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## Rules governing outside activities and occupations

### Introduction

1. This Directive converts ILO Circular No. 668, Series 6, dated 17 August 2007 and entitled *Rules and approval procedures governing outside activities* into an IGDS document which supersedes that circular.
2. This Directive is issued pursuant to article 8 of the Constitution of the ILO and Chapter 1 of the ILO Staff Regulations.
3. This Directive clarifies the obligations of officials set out under articles 1.2, 1.3, 1.5 and 1.6 of the Staff Regulations:
  - Under article 1.2, officials are obliged to refrain from engaging in any political or other activity or occupation or holding any office which is incompatible with the proper discharge of their duties and to obtain the prior approval of the Director-General before they engage in outside occupations.
  - Under article 1.3(a), officials are obliged to refrain from communicating unpublished information known to them by virtue of their official position except in the performance of their duties or by authorization of the Director-General. These obligations continue to bind officials after they leave the service.
  - Under article 1.3(b), officials are obliged to refrain from publishing, causing to be published or assisting in the publication of material relating to the International Labour Organization or delivering public lectures relating to the Organization, except in the course of their duties or by authorization of the Director-General.
  - Under article 1.5, an official is not allowed to accept any honour, decoration, favour, gift or fee from any government or from any other source external to the Organization, unless in the opinion of the Director-General, such acceptance is compatible with the official's status as an international civil servant.
  - Article 1.6 requires any official who becomes a candidate for a public office of a political character to resign from the Office.

4. This Directive sets down the conditions under which an official will normally be authorized to engage in outside activities and/or to accept remuneration from an outside source. It delegates approval authority under the abovementioned articles from the Director-General to the Director of the Human Resources Development Department (HRD), the higher level chief or responsible chief as set out below.<sup>1</sup>
5. This Directive is effective as of the date of issue.

## Scope

6. This Directive applies to all ILO officials, including those in technical cooperation projects, whether they are in headquarters or in external offices, are on paid or unpaid leave, and whose conditions of service are governed by the Staff Regulations or Rules Governing Conditions of Service of Short-Term Officials.

## General principles

7. Engagement in outside activities may be beneficial both to officials and to the Organization. The ILO encourages the participation of its officials in professional activities that widen knowledge and understanding of the Organization. Officials are encouraged to maintain and enhance their professional and technical competencies through contacts with appropriate professional bodies.
8. According to the applicable rules, the primary consideration that officials must bear in mind is that, with respect to outside activities and remuneration, the interests of the ILO take precedence. The interests of the ILO must not be, or appear to be, prejudiced by an official's participation in any outside activity. Participation in outside activities or acceptance of outside remuneration must not involve any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest with the work of the ILO nor call into question the integrity, impartiality or independence of the official in the performance of his or her duties.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the performance of outside activities must not impair the capacity of the official to perform his or her duties to the best of his or her ability.

## Outside activities and occupations

9. An outside activity is any activity that is not included within the scope of the official's job description or any duties otherwise assigned to the official by the Director-General, his or her responsible chief or higher level chief. For the purposes of this Office directive, the expression "occupation" shall be defined as the exercise of a profession, whether or not any emoluments (salary, fee or any other form of payment) are received, as an employer, employee or as an independent contractor.
10. Based on the above principles and rules, officials must obtain written approval before engaging in any activity or occupation outside the normal course of their duties that may be related to the work of the Organization takes place during working hours or is remunerated. Such an activity may be authorized only if:
  - the activity or occupation is compatible with the status of an international civil servant; and

<sup>1</sup> Article 2.3 of the Staff Regulations defines responsible chief. The higher level chief is the official to whom the responsible chief reports.

<sup>2</sup> See Office Guideline, *Conflicts of interest*, IGDS No. 68 (Version 1) of 17 June 2009.

- the activity or occupation does not interfere with the work of the official, nor with his or her availability to accept any new assignment that the Director-General may require the official to undertake in accordance with the Staff Regulations.
11. Continuing or recurring activities or occupations will be authorized for a maximum of 12 months at a time. Such authorization may be reviewed in the light of a new assignment or any other relevant fact.
  12. In general, officials may be members of a political party in their home country, including when the duty station is their home country, provided the obligations imposed on its members are compatible with the proper discharge of their duties. Officials, while retaining the right to vote, should not participate in political activities either in their home country or host country, such as standing for or holding political office, actively participating in campaigns, making public statements or writing articles. In their support for a political party, officials should always exercise tact and discretion. In particular, they should not accept or solicit funds, write news articles, make speeches or make statements to the press.
  13. Officials are expected to observe local laws and should not engage in any outside activity that is prohibited by law.
  14. Subject to the general principles set out in paragraphs 7 and 8 above, approval would not normally be required to participate in any activity:
    - that takes place outside working hours;
    - that is not related to the work of the ILO; and
    - that is not remunerated or gives rise to any other form of financial gain.
  15. Officials are responsible for determining whether participation in an outside activity requires prior approval in light of the considerations set out above. In case of doubt, the official may seek guidance, on a confidential basis, from the Ethics Officer.<sup>3</sup>

## Final provisions

16. The enforcement of the provisions of this Directive shall be the responsibility, as appropriate, of the Director of HRD, the responsible chief and/or higher level chief of the official concerned.
17. Non-compliance by any official with the principles and provisions of this Directive may lead to disciplinary action.
18. Each official is invited to consider these principles and rules before engaging in an outside occupation or activity. She or he may wish to consult the Ethics Officer, on a confidential basis, to seek advice on any potential conflict of interest that may arise before initiating the formal approval procedure ([ethics@ilo.org](mailto:ethics@ilo.org)).

Juan Somavia  
Director-General

## **Additional references**

*Further information and guidance are contained in Office procedure, Approval procedures for outside activities and occupations, [IGDS No. 70 \(Version 1\) of 17 June 2009](#).*

<sup>3</sup> See Office directive, *Ethics in the Office*, IGDS No. 76 (Version 1) of 17 June 2009.