaining an environment that is conducive to safety in work, in learning, and in every-day activities for all its staff members. We are strong supporters of organizational culture that is free of intimidation or fear. Acts of violence, threats of violence, and behavior meant to intimidate others, as well as carrying weapons on GS/OAS property or in any place where the Organization does business, are strictly prohibited.

The prohibition of carrying weapons does not apply to authorized security personnel.

In addition to complying with pertinent provisions of OAS governing documents, as a GS/OAS staff member, I will:

1. Avoid any behavior that could be perceived as abusive or threatening.
2. Avoid any behavior that could cause another person physical or psychological harm.
3. Avoid any behavior that could be threatening the Organization's property or the property of other staff members.
4. Avoid any behavior that could disrupt work or sense of well being of any other GS/OAS staff member.

Drugs and alcohol

The Organization of American States believes that a fully professional work environment must be free of drugs and alcohol. We, GS/OAS staff members, are dedicated to furtherance of that goal, and realize our responsibility in making sure that our performance and behavior are free from the effects of the use of prohibited substances such as drugs or alcohol.

In addition to complying with pertinent provisions of OAS governing documents, as a GS/OAS staff member, I will:

1. Not use prohibited substances, such as drugs or alcohol in GS/OAS properties, except for official functions when the alcohol is served. In such cases, I will make sure that my consumption of alcohol will not affect:
 - a. My performance after returning to work.
 - b. My behavior as a GS/OAS professional and representative.
2. Refrain from encouraging others to use prohibited substances, especially during work hours.

Conduct abroad

As GS/OAS staff members, we understand that our conduct outside of our main duty station is regulated by the same principles as those applying to the headquarters.

In addition to complying with pertinent provisions of OAS governing documents, as a GS/OAS staff member, I will:

1. Bear in mind that I am a representative of the Organization and act responsibly.
2. Act in full accordance with the provisions of this Code and other governing documents of the Organization of American States.

3. Follow the letter of the law.
4. Follow security instructions and recommendations that are issued for the country.

Conduct Outside of the Workplace

Conduct of Members Family & Household and Acquaintances

Although provisions of this Code do not directly relate to members of our families and households, as GS/OAS staff members we understand that their behavior, especially during official OAS functions, can have a detrimental effect on the way we perform our every day responsibilities, as well as on how the OAS is perceived and its reputation.

In addition to complying with pertinent provisions of OAS governing documents, as a GS/OAS staff member, I will:

1. Ensure that behavior, acts or communications of members of my family or household and/or acquaintances do not have negative effect on my work and performance.
2. Ensure that behavior, acts or communications of members of my family or household and/or acquaintances do not have negative effect on work of other GS/OAS staff members or put them in uncomfortable situation.
3. Ensure that family members do not try to influence internal decisions made by OAS representatives/offices.
4. Ensure that behavior, acts or communications of members of my family or household do not have any type of negative effect on the OAS's reputation and its image.

Domestic Employees

As GS/OAS staff members, we (in applicable cases) understand that it is our obligation to make sure that all of our domestic employees are contracted according to local labor laws and in compliance with relevant OAS policies. We also acknowledge our responsibility in completing and timely submitting all required paperwork.

Post GS/OAS employment

While we understand that there are no restrictions as to what employment we may obtain after leaving the GS/OAS, we also realize our responsibility to not allow the prospects of the future employment affect the way we conduct business as GS/OAS staff members. Similarly, while we realize that we can freely use the skill and knowledge that we have gained during our time at the GS/OAS, we understand that disclosure of any confidential information, or undue use relationships developed during our term at the GS/OAS, is strongly considered unethical.

In addition to complying with pertinent provisions of OAS governing documents, as a GS/OAS staff member, I will:

1. Disclose my plans of leaving the Organization as soon as my decision to that effect is finalized.

2. Disclose any conflict of interest that may arise between my current employment at the GS/OAS and the new job.
3. Not disclose any confidential information that I learned during my term at the Organization of American States.
4. Not take any undue or unseemly advantage of the relationships that I developed both inside and outside of the Organization during my term at the GS/OAS.

