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in the International Civil Service



UNITED NATIONS

INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE ADVISORY BOARD

**REPORT ON
STANDARDS OF CONDUCT
IN THE
INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE**

1954

Note by the Secretary-General

The report which follows, entitled "Report on Standards of Conduct in the International Civil Service", was prepared by the International Civil Service Advisory Board in response to a request made by the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination at its twelfth session, in October 1951. At its eighteenth session in May 1954 the Committee received the report with appreciation, expressing the hope that it would receive wide circulation among international civil servants.

The Board is composed of the following members: Mr. Thanassis Aghnides, Chairman; Dame Mary G. Smieton, Vice-Chairman; Mr. Leon Baranski; Mr. Charles Bland; Mr. Arthur S. Flemming; Mr. Roger Gregoire; Mr. Ebbe Groes; Mr. Luiz Simoes Lopes and Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar. Mr. John McDiarmid serves as Secretary of the Board.

The origin of the Board is to be found in General Assembly resolution 13 (I), adopted by the Assembly at its first session, on 13 February 1946, which laid down in paragraph 6 that:

"An International Civil Service Commission shall be established by the Secretary-General, after consultation with the heads of the specialized agencies brought into relationship with the United Nations, to advise on the methods of recruitment for the Secretariat and on the means by which common standards of recruitment in the Secretariat and the specialized agencies may be ensured."

Under its present terms of reference, elaborated by the Secretary-General and the heads of the specialized agencies in the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, the purpose of the Board is "to contribute to the improvement of recruitment and related phases of personnel administration in all of the international organizations through:

- (a) Advice and interchange of information on methods of recruitment and on the means by which appropriate standards of recruitment in the Secretariat and the specialized agencies may be ensured;
- (b) Consideration, after consultation with the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, of related phases of personnel administration and advice on methods of further assimilating and improving major personnel policies in the United Nations and the specialized agencies;
- (c) At the request of an individual agency, provision of advice or assistance on a personnel problem of the agency."

In addition to the United Nations, the Board advises the following specialized agencies in connexion with the above questions: International Labour Organisation, Food and Agriculture Organization, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, International Civil Aviation Organization, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, International Monetary Fund and World Health Organization.

The two earlier reports submitted by the International Civil Service Advisory Board are: "Report on Recruitment Methods and Standards for the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies", issued in 1950 as document COORD/CIVIL SERVICE/2/Rev.1, and "Report on In-Service Training in the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies", issued in 1952 as document COORD/CIVIL SERVICE/4.

FOREWORD

1. At the request of the Executive Heads of the United Nations and the specialized agencies the question of standards of conduct in the international civil service has been considered by the International Civil Service Advisory Board. A preliminary review was made during the Board's fourth session, held in Geneva from 12 to 16 May 1952. At that time the Board was convinced of the lasting importance of the subject, and of the direct relation between high standards of conduct within the international secretariats and the success of the international organizations in achieving their aims. After reviewing the subject again during its fifth session, held in New York from 22 to 30 March 1954, and taking into account the additional two years of experience in the relatively young international organizations, the Board has prepared the present report in the hope that it will contribute to improved understanding of the status and obligations of international civil servants.

2. The Board considers that high standards of conduct are best attained by a universal understanding among staff members of the relation between their conduct and the success of the international organizations, and by the development of a strong tradition among men and women who are jealous of the reputation of the organizations they serve and are anxious to safeguard it. The Board's chief hope is that it can offer a formulation of standards which will facilitate the development of such a tradition in organizations which have grown rapidly and which encompass a wide diversity of national and cultural backgrounds.

3. In examining what is clearly a delicate and complex subject, the Board has endeavoured to avoid the pitfalls, on the one hand, of a purely theoretical approach, and, on the other, of attempting to write detailed guides to behaviour covering all possible circumstances. The general duties and obligations of international civil servants are already set forth in the United Nations Charter and in the comparable basic instruments (variously called Constitutions, Conventions etc.) of the specialized agencies. They are further elaborated in the staff regulations and rules. By underlining certain basic principles, and by suggesting practical applications of these principles to concrete situations, the Board has aimed at promoting increased understanding and improved practices. It is not attempting in any way to "legislate" on the subject of standards of conduct, but rather to aid in establishing a general doctrine or code of behaviour. The staff regulations and rules of the international organizations will continue to form the "law" relating to the conduct of the international civil servant, but it is hoped that the present report may both serve as a complementary guide for the staff members and assist the Executive Heads of the organizations in the application and development of the staff regulations and rules.

