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## Outside activities and occupations

### Introduction

1. This Guideline, presented in the form of frequently asked questions, aims to facilitate the implementation of the Directive, *Rules governing outside activities and occupations*, IGDS No. 71 (Version 1) of 17 June 2009, and Procedure, *Approval procedures for outside activities and occupations*, IGDS No. 70 (Version 1) of 17 June 2009.
2. This Guideline should be read in conjunction with the abovementioned Directive and Procedure.

### Frequently asked questions

#### ***May I participate in political or public activities?***

3. Officials must not take part in the political affairs of a country in which they find themselves as a result of their service with the Organization.
4. You may retain your right to vote in your home country, but you should avoid expressing your convictions publicly on controversial matters. Since it would be nearly impossible to stand for any political office at local, national, regional or international level without doing so, normally such activity will not be approved.
5. If the position envisaged will not involve you in any matters of national or international controversy, authorization may be granted for a public office which is not specifically political in nature. For example, participating in the administration of a small township or a school board could be considered compatible with the status of an international civil servant, but holding the position of mayor or deputy mayor would not be.

#### ***What about being a member of a political party?***

6. Membership of a political party in your home country is permissible provided that its policies and the obligations imposed on its members are consistent with the status of an international civil servant and that it does not entail active participation in political affairs (e.g. writing articles, participating in campaign activities, making public statements, holding an office). However, membership of a political party in the country of your duty station – other than when your duty station is your home country – is not permitted.

7. Membership of a political party that is illegal in the country of which the official is a national or in the country of the duty station is, in principle, not permitted.

***May I hold a post in government service?***

8. Officials may not hold any position in the service of a government, whether remunerated or not, nor may they perform any services, whether remunerated or not, on behalf of a government.
9. The Director-General may grant an exception to this rule when the interest of the Organization so requires. In such cases, the concerned official should make it clear when performing the activity that he or she is not acting in his or her capacity as an international civil servant.

***May I be a member of an association?***

10. In principle, you may belong to occupational, cultural, educational, academic, scientific or other associations without requiring authorization from the Office. You are in fact encouraged to belong to such associations if, by doing so, it can enhance the prestige of the Organization or the good reputation of the international civil service or can broaden your knowledge and improve your skills.
11. However, membership of an association must not impose any obligation that you act in a manner that is incompatible with your oath of office and your responsibility as an international civil servant and it should not otherwise be contrary to the interests of the Organization. In case of doubt, a request should be submitted for advice and approval.

***May I participate in commercial activities?***

12. Active participation in commercial, industrial or financial affairs is normally incompatible with the status of an international civil servant and is therefore not permissible.
13. You may not hold a financial interest in any business concern if it is possible for you or the business to benefit from such interest by reason of your official position with the ILO. The mere holding of shares in a company does not constitute a financial interest unless it constitutes a substantial or controlling interest, in which case it must be reported to the Office, where appropriate, as part of financial disclosure requirements.
14. If, in your official capacity, you deal with any matter involving a business concern in which you or a close relative holds a financial interest, you must immediately disclose the nature of that interest to your immediate supervisor.

***May I give lectures or participate in group discussions?***

15. Permission is not required to deliver, outside office hours, lectures on subjects unrelated with the ILO or its activities and policies to societies, clubs and other gatherings of a private nature or to participate in discussions at such gatherings, subject always to the obligations of dignity, tact and reserve and the avoidance of unauthorized disclosure of unpublished information. In case of doubt as to whether a subject relates to the ILO or not, you should seek the advice of your responsible chief.
16. However, any lecture or statement of a public nature or made in an official forum – even on questions unrelated to the ILO and its activities – does require prior approval by the responsible chief. The term “lecture or statement of a public nature” means any lecture or statement made public through the media or delivered to an audience, or liable to receive publicity.

17. Since officials are a valuable potential source of public information on the Organization, officials on leave or on mission in their home country are encouraged to give talks on the activities of the ILO especially those coming within their sphere of competence. Approval should be sought from the relevant ILO Office ahead of time. The Department of Communication and Public Information (DCOMM) has materials and tools that can be used for such purposes.