Conflict of Interest

Definition

A situation of conflict of interest occurs when a staff member has, or appears to have, a personal interest (e.g. financial, business, social) that might affect or compromise his/her fairness and/or impartiality in making work-related decisions and in every-day actions. A conflict of interest takes place even if there is no actual resulting action. Just the appearance of such inpropriety is enough to seriously damage the perception of the individual's fairness, justice and impartiality. Consequently, such an appearance is also damaging to the reputation of the entire Organization.

Examples of conflict of interest include:

1. Professional vs. private interests. A conflict may occur between the interests of the Organization versus the personal interest of the individual.
2. Occupational interests. In cases when a staff member is engaged in employment or professional activities outside of the Organization, the conflict may occur between the interests of the Organization versus the interests of other professional entities in which the staff member is engaged.
3. Family interests. A conflict of interest may occur between the interests of the Organization versus those of staff's family members (e.g., spouse, child, close relative). Most common situations include the hiring or professional advancement of family members and the purchase of goods or services from relatives.
4. Gifts. A conflict of interest may occur when a person accepts inappropriate gift(s) from individuals with whom the staff member has an ongoing business relationship.

We, GS/OAS staff members, believe that we must maintain a highest possible level of trust with our stakeholders. We must protect our professional integrity as well as the interests of our stakeholders and clients and thus must not engage in activities that create actual, apparent, or potential conflicts of interest.

In addition to complying with pertinent provisions of OAS governing documents, as a GS/OAS staff member, I will:

1. Avoid activities that create a conflict of interest, or may appear to create such a conflict.
2. Adhere to and advocate the use of published policies on conflicts of interest within the Organization.
3. Prioritize obligations to identify conflicts of interest or the appearance thereof; when conflicts arise, disclose them to relevant stakeholders.
4. Educate others regarding the actual or potential conflict of interest that they may create through their decisions and/or actions.

Hiring or Professional Advancement of Relatives

We, the GS/OAS staff, shall not use our positions within the Organization of American States for any kind of personal gain or private benefit, material or non-material, including for the gain and benefit of our family members and close acquaintances or relatives. We understand that this principle, in particular, applies to entering any kind of contracts with:

- a. Relatives through blood or marriage
- b. Individual(s) with whom we are involved in significant personal or professional relationship(s)
- c. Companies, associations or organizations in which one or more persons of highest authority is our relative through blood or marriage, or with whom we are involved in a significant personal or professional relationship

In addition to complying with pertinent provisions of OAS governing documents, as a GS/OAS staff member, I will:

1. Will not advocate for hiring or the professional advancement of family members, acquaintances or relatives.
2. Make sure that all recruitment and procurement activities and decisions that I perform are in full compliance with the provisions indicated above.
3. Seek guidance in all situations of doubt or question.

Outside Activities and Interests

We, the GS/OAS staff, understand that there are certain limitations as to what outside activities we may or may not be involved in. Most of those limitations are set forth in Staff Rule 101.4.

In addition to those provisions of the Staff Rule 101.4, we the GS/OAS staff members understand that any official written communication on behalf of the Organization that is addressed to members of the U.S. Administration, U.S. Congress or federal government must be previously approved by >>>>.

At the same time, we understand that all staff members are encouraged to engage in charitable or volunteer activities, as well as in any activities that enhance the image of the Organization of American States.

In addition to complying with pertinent provisions of OAS governing documents, as a GS/OAS staff member, I will:

1. Make sure that my outside activities are in accordance to the OAS guidelines and polices.
2. Make sure to disclose fully the extent of my applicable activities and interests outside of the GS/OAS.
3. Refrain from using my position for illicit personal, material or non-material, gain or the appearance of such.

Relationships with Governments, Private Sector, and NGOs

As GS/OAS staff, we understand that our responsibility is to the Organization of American States and, while we strive to maintain the best possible relationships with member states and their respective

governments, we remain independent of any influence nor will we seek any kind of influence or guidance from those entities or their representatives.

In addition to complying with pertinent provisions of OAS governing documents, as a GS/OAS staff member, I will:

1. Seek no instructions, guidance or support from entities other than General Secretariat of the Organization of American States.
2. Not appear on behalf of, or advocate for interests of third parties before the OAS.
3. Not promote causes important to third parties that are different, or in conflict with those, of the OAS.