I. Basic considerations

4. One of the fundamental, if not paramount, standards of conduct derives from the requirement of integrity, underlined in Article 101 of

the United Nations Charter and explicit or implicit in corresponding articles of the basic instruments of the specialized agencies. Integrity, while perhaps not subject to exhaustive and precise definition, must be judged on the basis of the total behaviour of the person concerned. Such elementary personal or private qualities as honesty, truthfulness, fidelity, probity and freedom from corrupting influences, are clearly included. For the international official, however, the Charter also requires integrity as a public official, and especially as an international public official. Perhaps the clearest expression of this is the fact that he has dedicated himself to regulate his conduct with the interests of the international organization only in view. It follows that he must subordinate his private interests and avoid placing himself in a position where those interests would conflict with the interests of the organization he serves.

5. A second basic requirement is the necessity of developing and maintaining what the Board has previously referred to as an international outlook, based on loyalty to the international organization:

"This outlook flows from an understanding of and loyalty to the objectives and purposes of the international organization itself as set forth in its Charter or Constitution. The acceptance of the oath of office and of the basic obligation to serve wholeheartedly and completely the organization's interests needs to be worked out in many directions. It involves willingness to try to understand and be tolerant of different points of view, different cultural patterns, and different work habits. It also entails willingness to work without prejudice or bias with persons of all nationalities, religions and cultures. It means a readiness to be continually conscious of how proposals, events and statements of opinion may appear to a very wide range of nationalities. It involves conduct of the highest type and exercise of judgment and restraint in all expressions of view whether public or private; any expressions which could be construed as biased or intolerant, particularly in respect of national interests or political issues with which the organization is confronted, must be scrupulously avoided. At the same time it should be quite clear that the staff member is in no way required or expected to give up his personal or political views or his national characteristics. In fact, the highest type of loyal international civil servant is one who finds that whatever his personal views he can willingly conform to the observance of his international obligations and support the decisions of the international organization he serves What is essential is not the absence of personal, political, or national views, but rather restraint at all times, not merely during working hours, in the expression of such views."¹

6. It is important to remember that the United Nations and the specialized agencies have a common purpose - to serve the broad ideals of peace, economic and social progress, and the promotion of co-operative and friendly relations among the nations of the world. The Board would emphasize, therefore, that international loyalty means loyalty on the part

1 International Civil Service Advisory Board, Report on In-Service Training in the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies (Coord/Civil Service/4), page 4, paragraph 7.

of the staff member to the whole United Nations family of organizations, and not merely to one particular organization. The staff members of the various organizations will have repeated opportunities, and indeed have the obligation, to understand and exemplify this wider loyalty. Not least will be the opportunity presented when representatives of the various secretariats are serving together in the field and on advisory assignments in the same country or region.

7. A third requirement closely related to international loyalty is that the international civil servant must, in the exercise of his functions, remain independent of any authority outside the organization he serves, and that his conduct should at all times reflect such independence. In taking his oath of office he has undertaken an obligation not to seek or accept instructions in regard to the performance of his duties from any government or other authority external to his organization. It is not only the strict letter of this oath but the spirit which must be understood and adhered to.

8. To integrity, international outlook and independence, must be added impartiality. Impartiality implies objectivity, lack of bias, tolerance, restraint - particularly when political or religious disputes or differences arise. The staff member's personal views and convictions remain inviolate, but he has not the freedom of a private person to "take sides", to enter a dispute as a partisan, or publicly to express his convictions on matters of a controversial nature, either singly or as a member of a group. Just as the practice of impartiality will strengthen the secretariat, repeated instances of partiality, or bias, will do serious harm to the organization.

9. The Board would emphasize that the international civil servant's duty to maintain high standards of conduct and attitude is a positive and active obligation, and not merely a negative or passive one. He must, therefore, feel personally responsible for contributing to the broad ideals to which he dedicated himself in joining his organization.

