



# Code of Ethics

# Contents

<b>APPLICABILITY OF THE CODE .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>CODE OF ETHICS FOR INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION PERSONNEL.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>PREAMBLE.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>VALUES.....</b>	<b>3</b>
Independence .....	3
Loyalty.....	3
Impartiality .....	4
Integrity .....	4
Accountability.....	4
Respect for human rights .....	4
<b>PRINCIPLES .....</b>	<b>4</b>
Conflict of interest.....	4
Discrimination.....	5
Abuse of authority .....	5
Harassment.....	5
Gifts, honours, favours or other benefits .....	5
International Maritime Organization resources .....	6
Confidentiality of information .....	6
Post-employment .....	6

(Front cover photo credit: Mr. Kenzaburo Orui, The Photo Exhibit “Beyond the Horizon”)

## **APPLICABILITY OF THE CODE**

This Code of Ethics shall be applicable to, and mandatory for, all International Maritime Organization (IMO) personnel.

For the purposes of this Code, IMO personnel are:

- (a) Staff members appointed by the Secretary-General and subject to the IMO Staff Regulations and Staff Rules; and
- (b) Other personnel engaged by IMO to perform work or services for a limited period of time, or for defined activities or outputs for the IMO Secretariat, programmes and projects, and whose contractual relationship is not governed by a letter of appointment subject to the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules of IMO.

The present Code of Ethics shall enter into effect on 15 August 2025.

\*\*\*

# CODE OF ETHICS FOR INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION PERSONNEL

-----

## PREAMBLE

Reaffirming the purposes of the International Maritime Organization, as enshrined in the Convention on the International Maritime Organization, and the importance for the International Maritime Organization, as a specialized agency of the United Nations, to secure the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity.

Recognizing that it is imperative for the International Maritime Organization to cultivate and nurture a culture of ethics, integrity and accountability and thereby enhance the trust in, and the credibility of, the International Maritime Organization.

Reaffirming the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service<sup>1</sup> as well as standards of conduct provided for in the relevant Staff Regulations and Rules<sup>2</sup> and other relevant issuances of the International Maritime Organization.

The present Code of Ethics sets out the values and principles to guide the conduct and behaviour of International Maritime Organization (IMO) personnel.

## VALUES

### Independence

IMO personnel shall maintain their independence and shall not seek or receive instructions from any Government or from any other person or entity external to IMO and shall refrain from any action which might reflect negatively on their position as IMO personnel responsible only to IMO.<sup>3</sup>

### Loyalty

Loyalty to the purposes, values and principles of IMO is a fundamental obligation of all IMO personnel. They shall be loyal to IMO and shall, at all times, discharge their functions and regulate their conduct with the interests of the United Nations and of IMO only in view.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service (ICSC) are applicable to IMO staff members by virtue of IMO Staff Regulations and Staff Rules, Article 1, Staff Regulation 1.4.

<sup>2</sup> In particular, the regulations under Article 1 of the IMO Staff Regulations (Duties, Obligations and Privileges); and Staff Rule 101.2 (Staff member obligations and acts of misconduct).

<sup>3</sup> The duty to remain independent is set out in the ICSC Standards of Conduct at paras 8, 11, 12; and IMO Staff Regulation 1.3, 1.4, 1.6, and 1.7.

<sup>4</sup> Loyalty is defined in the ICSC Standards of Conduct at para.7. The duty of 'loyalty' is expressed in IMO Staff Regulation 1.1; and, in the oath, IMO Staff Regulation 1.9.

## **Impartiality**

IMO personnel, in the performance of their official duties, shall always act with impartiality, objectivity and professionalism. They shall ensure that expression of personal views and convictions does not compromise or appear to compromise the performance of their official duties or the interests of IMO. They shall not act in a way that unjustifiably could lead to actual or perceived preferential treatment for or against particular individuals, groups or interests.<sup>5</sup>

## **Integrity**

IMO personnel shall maintain the highest standards of integrity, including honesty, truthfulness, fairness and incorruptibility, in all matters affecting their official duties and the interests of IMO.<sup>6</sup>

## **Accountability**

IMO personnel shall be accountable for the proper discharge of their functions and for their decisions and actions. In fulfilling their official duties and responsibilities, IMO personnel shall make decisions in the interests of IMO. They shall submit themselves to scrutiny as required by their position.<sup>7</sup>

## **Respect for human rights**

IMO personnel shall fully respect the human rights, dignity and worth of all persons and shall act with understanding, tolerance, sensitivity, and respect for diversity and without discrimination of any kind.<sup>8</sup>

# **PRINCIPLES**

## **Conflict of interest**

IMO personnel shall arrange their private interests in a manner that will prevent actual, potential or apparent conflicts of interest from arising, but if such a conflict does arise between their private interests and their official duties and responsibilities, the conflict shall be disclosed and resolved in favour of the interests of IMO.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Reference to impartiality is made in the ICSC Standards of Conduct at paras 8, 9; and IMO Staff Regulation 1.4, 1.7.