Political Activities

In accordance to the provisions set forth in Staff Rule 101.6, we, the members of the GS/OAS staff, understand that it is a breach of this Code to engage in any type of political activities while on staff at the GS/OAS.

In addition to complying with pertinent provisions of OAS governing documents, as a GS/OAS staff member, I will:

1. Not use my position to gain support (material or non material) for personal political activity or that of other persons.
2. Ensure that the authority/resources under my management are not used to advocate the election or defeat of any political candidate.
3. Refrain from engaging in political activities that are in conflict with GS/OAS policies.
4. Refrain from engaging in fundraising or any form of campaigning on behalf of other persons.
5. Truthfully educate others regarding the GS/OAS policies on political involvement by GS/OAS staff.
6. Seek guidance in times of question and need.

Gifts and Gratuities

During professional interactions, sometimes a person with whom you have a professional relationship may present you with a gift. As a general rule, acceptance of gifts by GS/OAS staff is prohibited unless it meets certain criteria outlined below.

Gifts from sources outside of the GS/OAS

Gifts can be either direct or indirect. A direct gift is one that is presented directly to you. It can be in a form of money (in any amount - cash, check or any other instrumentality of transfer of money), any other tangible or intangible things, services or anything else having more than an insignificant monetary value. These include, for example, valuable items, discounts, admission to events, lodging with or without meals, entertainment of any kind, gifts of training, transportation, or travel.

An indirect gift is any of the items or services listed above that is presented to the member of your family, close relative or acquaintance, business partner or any other entity because of their relationship with you, or because of your suggestion, recommendation or direction.

The only gifts from the sources outside of the GS/OAS that may be accepted are gifts that meet **each** of the four criteria:

- a. The gift is unsolicited
- b. The gift is infrequent
- c. The gift is of small intrinsic value (e.g. low-cost promotional items, simple meals, etc.), and
- d. The gift does not compromise, nor creates an appearance of compromise of, your integrity or that of the Organization.

In all other cases the gift should not be accepted and returned to the giver with a note advising that acceptance would be contrary to the OAS policies. Details of returned gifts shall be notified at once to the recipient's supervisor.

If returning or declining the gift is not possible, or if the gift may be of substantial benefit to the Organization, you must immediately seek written direction from >>> . Such direction should indicate the suggested course of action in regards to the gift, e.g. whether you are authorized to accept the gift, should decline it, donate it to charity or dispose in any other way.

Gifts between the GS/OAS staff members

As a general rule, GS/OAS staff may not directly or indirectly make gifts, or solicit collection of funds for a gift for another staff member in a position of authority.

The only gifts between the GS/OAS staff members that may be accepted, are gifts that meet **each** of the five criteria:

1. Gifts are not solicited
2. Gifts are of minimal value
3. Gifts are presented on special, infrequent occasions
4. There is a relationship between the staff members that justifies the gift
5. The staff members are not in a supervisory relationship, directly or indirectly, to each other, with the exception of the gifts that are presented in following cases:
 - a. The gift is made in response to an infrequent occasion of personal importance, e.g. marriage, death, births of children, etc.
 - b. The gift is in relation to an event that terminates the supervisor-supervisee relationship, such as transfer, retirement, or termination.

In addition to complying with pertinent provisions of OAS governing documents, as a GS/OAS staff member, I will:

1. Make sure that I follow closely the policies of the Organization in reference to accepting and presenting gifts.
2. Educate others regarding the GS/OAS policies on accepting and presenting gifts.
3. Seek guidance in times of question and need.

Awards

In accordance to the Staff Rules, no staff member may accept a decoration from any government, neither may he/she accept honors, awards, remuneration, favors, or gifts when, in the opinion of the

Secretary General, these are incompatible with his status as an international civil servant or with the interests of the Organization.

A staff member may, however, accept awards from outside sources provided that any type of direct or indirect gift does not accompany them. If it does, before the staff member can accept such an award, he/she must obtain a written authorization from >>>.

Staff members may also accept honorary decrees from institutions of higher education, provided that they do not cause questions about the staff's impartiality or the impartiality of the Organization.