II. Conduct within a Secretariat

10. For the international civil servant, particularly if newly appointed, the Board considers the following statement to be an excellent guide for official relationships with other staff members:

"It is clear that in his day-to-day work and dealings with other officials of the organization the international civil servant has his most immediate opportunity and obligation to demonstrate his 'international-mindedness'. The international secretariat is in itself a great school, where intercourse with those of so many diverse nationalities will rub off one's rough spots and sharp edges. No one who believes that the attitudes, or the working methods and work habits, of his own nationality or of his own region are the only ones worthy of acceptance and utilization can long be successful in international work. In fact, I have always found that within an international secretariat, and, indeed, within each section or office of such a secretariat, one of the most concrete opportunities exists for demonstrating in a small way that the underlying premises of the Charter are sound and workable. It is perhaps a temptation particularly in the first stages of one's career to be impatient with or intolerant of the methods adopted and

contribution made by persons of a different background and habits of work than your own."²

11. The true international civil servant, however, must pass this test. The Board would go even further and state that in the field of social relations the staff member also has an opportunity if not an obligation to demonstrate his "international-mindedness". The cultivation of social relations with colleagues of different races, religions, and cultural backgrounds is desirable, in that it is likely to further the development of the intellectual outlook and increase the effectiveness of international officials.

12. Within the secretariats the obligations of supervisors to staff under their direction and of such staff to their superior officers are of particular importance. Clearly those in the highest offices, followed by those at lower supervisory levels, must set the tone by personal example, and accept their responsibility for the guidance and training of their staff. It is important not only that supervisors be motivated by an attitude of impartiality, tolerance and understanding but that they act in such a way that this attitude is widely recognized as being their underlying motivation throughout.

13. It is essential for the development of a spirit of mutual understanding that supervisors strike a proper balance between the need for maintaining discipline and the need for understanding and fair treatment of their staff. An important element in this balance is the exercise of scrupulous care by supervisors in allowing the views of their junior officers to be heard, particularly when those views are opposed to their own, and in seeing that due recognition is given to the merits of an individual. This is especially important in international organizations, where there is need for persons of all nationalities to make their contributions and where there are inevitable differences in cultural backgrounds, in approach to work, and in methods of expressing opinions.

14. It is axiomatic that the conduct of supervisors must be free of intimidation or personal favouritism and that solicitation or acceptance by them of favours, gifts, or loans from their staff must not be practised or even suspected.

15. For his part, the subordinate official must recognize the importance of intellectual discipline and regulate his conduct accordingly. He must accept the obligation to put before his superiors all the relevant facts and considerations relating to a current question, without concealment. While he has the right, which should be safeguarded, to record his views in the official files, it is his duty to accept, carry out, and even defend decisions of his superiors once they are taken, whether or not they accord with his own opinions. Any public or repeated expressions of disagreement with such decisions can only weaken the organization.

16. While this general rule of disciplined conduct is an important one, where the staff member has serious doubt as to the compatibility of an instruction he has received with administrative regulations and rules, it is his duty to place his point of view clearly before his supervisor and,

2 Aghnides, Th., "Standards of Conduct of the International Civil Servant", Revue internationale des sciences administratives, 1953, No. 1, Brussels: Les Editions de la Librairie encyclopédique, S. P. R. L., pages 182-183.

if it is not accepted, he should ask for written instructions. Once such instructions have been received, they must be carried out.³

17. Proper standards of conduct preclude the use by an international civil servant of his official position to influence or attempt to influence a colleague - for personal reasons - in his decision regarding the appointment of a person to an international secretariat. This in no way would prevent the giving of information or views, perhaps at the request of the responsible official, which would enable the latter to make an impartial decision of the case on its merits. Clearly, no unauthorized staff member should intervene in any way in the awarding of contracts to commercial firms.

III. Relations with governments and with representative bodies of the organization.

18. The independence of an international secretariat - essential for the fulfilment of its mission - is put to the most crucial test in the day-to-day relations of staff members with governments and their representatives and with representative bodies of the organization. For the staff member the basic guide is his oath of office, which pledges him not to seek or accept

³ United Kingdom: Royal Commission on the Civil Service, 1929-1931, Minutes of Evidence, London: H. M. S. O., 1931, page 1268.

