

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR HUMANITARIAN AID SITUATIONS

Since 1958, the Centre for International Studies and Cooperation has worked with partners in the global South to combat poverty and exclusion. To this end, CECI builds the development capacities of disadvantaged communities. We support peace building, human rights, and equity initiatives. We also mobilize resources and promote knowledge exchange.

CECI firmly believes that equality and equity between women and men is a sine qua non for development, so gender mainstreaming is built into the design and implementation of both our long-term development projects and humanitarian relief work. Local populations are more vulnerable to sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) in crisis situations, and this is particularly true for women and children. Because CECI is assuming an increasingly greater role providing humanitarian aid in countries where we work, we must protect beneficiaries of relief operations from SEA in order to ensure they receive the quality service to which they are entitled.

To protect beneficiaries, to provide quality humanitarian aid and to preserve CECI's ethical standards and reputation and, our staff and teams must uphold an ethical code of conduct. This code requires them to provide assistance free of SEA and to preserve the safety of beneficiaries serviced by our organization, our partners and other agencies we come into contact with. The code also requires from them integrity and incorruptibility.

When you have read the code, please sign in the space provided to indicate you agree to comply with the provisions. Return the completed form to the appropriate CECI Country Director (for national employees), to the CECI Regional Director or Human Resources Service (for expatriates, volunteers, or employees in the head office engaged in humanitarian aid operations). You will be briefed individually or in a group to ensure you fully understand the code.

This code of conduct forms part of your contract of employment and failure to comply with it could result in disciplinary proceedings, dismissal or in some circumstances criminal prosecution.



CODE OF CONDUCT

The code of conduct outlined below is designed for your guidance and protection and to help you understand what CECI considers to be acceptable professional and ethical behaviour. On accepting appointment, all full-time paid staff, part time staff, consultants, volunteers including field staff, national staff and expatriate staff (hereafter “humanitarian workers”) must comply with this code of conduct:

- Humanitarian workers must show respect for the culture, customs and structures of the communities and the countries where humanitarian interventions are carried out; they must behave diligently and in good faith.
- Humanitarian workers must comply with criminal and civil laws in force in the country of intervention.
- Illegal acts such as fraud, accepting bribes and theft are unacceptable and will not be tolerated under any circumstances; misappropriation of food or equipment intended for beneficiaries constitutes theft and will be severely punished.
- Humanitarian workers are obliged to create and maintain an environment that prevents abuse, especially sexual exploitation and abuse and promotes equality and equity between women and men; notably:
 - Exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading, or exploitative behaviour is prohibited. This includes exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries;
 - All forms of child abuse, notably sexual activity with persons under the age of 18 is strictly prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defence;
 - Since they are based on or develop within inherently unequal power dynamics, sexual relationships between humanitarian workers and beneficiaries are strongly discouraged. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of humanitarian aid work.
- Illegal acts, exploitation and abuse of any kind of beneficiaries by humanitarian workers constitute acts of gross misconduct, which are actionable, and are therefore grounds for termination of employment of or services rendered by the humanitarian worker in question;
- Where a humanitarian worker develops concerns or suspicions regarding illegal acts, sexual abuse or exploitation by a fellow worker, whether within CECI or not, s/he must report such concerns to the appropriate person according to the procedure set out hereafter.



IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODE

Each humanitarian worker hired is required to sign a declaration acknowledging intent to comply with the code. Humanitarian workers will be briefed individually or at a team meeting discussing what is at stake regarding sexual exploitation/abuse and corruption prior to project launch. These subjects will be covered again at a mid-project meeting.

In the field or relief environments, CECI Country Directors are responsible for the provisions of the code. They are required to take a strong stance against sexual exploitation and abuse, reminding employees at all levels to comply with the code of conduct. They are also required to report cases to CECI headquarters.

Beneficiaries will be informed of the code of conduct when the project is launched and again at the midway point of project implementation. Two key resource persons will be designated per project - one within the community and one within the staff – to monitor and report potential cases of SEA. Beneficiaries may also report cases directly to CECI employees, project leaders, country directors and regional directors, as they see fit.

CECI staff and country directors will encourage and support beneficiaries who have suffered SEA offenses at the hands of CECI humanitarian workers to bring complaints to local authorities for investigation and eventual legal action. Justice obstruction and failure to comply with authorities' investigations will result in termination of employment.

Any employee accused of sexual exploitation/abuse or illegal acts will be removed from the humanitarian aid project immediately. Substantiated accusations will result in termination of employment.

For employees hired by CECI headquarters in Montreal, the CECI Human Resources division is responsible for acting to resolve issues under the code in Canada, following investigation carried out in the field.



DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, _____ certify that I have read the Code of Conduct, that I understand all its provisions and that I undertake to adhere it.

I am aware that failing to comply with the Code shall result in sanctions and that a serious lack of compliance could result in immediate dismissal.

In witness whereof, the undersigned has signed on this _____ day of _____ 20 ____

Signature

CONFIDENTIALITY

All complaints will be processed with due diligence and confidentiality. The identity of complainants, witnesses and subjects of allegations will remain confidential.

No action will be taken against any person who in good faith reports a violation.

PROCEDURE

The Country Director is the designated person to receive complaints. However, when allegations are lodged against the Country Director, the complaint will be referred to the Regional Director for action. If the allegations are lodged against the Regional Director, the complaint will be referred to Headquarters.

If the complaint is deemed admissible, the subject of the allegations is advised of the complaint and the nature of the allegations and is informed an investigation is being conducted.

Within ten (10) business days after a complaint is received or within 10 business days after having knowledge of the relevant facts, a findings report containing the Country Director's recommendations, or by any other officer designated by CECI, with regards to actions to be taken will be submitted to the regional direction. The employee is advised of measures to be taken in his or her case.

The Country Director is responsible for collecting all the necessary information during the investigation.

An employee may be relieved of his duties in situations requiring rapid intervention or in an alleged case of gross misconduct during the investigation.