Disclosing Conflict of Interest & Conduct in Situations of Conflict of Interest

We, the GS/OAS staff, realize that we need to be very vigilant and sensitive to situations that may create, or appear to create a conflict of interests. In all those cases we will abstain from any action or making any decisions until instructed by >>> as to best course of action.

In addition to complying with pertinent provisions of OAS governing documents, as a GS/OAS staff member, I will:

1. Not participate in any action or the making a decisions that could cause a conflict of interest or appearance thereof.
2. Promptly disclose any situations (past, present and potential) that create a conflict of interest or appearance thereof, to >>> before taking any participatory action or decision.
3. Seek guidance and information in times of need and question.
- 4.

Use of GS/OAS Assets

Each GS/OAS staff member has a responsibility to properly use the Organization's property, facilities and equipment. This responsibility includes protecting GS/OAS' property from loss, theft, abuse and unauthorized use. All GS/OAS assets should be used for legitimate business purposes.

Use of information

As GS/OAS staff members, we must consider and protect the rights of individuals, especially in the acquisition and dissemination of information, while ensuring truthful communications and facilitating informed decision-making.

In addition to complying with pertinent provisions of OAS governing documents, as a GS/OAS staff member, I will:

1. Build trust among all staff members and clients by maximizing the open exchange of information, while eliminating anxieties about the inappropriate use and/or inaccurate acquisition and sharing of information.
2. Acquire and disseminate information through ethical and responsible means.
3. Investigate the accuracy and source of information before allowing it to be used in employment-related decisions.

4. Safeguard restricted or confidential information.
5. Take appropriate steps to ensure the accuracy and completeness of all information communicated about OAS policies and practices.

Disclosure of Confidential Information

Confidential information is any non-public information that, if disclosed, would be damaging to the best interests of the Organization. As GS/OAS staff members, we recognize our responsibility to hold all confidential information obtained from the GS/OAS or its customers in confidence, except when disclosure is authorized or legally mandated. Confidential information should not be shared with the media or any other third parties. If there is any doubt about whether such information has been publicly released or if disclosure is legally mandated, the staff member should contact >>> for guidance.

Confidential information must not be disclosed regardless of the employment status, including after the termination of an employment relationship at the GS/OAS.

Use of GS/OAS resources

We, the GS/OAS staff, understand that the resources of the Organization are available for us to use in meeting the objectives of our positions. At the same time, the resources at all times constitute the property of the Organization and it is considered highly immoral to take unlawful ownership of any item of the GS/OAS property and/or intentionally cause its damage.

In addition to complying with pertinent provisions of OAS governing documents, as a GS/OAS staff member, I will:

1. Take good care of the OAS properties that are available to me.
2. Refrain from making any type of damage to the OAS properties.
3. Not take property of any item that belongs to the Organization.

Use of OAS name and logo

The name and logo of the Organization of American States can only be used by authorized entities for purposes that strictly comply with the GS/OAS policies.

In addition to complying with pertinent provisions of OAS governing documents, as a GS/OAS staff member, I will:

1. Never use OAS official stationery for private, non-work related purposes.
2. Provide OAS logo in digital format and/or official stationery to unauthorized individuals.
3. Truthfully and accurately represent my position within the GS/OAS on any written documents, e.g. business cards.

Use of technology

As GS/OAS staff members, we must strive to make the best possible use of the Organization's technology and recognize our responsibility and obligation to use technology systems that are available to us in an ethical, professional, and legal manner consistent with authorized job functions. We

understand that all computers connecting to the GS/OAS network, regardless of their location or source of funding, are subject to the terms of this Code.

a. Access

In addition to complying with pertinent provisions of OAS governing documents, as a GS/OAS staff member, I will:

1. Take reasonable precautions to prevent unauthorized access to passwords, user identifications, or other information that may be used to access information systems.
2. Limit access to information contained in or obtained from the systems only to authorized people.
3. Diligently protect all confidential information from unauthorized disclosure.
4. Not share, record, copy, transmit, delete, or in any way alter information in official GS/OAS systems except when required to perform official duties.