On the question of relations between subordinates and supervisors, the Board considers it relevant to quote here a statement by a United Kingdom Royal Commission regarding the relationship between the national civil servant and his political chief or minister:

"Determination of policy is the function of Ministers and once a policy is determined it is the unquestioned and unquestionable business of the Civil Servant to strive to carry out that policy with precisely the same energy and precisely the same good will whether he agrees with it or not. That is axiomatic and will never be in dispute. At the same time it is the traditional duty of Civil Servants, while decisions are being formulated, to make available to their political chiefs all the information and experience at their disposal, and to do this without fear or favour, irrespective of whether the advice thus tendered may accord or not with the Minister's initial view. The presentation to the Minister of relevant facts, the ascertainment and marshalling of which may often call into play the whole organization of a Department, demands of the Civil Servant the greatest care. The presentation of inferences from the facts equally demands from him all the wisdom and all the detachment he can command.

The preservation of integrity, fearlessness, and independence of thought and utterance in their private communion with Ministers of the experienced officials selected to fill the top posts in the Service is an essential principle in enlightened government; as - whether or not Ministers accept the advice thus frankly placed at their disposal, and acceptance or rejection of such advice is exclusively a matter for their judgment - it enables them to be assured that their decisions are reached only after the relevant facts and the various considerations have, so far as the machinery of government can secure, been definitely brought before their minds."

instructions in regard to the performance of his duties from any government or other authority external to his organization. All staff members, on permanent or temporary appointment, or whether seconded from a national government are, during their period of service, international officials. They must clearly understand that they are not, in any sense, representatives of a national government or of a national policy. It is worth recalling that Member States and their representatives, for their part, through adherence to the United Nations Charter and the basic instruments of the specialized agencies, have committed themselves to understand and respect this independent status.

19. The principle of independence in no way conflicts with, or should obscure, the fact that it is the Member States, represented by governments, that together make up the international organization the staff member serves. Conduct which facilitates good relations with individual Member States, and which contributes to trust and confidence in the secretariat, strengthens the organization and promotes its interests. Courtesy and tact are obviously required.

20. It is also the duty of the staff member to avoid any action which would impair good relations with governments, or destroy confidence in the secretariat - such as public criticism of, or any kind of interference with, the policies or affairs of governments. For international civil servants, either individually or collectively, to engage in any active criticism of a government or in any activity which undermines or discredits its authority, is incompatible with their status. A fortiori, any direct or indirect activity with a view to the overthrow of a government by force, including incitement or advocacy of such overthrow, is one of the gravest forms of misconduct.

21. Reference is sometimes made to possible conflict between national and international loyalties. If such circumstances should arise the conduct of the international civil servant must clearly reflect his obligation to the international organization, and any appearance of disloyalty to that organization must be considered incompatible with his status.

22. Acceptance of this principle may be made easier by the understanding that, from the long-range point of view, legitimate national interests can only be served by the promotion of world peace and prosperity and the successful progress of the international organizations toward these objectives. The staff member who cannot accept this view has no alternative but to resign from the international service.

23. Just as international civil servants are not representatives of their countries, it should be understood that they have no general authority or justification for considering themselves as liaison agents between their governments and the international organization. The Executive Head may, however, request a staff member to serve in a liaison capacity, and when this is the case, the proper attitude and conduct is well expressed in the following quotation:

"A liaison agent must be in a position to report accurately on currents of opinion in his country, and to describe the attitude of his Government. Secondly, it is his duty to discuss concrete questions with the appropriate authorities of his Government at the request and on behalf of the head of the service, but not to discuss concrete questions with the latter at the request and on behalf of his Government. He should, of course, explain his Government's policies, but he should do so without attempting to further them. To make this distinction is not always

easy. It is a test both of international loyalty and of objectivity towards national interests and viewpoints, the more so since Governments may not always refrain, as they ought to do, from taking advantage of the presence of one of their nationals in the service by pressing him to assist in the work of national delegations. Another duty of a liaison agent is to give to his compatriots the fullest explanation possible of the work of the international body, especially in connexion with decisions which may be unpopular in the country in question."⁴

24. In considering the proper relations of staff members to representative organs and committees of the organization, two fundamental principles should be kept in mind. First, members of the secretariat should remember that the international organization is made up of Member States and that the secretariat is a service organization and not a controlling or policy-making body. The function of the secretariat lies mainly in facilitating and assisting in the work of the representative organs and in carrying out their decisions. Secondly, the essential unity of an international secretariat, and the primary responsibility of the Executive Head for directing and controlling its work, must be thoroughly understood and accepted.

