



United Nations Financial Disclosure Programme

Policy on Voluntary Public Disclosure by UN staff members of Financial Disclosure and Declaration of Interest Statements

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to inform those staff members who are obliged to comply with the UN Financial Disclosure Programme, of the principles which will be applied when voluntarily making public certain information contained in their confidential financial disclosure or declaration of interest statement. Public disclosure is not a requirement of the UN Financial Disclosure Programme and is done so on a voluntary basis.

Background

The UN Ethics Office is mandated to administer the financial disclosure programme in accordance with the Secretary-General's bulletin on financial disclosure and declaration of interest statements (ST/SGB/2006/6), which came into force on 01 May 2006.

The primary purpose of the UN financial disclosure programme is to ensure that potential conflicts of interest arising from staff members' financial holdings, private affiliations or outside activities can be identified, and advice provided as to how best to manage any potential conflicts of interests in the best interests of the UN. This may result in staff members being advised of an appropriate course of action, such as divesting themselves of holdings, or recusing themselves from a particular activity or aspect of their official functions.

Staff members are required to complete and submit their confidential financial disclosure or declaration of interest statement by using the secure electronic filing system available at www.unfdp.org.

The General Assembly mandated that the statements submitted each year should be confidentially reviewed by an external financial firm. PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC) was awarded this contract following an international public tender and evaluation procedure held in 2006. The financial statements received by PwC are handled in a strictly confidential manner and are not seen by any other United Nations Staff member, including the staff of the Ethics Office. It is a specific term of the contract with PwC that the information PwC receives is protected by UN Diplomatic Privileges and Immunities.

Public Disclosure

Those staff members wishing to make their statements public should only do so once the confidential review carried out by PwC has been completed and the individual staff member has been notified accordingly in writing by the PwC Review Team.

Public disclosure is considered to be an important voluntary initiative, as it demonstrates that United Nations staff members understand the importance of the public and Member States being assured that in the discharge of their official duties and responsibilities, they will not be influenced by any consideration associated with his/her private interests.

If a staff member wishes to make his/her statement available to the public, such a disclosure will be made on a completely voluntary basis. All statements released for public disclosure will be posted on the Secretary-General's homepage on www.un.org/sg/ within the section "Ethical Standards".

Given the multi-cultural environment of the UN and the often security sensitive locations where UN staff are either working or come from, full public disclosure may not always be a viable or sensible option for certain staff members.

However, in order to ensure there is uniformity in the public disclosure of information, following a staff member providing his or her consent for a copy of their confidential financial disclosure document to be provided to the Ethics Office, a summary document will be prepared by the Ethics Office and approved for public disclosure by the staff member, based upon the following principles:

- (i) the personal assets, liabilities and outside activities of a staff member's spouse and dependent children will not be publicly disclosed, as their confidential disclosures are made in order to better advise the staff member what, if any, additional compliance arrangements may be necessary in relation to the discharge of the staff members official duties and responsibilities;
- (ii) subject to (iii) & (iv), the source and nature, but not the value, of a staff member's personal assets, stock options, income from non-United Nations sources or profits from the sale of personal property, and liabilities greater than or equal to \$10,000 USD, or the equivalent in local currency at the operational rate of exchange, will be disclosed;
- (iii) a staff member may request in writing the approval of the Director of the Ethics Office that a particular asset, stock option, source of income, profit from the sale of personal property, or a liability be exempted from public disclosure, on an exceptional case basis, where:

- a. it can be reasonably expected that, based upon the recognized cultural traditions of the staff member's country of citizenship and/or the religious teachings or belief of the staff member's affiliated religion, public disclosure of the interest may result in religious or social exclusion or disadvantage in relation to the staff member or a relative (i.e., spouse, father, mother, son, daughter, brother, or sister) of the staff member; and
 - b. it can be reasonably expected, given the nature of the duties and responsibilities of the staff member and location of the staff member or a relative of the staff member (i.e., spouse, father, mother, son, daughter, brother, or sister), that such public disclosure would threaten the safety or security of the staff member, or the relative(s) of the staff member;
- (iv) the following assets or interests need not be disclosed publicly:
- a. cash or deposits with a financial institution
 - b. pension rights
 - c. life insurance policies; and
- (v) directorships or positions of office in non-United Nations entities, held within the reporting period, will be publicly disclosed.