b. Respect for Others

In addition to complying with pertinent provisions of OAS governing documents, as a GS/OAS staff member, I will:

1. Respect the privacy of other users, and specifically will not read, delete, copy, or modify another user's data, information, files, e-mail or programs (collectively, "electronic files") without the other user's express permission. At the same time, I understand that there should be no expectation of privacy in electronic files stored on the resident memory of a computer available for general public access, and that such files are subject to unannounced deletion.
2. Forge or attempted forgery of any electronic communications
5. Not send nor attempt to send unsolicited junk mail or chain letters.
6. Not flood nor attempt to flood a user's mailbox.
7. Not attempt to obstruct usage nor deny access to other users.
8. Not transmit or distribute material that would be in violation of existing policies or guidelines regarding using the GS/OAS technology resources.

c. Respect for Property

In addition to complying with pertinent provisions of OAS governing documents, as a GS/OAS staff member, I will:

1. Not intentionally introduce, and use due diligence to avoid the introduction of, any program or data intended to disrupt normal operations (e.g. a computer "virus" or "worm") into the GS/OAS information technology resources.
2. Not introduce any programs or applications that are not required for every-day work (e.g. instant communicators).
3. Use GS/OAS technology resources solely for the work-related purposes.

d. Retention of Electronic Files

In addition to complying with pertinent provisions of OAS governing documents, as a GS/OAS staff member, I will:

1. Strive to retain, manage, and make accessible in record-keeping or filing systems the electronic files that support GS/OAS organizational functions.
2. Be responsible for ascertaining the disposition requirements for the electronic records in my custody (with the assistance of my supervisor, as needed).

3. Understand that the GS/OAS, as owner of electronic records stored on GS/OAS computers, reserves the right to periodically purge electronic records, including e-mail messages. Users who are either required to retain an electronic record, or who otherwise wish to maintain an electronic record, should either:
 - a) Print and store a paper copy of the record in the relevant subject matter file; or
 - b) Electronically store the record on a storage medium or in an electronic storage location not subject to unannounced deletion.

e. Unlawful uses

In addition to complying with pertinent provisions of OAS governing documents, as a GS/OAS staff member, I will:

1. Not engage in unlawful uses of the information technology system resources of the GS/OAS. Unlawful activities violate of this policy and may also subject persons engaging in these activities to civil and/or criminal penalties.
2. Not distribute and/or display obscene materials, including the use of inappropriate or offensive language.
3. Not engage in any form of defamation, i.e. publish a false and defamatory statement(s), which damages the reputation of another.
4. Abide by all licensing and copyright agreements.
5. Not engage in any form of gambling while using the GS/OAS resources.

f. Other

In addition to complying with pertinent provisions of OAS governing documents, as a GS/OAS staff member, I will:

1. Seek guidance from a supervisor or an appropriate administrator whenever I am unsure of the correct decision regarding the appropriate use, confidentiality, or access, and will do so *before* I take any action on the support issue in question.
2. Report any incidents of personal noncompliance or noncompliance of colleagues with this Code that may result in damages to GS/OAS technology resources.

Intellectual Property

As GS/OAS staff members, we recognize that is unacceptable to take another person's work and present it as your own. We also realize that all results of our work as GS/OAS staff members are owned by the Organization.

In addition to complying with pertinent provisions of OAS governing documents, as a GS/OAS staff member, I will:

1. Enclose in quotation marks and give a citation to any portion of text that originates in someone else's written work that I include in my own work;
2. Make sure to put in quotation marks all the pieces of the text that are unchanged from their original source, as well as provide the source of the text.
3. Not publish a work that is substantially taken from another person. I will make sure to add a substantiative amount of new ideas and/or interpretations.
4. Clearly distinguish between my work and that of others.
5. Respect copy rights and patent rights.

6. Always give due credit to other researchers.

Motor vehicles

GS/OAS motor vehicles are for official use only. In exceptional cases, and upon prior authorization, if the vehicle is used for any other purposes than official business, the authorized staff member must promptly and appropriately reimburse all associated and/or incurred costs (e.g. repairs).