25. When staff members are submitting proposals on substantive matters, rather than technical matters, to legislative bodies, they are presenting the position of the Executive Head and not that of a department, a section, or an individual concerned. Such statements should be made in the name of the Executive Head and in conformity with his policies and recommendations. Acceptance of this view will serve to restrain the staff member from an over-zealous presentation which may lead to his identification personally with a particular policy. Equally, it will serve to ensure a fair and proper presentation of a position with which the staff member may happen personally to disagree. An official whose opinion is requested on an important subject on which the position of the Executive Head is not yet known has the clear responsibility of ascertaining that position before expressing a view. Should he be unable to do so, and if the situation in the legislative body is such that some expression of opinion by him is necessary, the official should make it clear that he is expressing a tentative view, and that he must refer the question to the Executive Head to secure the definitive position. It is to be hoped that governmental representatives and other members of legislative bodies and committees, for their part, will refrain from requesting the personal views of subordinate officials, particularly after the position of the Executive Head has been made known.

26. It is obviously an intolerable practice for a staff member to prepare for the use of a governmental or other official representative - whether upon request or not - speeches, arguments or proposals on political or other controversial questions which are under discussion in a representative organ. It is equally improper for an official to plead before a representative committee, or an advisory expert group, for appropriations beyond those requested by the Executive Head, for expansion of the activities of his particular department or service, or for any point of view at variance with that of the Executive Head.

⁴ The Royal Institute of International Affairs, The International Secretariat of the Future, London: Oxford University Press, 1944, pages 34-35.

27. There are many ways in which the staff member can render proper services to representative bodies or their members, and in so doing, serve the interests of his organization. Providing factual information, assisting with technical matters such as the preparation of draft resolutions in formal style, or giving technical advice - all these are useful and proper ways of furthering the effective functioning of the organization. It should be a universal practice, however, for the staff member who is requested to give such information or render such assistance to inform his superior officer and thus remove or minimize the personal factor.

28. Adequate arrangements should and do exist within the international organizations for a staff member to secure fair treatment in respect of his personal administrative status. It is thus inexcusable for an official to lobby with governmental representatives or members of legislative bodies in order to secure support for improvements in his personal situation or that of another staff member, or for blocking or reversing unfavourable decisions regarding his status. The proper method for raising staff problems is through the normal channels provided in each organization. The Board trusts that governmental representatives or members of legislative bodies, in turn, will neither accede to any such requests, nor on their own initiative intervene in such administrative matters.

29. Of special importance is the conduct and role of elected staff representatives in connexion with the decisions of an international organization regarding conditions of service and general staff questions. The Board notes that arrangements are made in most of the participating organizations for full consultation by the Executive Head with representatives of the staff before he decides on the proposals he will make to the legislative bodies regarding such matters. These arrangements, if they are to work successfully, will depend in large measure upon the cultivation by the staff associations of a responsible understanding amongst their members of the obligations which the right of consultation carries with it, particularly in respect of the upholding of any agreements which may have been reached.

30. Where, as may happen despite such consultations, the staff representatives maintain a point of view which is not accepted by the Executive Head, the Board would regard it as desirable that there should be a recognized procedure by which the views of such representatives on staff matters can be made available to the appropriate organ of the international organization concerned. The precise arrangements would depend upon the internal structure of the organization and might develop in varying ways, of which the practice whereby the Executive Head annexes to his reports written statements by the staff representatives would be the most usual. Participation by staff representatives in the actual debates of legislative bodies, for the purpose of upholding their views in opposition to those of the Executive Head, is clearly inadmissible. Similarly, private efforts of staff representatives to influence delegations to support the views of the staff representatives cannot be tolerated.

31. A special problem in relations with governments undoubtedly arises from the secondment of national officials to the international service. The Board has already pointed out that while in such service they must understand that they are international officials and must govern their conduct accordingly. In practice this will not be easy of attainment unless their national service has assured them that they are expected to act as international officials, and has taken appropriate steps - for example, protection

of promotion, pension, or seniority rights - to make such assurance effective.

