

UNITED NATIONS



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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
CABINET DU SECRETAIRE GENERAL

REFERENCE:

7 December 2007

Dear Colleagues,

You may recall that at the 2005 World Summit, world leaders agreed that it was crucially important for the United Nations to uphold the highest ethical standards and integrity and urged a scrupulous application of existing standards of conduct and the development of a system-wide code of ethics. There is no question that the United Nations must be a leader in public sector ethics. It is with this in mind that I seek your support and cooperation in our continued efforts at promoting ethics, integrity and accountability within the United Nations.

The United Nations faces unique challenges of managing a multi-cultural staff that are operationally stationed in every region of the world, and for whom independence and impartiality are not only a unique character but are also of utmost importance. In this regard, I wish to draw your attention to Article 100 (2) of the United Nations Charter, which provides that "*Each Member of the United Nations undertakes to respect the exclusively international character of the responsibilities of the Secretary-General and the staff and not seek to influence them in the discharge of their responsibilities.*"

The independence, impartiality and integrity of United Nations staff may be influenced by a number of factors, including the acceptance of gifts and favours, from both public and private sector sources. While appreciating the rich and diverse cultures and customs of the world concerning the giving and receiving of gifts, the receipt of gifts, honours, or remuneration by United Nations staff members, from any source, could give rise to the appearance of staff members being placed under a position of obligation to the donor of the gift, as well as bringing into question their independence and impartiality as international civil servants.

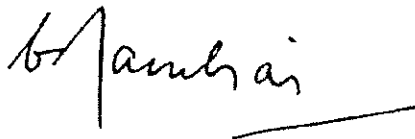
In this connection, I wish to draw your attention to the Staff Regulation 1.2(j), as adopted by the General Assembly, which provides that "*No staff member shall accept any honour, decoration, favour, gift or remuneration from any Government.*" However, in recognition of the potential for public embarrassment which may be caused by the refusal of an unanticipated honour, decoration, favour or gift from a Government, staff members may receive it on behalf of the organization but must then report and entrust it to the Secretary General, who will either retain it for the Organization or arrange for its disposal for the benefit of the Organization or for a charitable purpose, as stipulated in Staff Regulation 1.2(k).

All United Nations Staff Members

While recognizing with appreciation that Member States as part of their cultural hospitality or as a matter of protocol may wish to present staff members with gifts and other considerations, it has been suggested to Member States that these should be essentially of a symbolic nature and must not involve cash remuneration/cash certificates, etc.

The integrity of the United Nations depends on the integrity of its staff; your cooperation in this regard will ensure that the Secretariat is best able to provide its services to all Member States in fulfilling their obligations under the United Nations Charter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vijay Nambiar", with a horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

Vijay Nambiar
Chef de Cabinet