CODE VIOLATION

Reporting Allegations of Violations

If a GS/OAS staff member knows about or suspects misconduct, illegal activities, fraud, misuse of organizational assets or violations of OAS policies, he/she has a duty to report his/her concerns. Staff members are encouraged to report any such concerns to their supervisor, or to >>>. (Calls and Internet reports can be anonymous). There will be no retribution against any staff member making such a report in good faith.

Examples of violations include:

- Authorizing or participating in actions that violate applicable laws, regulations, or organizational policies.
- Failing to report a violation or willfully withholding relevant and material information concerning a violation.
- Retaliating against individuals who report or assist in investigations of suspected violations of applicable laws, regulations, or organizational policies.

Disciplinary Procedures

Violators of the Code shall be subject to Disciplinary Measures as set forth in Chapter XI of the Staff Rules.

In addition to the measures detailed in Chapter XI of the Staff Rules, violators of the Code may be subject to referral for criminal prosecution and/or reimbursement to the Organization for any losses or damages resulting from violations of the Code of Ethics.

Investigations

Upon notification, the Ethics Officer shall review the allegations, request additional information, if necessary, and shall refer allegations of violations of this Code to the Joint Disciplinary Committee along with his/her recommendations as to the disciplinary action that should result from the violation of the Code.

Prohibition against retaliation

It is a violation of this Code of Ethics for any GS/OAS' employee to retaliate or discriminate, directly or indirectly, or encourage others to do so, against an individual who reports a suspected violation or provides information relevant to an investigation of any conduct which the individual reasonably believes to be a violation of applicable laws, regulations, or organizational policies.

Appeals

The appeal procedures, as set forth in Chapter XII of the GS/OAS Staff Rules, apply.

Changes to the Code of Ethics

The Code shall be reviewed and updated on regular basis, with intervals of no longer than 3 years. The >>> shall outline a proposal of any updates or changes to the provisions of this Code and report any such changes or updates to the Department of Human Resources and Staff Committee. Additionally, any updates or changes to the provisions of this Code must be publicly disclosed in a prompt manner.

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All GS/OAS staff, regardless of the type of contract, is required to review and sign a new GS/OAS Code of Ethics acknowledgment. This document will be retained by the DHR. All new employees will be provided the Code of Ethics document during new employee orientation.

The following document is envisioned to be presented to GS/OAS staff in a hard copy in a form of a poster or a handout.

STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

I. EXCELLENCE

Valuing and striving to provide product/service of the highest quality possible: for example, a high degree of attention to detail, thoroughness, reliability and accuracy of information and a presentation that is both neat and easy to follow.

II. PRACTICALITY

The quest for optimal results needs to be balanced by practical considerations. Paying particular attention to the time and human and material resources.

III. RELIABILITY

Consistently performing one's work, and delivering results in most effective manner. Being accurate as to how much work he or she can actually accomplish in the projected timeframe; Not making unrealistic promises.

IV. ORGANIZATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Taking initiative on behalf of the Organization in ways that support the strategies of one's superiors. Initiative is properly directed in support of the boss' or departments' objectives, not just one's own unique ideas.

V. PROMPT AND TIMELY RESPONSE

Being acutely conscious of others' constraints with respect to time's passage; respect for others' schedules and time limitations; timely responsiveness to requests, e.g. for communication or information. Meeting or beating deadlines.

VI. AWARENESS

Deep understanding that, within the Organization, the person is perceived through the perspective of their attitude, performance, accomplishments and overall demeanor.

VII. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Taking an active role in furthering one's professional development. Taking actions tailored to increasing one's knowledge and expertise. It includes seeking training, reading professional publications, and attending relevant events, seminars and conferences. Attains professional certifications as well as membership in professional organizations.

VIII. ACCURACY

Striving to be as accurate as possible in all kinds of statements (either written or oral), research, and any kind of everyday activity. Demonstrating a high level of attention to detail.

IX. RESPECT

Being respectful of other people regardless of the type and level of work relationship that one has with them. Being respectful of roles and responsibilities at different hierarchical levels, and of the rights and privileges that belong to those levels.

X. INDIVIDUALISM

Demonstrating individual self in ways that are subtle; observe locally prevailing norms of behavior, and that do not unduly distract others. Not strongly calling attention to oneself.