32. Finally, as regards relations with governments, it should be understood that appointment to the international civil service in no way relieves the individual concerned of the obligations of his own citizenship in matters unrelated to the work or interests of the international organization he serves. His legal and civil obligations - in such matters as assisting in the due processes of law, respecting court judgments, and honouring a legal summons to appear - do not cease merely by virtue of his international status. A decision of the Executive Head that compliance with a particular governmental request or order is not compatible with the organization's interest will, of course, be determining for the staff member, but a proper standard of conduct must, in the absence of such decision, include the respecting of private civic obligations. When in doubt regarding the compatibility of any particular legal or civic obligation with his international status, the staff member concerned should seek prior guidance from the Executive Head.

IV. Political activities

33. In view of the independence and impartiality required by their status, it is an essential principle that international civil servants, while retaining their right to vote, should refrain from political activities. It is participation in political partisanship, or the public manifestation of views on questions of public controversy, and not the holding of beliefs and opinions, that will destroy or diminish the contribution of international officials to the work of the international organizations; in fact, it is not only permissible but desirable that staff members should take a lively interest in the important public questions of the day.

34. Without attempting an exhaustive list of activities which the international civil servant must forego in order to comply with the above general principle, the Board believes some illustrative examples may be usefully given. Since public manifestation of support for a political party cannot be permitted, this would rule out candidature for public office of a political character and a fortiori the holding of such office; this applies to elective offices where party affiliations or political issues are involved, whether on a national or a local scale. Similarly, public support of a political party by speeches, statements to the Press, or written articles, is inadmissible. Further, the holding of political party office, membership on any political campaign committee, acceptance or solicitation of any financial contributions for political purposes, initiation or signature of petitions involving political candidates or political issues - all these are examples of what must be regarded as improper conduct for an international official.

35. Membership of a political party has a different significance in different countries and it is not possible to lay down a rule which will give complete guidance on the subject. What can be said is that for a staff member to belong to a political party which is illegal in the country of which he is a citizen is inadmissible. Similarly, membership in any group, whether political or not, which imposes on the staff member an obligation to action incompatible with his oath of office and responsibilities as an international civil servant must be ruled out.

36. Within the broad field of political and public affairs, it is not sufficient to abstain from activities in the cause of a particular party. Public participation in any matters of national or international controversy must be ruled out by the staff member's code of conduct. Even membership in groups supporting resolutions or particular decisions of the international organization, when that support involves pressure on particular governments for action, may be inadvisable, since it may involve identification of the staff member with such pressure.

37. Having stated its views as to the broad principle governing political activities of staff members and having presented a number of concrete instances which illustrate this principle, the Board nevertheless recognizes that the detailed application to particular circumstances must rest within the discretion of the Executive Head. A staff member who has any doubt as to the propriety of an outside activity which might be considered political in nature should seek a decision in advance from his Executive Head.

V. Relations with the public

38. The success of international organizations will depend in large measure on the steady increase of public understanding and support of their objectives and of their activities in pursuit of those objectives. This places on the secretariat official an important and continuing responsibility. He represents to public gathering and to private individuals with whom he comes in contact a symbol of the organization he serves. He must endeavour in a positive and constructive way to contribute to increased public understanding and support.

39. Once this principle is understood and accepted, the individual staff member will be the best judge of how to increase his contribution. Tact, restraint, and tolerance become obvious standards. What may be less understood is the importance of acquiring sufficient knowledge about the achievements and activities of the United Nations family of organizations to enable him to promote understanding, to provide accurate information, and effectively to answer criticism. Some staff members will have greater opportunity and greater talent than others; all should play their part.

40. Wherever they serve, but particularly on field or mission assignments (see paragraphs 44 to 49), international civil servants must understand and respect the culture, customs and habits of the country of their duty station. They must avoid giving cause for resentment and abstain from conduct which will reflect adversely on their organization. Ostentation in their way of life and entertainment, especially where their standards of pay are higher than those prevailing in the country of duty, and the appearance of an inflated sense of personal importance, will certainly be harmful. Obviously, public airing of personal grievances or destructive criticism of their organization are incompatible with their oath of office.