***What kind of academic activities may I undertake?***

18. Study at universities or other educational institutions outside office hours does not require prior approval. However, publication of theses and other papers may require prior approval as described below.
19. Teaching or research at universities or other academic institutions may be authorized within defined limits. It is essential to request authorization from the Director of HRD through your responsible chief prior to undertaking such activities. You may be authorized to give courses over short periods, participate in group research or discussion of an academic nature, or teach on a regular basis, only outside working hours and for a maximum of a few hours per week. Requests to give a special lecture or a short course during working hours, including while on mission, should be authorized by your responsible chief.
20. Once authorization has been granted, you shall enjoy normal academic freedom, subject always to the general obligations of dignity, tact and reserve. No separate authorization will be required for specific lectures or activities falling within the scope of the general authorization.
21. You should always request special authorization to disclose unpublished information known to you by reason of your official position. Specific rules concerning the publication of certain documents (for instance, paragraphs 5.5.3 and 5.5.4 of the Standing Orders of the Governing Body in connection with Governing Body minutes), and in particular ILO Circular No. 17, Series 12, dated 25 May 1973 on copyright, must be strictly adhered to at all times.

***What about publication of materials?***

22. First of all, "publication" means not only printed material offered for sale or distribution, but, more generally, any written communication of information to the public, including by electronic means.
23. The publication of any material relating to the Organization is not allowed except in the course of an official's duties or by authorization of the higher level chief. Any material relating to the activities or policies of the Organization is considered to be material relating to the Organization in this sense. In case of doubt as to whether the material relates to the Organization, the official should seek the advice of the responsible chief.
24. Officials may be authorized to publish material related to the Organization under their own name in outside publications. The publications should state that the views expressed are not necessarily those of the ILO. As stated in the circular, the following disclaimer should normally be included: "The views expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the International Labour Organization."
25. Officials may publish in outside publications without authorization, under their own name and in their personal capacity, material not relating to the Organization which they have prepared in their own free time, subject always to the need to avoid any pronouncement that might adversely reflect on the reputation of the Organization and the international civil service. In case of doubt as to whether the material relates

to the Organization, the official should seek the advice of the responsible chief. If the publication identifies the ILO affiliation of the author, it should state that the views expressed are not necessarily those of the ILO, normally using the above disclaimer.<sup>1</sup>

***Am I free to accept any remuneration, awards or decorations?***

26. You may not accept any honour, decoration, remuneration, favour, gift or fee from any government or from any source external to the Organization without prior approval of the Director-General. This is clearly stated in article 1.5 of the Staff Regulations. Therefore, any request for permission to engage in an outside activity should state whether or not such activity will give rise to any form of payment, financial reward or other favour, gift or award.
27. As regards remuneration or awards from governments, permission will be given only in very exceptional circumstances where this is not incompatible with the official's status as an international civil servant. The granting of permission does not remove the obligation to report the receipt of remuneration in the annual Register of Financial Interests for those officials required to do so.<sup>2</sup>
28. As regards remuneration and awards from sources other than governments, permission will normally be given to receive only moderate fees.
29. However, you are free to accept, without prior authorization:
  - (a) reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses incidental to activities which have been authorized or do not require authorization;
  - (b) souvenirs, without commercial value, of a commemoration or other ceremony such as diplomas, scrolls, commemorative medals, etc.
30. As a general rule, the acceptance of a decoration will be permitted only if it relates to services rendered during a period when you were not in the service of the ILO. If you cannot, without risk of embarrassment, refuse a decoration officially conferred upon you in respect of service as an ILO official, you should accept it in the name of the ILO and inform your higher level chief of the matter immediately.
31. You may not accept any remuneration for activities concerning the ILO or which are considered part of your official duties unless, in the opinion of the higher level chief, such acceptance is compatible with your status as an international civil servant. In that event, the remuneration should be accepted on behalf of the Organization and turned over to the Director-General for payment at his or her discretion into an appropriate fund.<sup>3</sup>

***Where can I go to obtain further advice or information?***

32. For further guidance on potential conflicts of interest, you may consult the Ethics Officer ([ethics@ilo.org](mailto:ethics@ilo.org)) on a confidential basis.

<sup>1</sup> See Circular No. 612, Series 1, dated 7 October 2005, on the role of the Research and Publications Committee.

<sup>2</sup> See Circular No. 667, Series 6, dated 26 April 2007, on Register of Financial Interests.

<sup>3</sup> See Circular No. 24, Series 5, dated 29 August 1988, on Payments by outside bodies to staff members for services rendered in the course of their official duties.

33. To obtain further information and general guidance on the application of these rules and approval procedures, you may contact HRD ([hrd@ilo.org](mailto:hrd@ilo.org)).

Guido Raimondi  
Ethics Officer

***Additional references***

*Office Guideline, Conflicts of interest, IGDS No. 68 (Version 1) of 17 June 2009.*<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.ilo.org/intranet/edmsp1/igds/groups/dirdocs/documents/igds/igds\\_002278.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/intranet/edmsp1/igds/groups/dirdocs/documents/igds/igds_002278.pdf)