XI. PATIENCE

Being sensitive to others' workloads and priorities.

XII. SENSITIVITY

Being sensitive to others; learning how to temper and modulate his or her behavior according to circumstances and organizational needs.

XIII. CONSCIENTIOUS

Doing high quality work in order to satisfy an internalized value that one's work ought to be done along the lines of excellence. A conscientious professional takes pride in all of his or her tasks and responsibilities, not merely those that will receive the most notice or the highest remuneration.

XIV. NONJUDGMENTAL ATTITUDE

In arriving at conclusions one pays attention to considering all relevant information and to probing for possible misunderstandings. In a setting where people from many countries, cultural backgrounds, and ethnic groups are working together, being nonjudgmental is particularly important.

XV. TACT

Being sensitive to the feelings and reputations of others. When shortcomings must be revealed, the bad news should be restricted to those who are directly involved.

XVI. ASSERTIVENESS

Being assertive, but putting a boundary on one's assertiveness and self-assurance that varies across times, situations, and people. This shifting boundary is governed by one's awareness of the likely effect on others of varying levels of assertiveness.

XVII. PERSONAL WARMTH

Maintaining the appearance of positive regard towards others; not being emotionally flat or uncaring towards others

XVIII. SELF-CONTROL

Avoiding any energetic, agitated display of deep feelings, especially anger. Reacting rationally and neutrally to unusual events and behavior, including emotionally upsetting situations and even well-intentioned criticism of oneself.

XIX. ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Being punctual and dependable in attendance. Being sensitive to the needs of others, who are also following preplanned schedules.

XX. PRESENTATION

Showing up for work groomed and dressed in a way that is attractive without being distracting. In face-to-face situations, one's physical appearance is almost always the first indication of "professionalism" that others judge. As the old saw says: "First impressions are lasting."

Appendices:

1. Prohibition against Workplace Harassment. Executive Order No. 05-7 Rev. 1
2. Prohibition against Sexual Harassment. Executive Order No. 95-7
3. Protection for Whistleblowers, Informants and Witnesses; Executive Order No. 05-8, Corr. 1
4. Rules and Procedures for the Use of the General Secretariat's Licensed Named User Software. Administrative Memorandum No. 112
5. Policies with Respect to Ethics of Conduct and Conflicts of Interest. Administrative Memorandum No. 58 Rev. 1; Modified by Executive Order No. 96-3

III. PROCESS

The following process is adapted after the suggested steps by the NC Office of Staff Personnel

1. First draft of the Code and its primary provisions

2. Initial presentation of the idea and the draft to management to obtain their support

The support and commitment of the OAS leadership is necessary for success in developing a Code of Ethics. Resource allocation, the buy-in of others and communications relating to Code development are among the critical areas affected by leadership commitment. For these reasons, it is important to gain leadership commitment early in the process and to make this commitment clear to everyone in the Organization.

At the same time, it is crucial to keep in mind that the Code needs to be accompanied by a certain structure that would allow for its enforcement. At this stage, a discussion should about *who* should be informed in cases of Code violation, *what process* should be followed or what should be the *consequences* of violation of the Code, etc. This means that an entity within the organization (a position, office) would need to be identified or created/developed. The objective of the officer/office would be not only to provide information and guidance in the matters of ethical concern, but also to collect complaints regarding Code violation and conduct investigations. This officer/office would also be responsible for suggesting periodic updates to the Code.

Sample areas of decision would include:

- a. Position of the Ethics Office/Officer within the GS/OAS administrative structure
- b. Structure of the Ethics Office (if applicable), i.e., whether it is going to be one office (ethics) or a group of related offices working together (e.g. ethics of office, ombudsman, office of conflict resolution, etc.)
- c. Ethics personnel, i.e., the number of persons working in the office, their qualifications, scope of work.

3. Creating a Code development Task Force

It is crucial to involve staff members in the development of the Code. A careful thought should be given to selecting appropriate Task Force staff members, who need to be committed and have the time to devote to the task force. In choosing the team, it is important to ensure that selected staff is representative of the diversity of the organization and the views of key employees, and other groups.