41. Staff members may from time to time be subjected to public criticism based on shifting fashions of moral and political judgments. They should have a right to expect that they will be defended by their organization against unjustified criticism growing out of ill-founded public reactions foreign to the purposes and standards of the international organization they serve.

42. Many international civil servants necessarily come into contact with representatives of the Press. They may have the duty to get into touch with them or they may be approached by them. The first principle to follow in this connexion is that no staff member should make statements to the Press, except as authorized. It is for the Executive Head to lay down, by administrative instruction, the method by which the very important task of conveying information to the Press is to be undertaken. As a general rule, there are Press services through which such information is channelled. The Board's concern is to make clear that when any responsibility for communicating with the Press is placed on a staff member, or where as a responsible officer he is approached by a member of the Press, he must regard himself as speaking in the name of his organization and avoid personal references and views. It would obviously be improper for a staff member to attempt to use the Press to further his own interests, to air his own grievances, to reveal unauthorized information, or to attempt to influence policy decisions with which the organization is faced.

43. The Board supports strongly the principle set out in the staff regulations and rules of the international organizations, that staff members should not accept any honours, decorations, gifts, or marks of favour from any government or from any other source external to the organization. It hopes that member governments will respect this principle and refrain from placing staff members in the embarrassment of refusing such offers. Such favours might be regarded by the donor as a means of enlisting support or entailing an obligation to render some service in return. Equally important, acceptance of favours might be regarded by the public as entailing such an obligation even though this may play no part in the intention of the donor. Officials handling business with commercial firms must apply the same rules and must be particularly circumspect as regards gifts and offers of hospitality. If the staff regulations or staff rules do not give clear guidance in an individual case, the staff member should seek a ruling from the Executive Head.

VI. Conduct of staff members serving away from Headquarters

44. The special opportunity, as well as the special obligation of staff members serving away from Headquarters, including temporary experts sent to advise governments, warrants particular emphasis. The opportunity arises from the fact that their personal contribution takes on increased significance in areas where the major organs and major activities of their organization are not in evidence. Such staff members, even if sent on technical missions, are in fact frequently considered as "representatives" of the United Nations or of the specialized agency concerned and the most scrupulous attitude and unexceptionable conduct are thus needed from them. Particularly in some of the areas of the world where political changes have been rapid in recent years, there is a great sensitivity on the part of the governments and peoples to the behaviour of visiting staff members and experts.

45. A prime obligation of an international civil servant going to serve in a particular area of the world is to obtain in advance the best possible knowledge of the countries to which he is going and of the habits, customs and attitudes of their peoples. This will be relatively easy for a staff

member sent from an established office. It is no less important, even if more difficult, for the expert recruited for a specific assignment. Such knowledge can help an individual to regulate his conduct so as to reflect discretion, understanding and tolerance.

46. Matters of protocol may well have an important bearing upon the success of a field mission. This fact should be borne in mind although diplomatic forms and usages, as well as particular circumstances, will vary so widely that valid general rules are difficult to prescribe. International missions, even of a technical nature, are accredited to governments; recognition of this fact will assist officials in regulating their conduct. Unless there are exceptional reasons for not doing so, it would seem wise for missions on arrival in a country to get in touch with the national protocol department in order to avoid what might be considered as diplomatic and social errors. The Board assumes that the heads of the regional offices of any international organization and resident technical assistance representatives, will make themselves familiar with matters of protocol and local usages and will be of assistance to periodic missions in these matters.

47. When staff members or experts of several international organizations are serving in the same country or region, an excellent opportunity is afforded for demonstrating a co-operative and understanding attitude regarding the international family as a whole, as mentioned in paragraph 6 above. Any evidence of rivalry, or public criticism, or unco-operativeness in such circumstances can only undermine the reputation of the international organizations and must, therefore, be strictly avoided.

48. Caution should be exercised by staff members and visiting experts who are invited by various groups to attend meetings, give lectures under their auspices, grant interviews, or make public statements. They should avoid causing harm to the mission or international organization by any association with, or expression of views regarding, matters of national or international controversy. Equally, persons serving in the field must avoid interfering in any way whatsoever with the internal affairs of their duty country; they should especially see to it that they do not become involved in any differences of views, or conflicts, as between central and local governments, or appear identified with the cause of officials or nationals of the country with whom they work.