<sup>6</sup> References to integrity are contained in the ICSC Standards of Conduct in paras.2, 4, 5, 23,24,31, and 34. Staff members' duty of integrity is set out in IMO Staff Regulation 1.4; and Staff Rule 101.7(a).

<sup>7</sup> The duty of accountability is set out in the ICSC Standards of Conduct at para.13.

<sup>8</sup> Explanation of respect for human rights is provided in the ICSC Standards of Conduct at paras 3, 6, 15; and IMO Staff Rule 101.2(e).

<sup>9</sup> Explanation of conflicts of interest is provided in the ICSC Standards of Conduct at paras 23–24; IMO Staff Regulation 1.4; Staff Rule 101.2 (n)–(s); and Appendix G (IMO Financial Disclosure Policy).

## **Discrimination**

IMO personnel shall not discriminate any individual or group based on their race, sex, gender, identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, disability, age, language, social origin or others. Discrimination is a prohibited conduct at IMO.<sup>10</sup>

## **Abuse of authority**

IMO personnel shall not use the position, power, and authority entrusted to them to influence or take advantage of colleagues, beneficiaries or other individuals or groups, for financial, political, sexual or other gain. Abuse of authority is a prohibited conduct at IMO.<sup>11</sup> Sexual exploitation and sexual abuse constitute prohibited conduct at IMO<sup>12</sup>.

## **Harassment**

IMO personnel shall not cause offence or humiliation to another person through words, gestures or actions to annoy, alarm, abuse, demean, intimidate, belittle, humiliate, or embarrass them. Harassment including sexual harassment, is prohibited conduct at IMO.<sup>13</sup>

## **Gifts, honours, favours or other benefits**

IMO personnel shall not solicit or accept gifts, honours, favours and/or other benefits from sources external to IMO that may bring into question their independence, impartiality and integrity, unless the acceptance of such gifts, honours, favours and/or other benefits is pursuant to applicable policies and regulations.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> The prohibition of discrimination is set out in IMO Staff Rule 101.2(e); and Appendix E to the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules

<sup>11</sup> The prohibition of abuse of authority is set out in the ICSC Standards of Conduct at paras 21–22; and Appendix E to the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules

<sup>12</sup> The prohibition of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse is set out in Appendix E to the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules

<sup>13</sup> The prohibition of harassment in any form is set out in the ICSC Standards of Conduct at paras 21–22; IMO Staff Rule 101.2(e); and Appendix E to the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules

<sup>14</sup> The duty to refrain from accepting honours, favours or other benefits is set out in the ICSC Standards of Conduct at paras 50–51; IMO Staff Regulation 1.6; and Staff Rule 101.2(k): IMO Policy on reporting, accepting and retaining honours, decorations, favours, gifts, or gifts from governmental or non-governmental resources is published in internal memorandum ADMIN/14/28. IMO's policy as an organization to accept the gifts from Member States, Associate Members and observer organizations is defined in IMO Gift Acceptance Policy.

## **International Maritime Organization resources**

IMO personnel shall only use or allow the use of the resources of IMO, directly or indirectly, including its property, for authorized purposes.<sup>15</sup> The resources of IMO must be safeguarded adequately and used economically.

## **Confidentiality of information**

IMO personnel shall not use information that is not generally available to the public for private gain, financial or otherwise, to benefit themselves or others with whom they have personal, family or other ties, nor shall they disclose such information to the public without authorization. IMO personnel shall not divulge to colleagues or other individuals or groups, information required to be kept confidential by applicable regulations, rules and policies.<sup>16</sup> This duty of confidentiality continues to apply after the expiration of their service with the Organization.<sup>17</sup>

## **Post-employment**

IMO personnel shall not act in such a manner as to take improper advantage of their official functions and positions, including privileged information obtained from such functions and positions.

---

<sup>15</sup> The duty to safeguard resources of the United Nations Organizations is set out in the ICSC Standards of Conduct at para.25. IMO policy and procedures on prevention and detection of fraud and serious misconduct is set out in Appendix F to the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules and staff rule 101.2 (g) and 101.2 (i).

<sup>16</sup> IMO Staff Regulation 1.5; Staff Rule 104.9(g); Staff Rule 111.1(j), (ee); Appendix E paras 5.2, 5.8; Appendix F paras 2.10, 3.11, 4.1 to 4.8, 5.14, 6.5, Annex para 2; and Appendix G para 7.1,

<sup>17</sup> The duty to protect the confidentiality of information is set out in the ICSC Standards of Conduct at para.39