4. Data intake and analysis-interviews and focus groups

The Task Group shall review the first draft and use it as a selection of material for the final Code. Using the first draft as a base, this step includes gathering additional information from stakeholders (leadership, staff, staff committee, etc.) on key ethics concerns. For a Code to be effective, individuals must find it relevant. Information gathering and processing of what was already prepared through interviews, focus groups and informal discussions is an important ways to surface key issues and can set the stage for an on-going dialogue about ethics. In addition, the information gathering process sends a message that the Organization believes that ethics issues are important and that the views of employees are valuable.

In developing a Code multiple perspectives need to be sought. In particular, those involved should be people who are interested or will be affected by the Code provisions in the drafting process. Some organizations include employees as stakeholders of their formal committees, whereas others solicit input and feedback less formally.

Analysis. Next, the information obtained needs to be analyzed. What are the key ethics issues and concerns within the Organization? What are the gaps in the first draft that need to be addressed? What suggestions do the staff have for creating a more useful Code?

5. Keeping the leadership informed

The findings should be reported to leadership so that they understand how the staff members, and other key stakeholders, view the current environment. In reporting the findings, it is recommended to limit comments to items raised by multiple sources, while not indicating where or from whom specific comments or insights were obtained.

6. Second draft of the Code of Ethics

Ideally, the involvement of others should improve the breadth and depth of issues addressed in a Code and should also facilitate general support and buy-in. The Task Force – with input from key leadership – will need to decide on the specific Code values, provisions, structure and so forth. The second draft should be very closely tailored to the Organizational individualism and intended to serve its unique needs. It is essential that the information collected from the employees be utilized.

7. Submission of the revised Code to leadership for review

The continuous support of leadership needs to be ensured by presenting them with the final draft of the Ethics Code for review and comments. This step would allow OAS senior leaders to maintain a participative role in the Code development process, even if they have not been actively involved in the day-to-day drafting of the Code. Such participation tends to reinforce leadership commitment to the overall Code initiative.

8. Revision of the Code

Appropriate comments and suggestions should be included into the revised draft Code. The inclusion of these comments and suggestions should not only strengthen the Code, it can also build a sense of ownership of the Code among those who provide feedback.

9. “Field test” of the Code and making final revisions

This step includes taking the revised Code “out into the field” for any final suggestions and revisions. There are always details that will be missed in the early drafts. Once the Code is nearly final, it is often easier for individuals to bring these to the attention of its drafters and/or senior leadership. It is very important to implement any final revisions.

10. Revision of the Code by the Legal department

Once a document is developed, and all involved parties are comfortable with it, it needs to be reviewed by the Legal Department.

11. Obtaining approval of final draft

Before publishing and disseminating the final Code, it needs to be formally approved by the Secretary General.

12. Deciding on a Communications and Education Strategy

This step involves designing and development of a comprehensive communications and education plan to increase Code and program effectiveness. It needs to be carefully thought through as to who needs the information and how it can best get to them in a cost-effective manner. As noted previously, a Code of Ethics is, in many ways, a vehicle for ongoing communications about ethics. The Code will have a greater impact to the extent that future ethics communications tie into, build on, or emphasize key issues that are addressed in the Code. Communications can take many forms, including ethics training, newsletter articles, posters, e-mails, formal and informal discussions of ethics and the like.

Roll Out the Code with a Special Event. It is recommended that the Code be launched at an event involving the Organization's leadership and other important contributors to the Code, e.g. the awards ceremony. The event should convey the reasons for the development of the Code and its importance in the Organization's overall ethics initiative. Consistent with the message in the Code, the event should emphasize that the distribution of the Code is not an end in itself but rather one key step in an ongoing process.

13. Periodic revision of the Code

Codes of Ethics should not be viewed as static documents. While they seek to capture timeless ethical principles, the guidelines, examples and related information they contain should be revisited in light of changes that may occur in an organization's environment. New issues may arise that were overlooked in previous versions. In addition, periodic revision of the Code can send a symbolic message to the staff members that ethics is an area that requires ongoing attention. An Organization that does not revisit ethics issues in its Code may unintentionally send just the opposite message.