49. While it is common for international organizations, through agreements with particular governments, to arrange for certain privileges or benefits for international civil servants, it must be recognized that such agreements are matters for negotiation between the headquarters office and the government concerned, and not matters for unauthorized negotiation by the field official. Still more, officials serving in the field must avoid any requests for privileges which are not provided for in agreements between the organization and government concerned.

VII. Outside activities

50. The Board considers it desirable to state at the outset the basic consideration which, in its view, should determine the appropriateness of outside activities, aside from political activities, on the part of international civil servants. It is that the primary obligation of an international civil servant is to devote his energies and capacity fully to the work

of the organization he serves. It follows that no activity can be permissible which in any way interferes with the work or is incompatible with the status of an international civil servant. Unless strict standards of compatibility and propriety are applied in this matter the reputation of the international secretariats may be jeopardized. There can be no participation in activities which cause an excessive drain on the staff member's time and energy, or which, by their nature, would reflect on the dignity or standing of the international civil service. Similarly, it is clear that no outside contractual obligation may be entered into which would interfere with the staff member's availability, at any time, for his official work. Generally speaking, the Board believes that any continuing or recurring outside activity of a substantial nature cannot be reconciled with the governing principles stated in this paragraph.

51. As regards the question of remuneration for any outside activity unrelated to the official work of the staff member, the Board's view is that this will in the main be properly regulated if the principles outlined above are adhered to. The conditions of employment of international organizations are designed to make it possible for the staff member to devote himself to his career, and outside activities the principal aim of which is to procure financial gain would be inadmissible.

52. Once the principles are stated and understood, the Board recognizes that in certain circumstances exceptional authorization of an outside activity may be given by the Executive Head. Such authorization should always be received in advance.

VIII. The private life of the staff member

53. In principle, the private life of the international staff member is his concern and should not be intruded upon by his organization. At the same time, in order that his private life will not bring his organization into disfavour, he must set himself a high standard of personal conduct - one that is more complex in some respects than that demanded of national civil servants. He must bear in mind that his conduct, whether connected or unconnected with official duties, must be such that it will not infringe upon any demonstrable interests of the organization he serves, bring it into discredit, or offend the community in which he lives. Such restraint must be exercised even in the use of rights recognized by the existing legislation, if this use is likely to reflect unfavourably on the organization. Not only must the international civil servant be careful and discreet himself, but he should impress upon members of his household the necessity of maintaining a similar high standard of conduct.

54. Scrupulous compliance with laws of the host country, avoidance of illicit or speculative dealings in currencies, honouring of financial obligations - these are only a few of the obvious requirements which derive from the general principle.

55. Violations of law can range from serious criminal activities to trivial offences, and standards for judgment can best be developed in the light of the nature and circumstances of individual cases. The Board believes the proper approach is that formulated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in his report to the General Assembly, as follows:

"The standard of conduct applicable to staff members is more exacting than ordinary legal standards. A conviction by a national court will

usually be persuasive evidence of the commission of the act for which the defendant was prosecuted. And acts which are generally recognized as offences by national criminal laws normally will be violations also of the independent standard of integrity developed by, and proper to, the United Nations. However, the Organization must remain free to take no account of convictions of staff members for trivial offences or for offences which are generally held not to reflect on integrity, or of convictions made without observance of the generally recognized requirements of due process of law."⁵

IX. Conclusion

56. The standards in this report are high and exacting, but it is the Board's view that international civil servants would be among the first to agree that they are capable of attainment and should be achieved. The international civil servant must accept special restraints in his public and private life and it is in so doing that he can make his positive contribution to the work and ideals of the international organizations.

57. Integrity, international loyalty, independence and impartiality, and the subordination of private interests to the interests of the organization, are daily requirements. The Board looks forward confidently to the development of a proud tradition which will make clear to all who come into contact with the international organizations that their staff members accept the high responsibility which their status demands. It will be amply rewarded if its endeavours will have contributed in some measure to the attainment of this end.

⁵ Official Records of the General Assembly, Eighth Session, Annexes, Agenda item 51, document A/2533, paragraph 72.