

II. UNV Code of Conduct

In accordance with the ideals of voluntary service, UN Volunteers will be guided by the motivation to devote their knowledge and abilities without regard to financial remuneration. Volunteerism, such as for the Sustainable Development Goals, is encouraged outside of the formal work setting as part of the voluntary nature of the assignment and where allowed by local law.

The following UNV Code of Conduct applies to all persons who serve as UN Volunteers. In addition, UN Volunteers are required to abide by any applicable Host Entity-specific regulations, policies, or administrative issuances governing the conduct of personnel. Failure of a UN Volunteer to adhere to the principles and values of the Charter of the United Nations, the UN Volunteer Conditions of Service, or other relevant administrative issuances by UNV or the Host Entity may constitute misconduct, wherever it occurs and whether or not the UN Volunteer was on duty.

1. RESPECT FOR THE PRINCIPLES OF THE UN CHARTER

- a. UN Volunteers must uphold, respect, and be loyal to the principles set out in the Charter of the United Nations, including respect for fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, and in the equal rights of all people. Consequently, UN Volunteers must show respect for all persons equally and shall not discriminate against individuals or groups of individuals. Specifically, UN Volunteers must show respect for all persons equally without distinction whatsoever based on race, gender, religion, color, national or ethnic origin, language, sexual orientation, disability, age, socio-economic status, political conviction, or any other distinguishing feature. Any form of discrimination, workplace or sexual harassment, abuse of authority, assault, or threat is prohibited.

2. INTEGRITY, INDEPENDENCE, AND IMPARTIALITY

- a. UN Volunteers must ensure that they undertake their duties in the interests of the United Nations. UN Volunteers must uphold and promote the highest

standards of efficiency, competency, and integrity, ethical and professional conduct, as well as values inherent in volunteerism, such as commitment, engagement, and solidarity. The concept of integrity includes, but is not limited to, probity, impartiality, fairness, honesty, and truthfulness in all matters affecting their work and status.

- b. Although UN Volunteers are not expected to relinquish national sentiments or political and religious convictions, they may not engage in any activity that may be inconsistent with the independence and impartiality required of persons affiliated with the United Nations. UN Volunteers must avoid any action and any public statement which may reflect negatively on the United Nations or the integrity, independence, and impartiality of the United Nations. UN Volunteers may not speak or write publicly on any matter related to UN activities unless specifically authorized to do so by UNV or the Host Entity.
- c. UN Volunteers must neither seek nor accept instructions from any government or any other source external to the UN system, except as authorized by UNV or the Host Entity. Unless specifically authorized by UNV or the Host Entity, UN Volunteers must not communicate to any government, entity, person, or any other source any information known to them by reason of their function for the United Nations, which the UN Volunteer knows or ought to have known has not been made public. These obligations do not end upon separation from the UN Volunteer assignment. UN Volunteers shall not, unless authorized by UNV or the Host Entity, accept any honor, decoration, favor, gift, or remuneration from any government or non-governmental source for activities carried out during their official functions.

3. PRIVATE LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

- a. UN Volunteers must honor their private legal obligations. Failure to do so may amount to misconduct. The privileges and immunities of the United Nations provide no excuse for UN Volunteers to fail to comply with local laws and their private legal obligations. Unlawful acts (e.g. theft, fraud, smuggling, possession or sale of illegal substances or objects, driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol, etc.) are prohibited.

4. SPECIFIC INSTANCES OF PROHIBITED CONDUCT

- a. Any form of sexual exploitation and abuse is prohibited. Sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or the age of consent locally, except where a UN Volunteer is legally married to a person who is under the age of 18 but over the age of majority



UN Volunteer Alaa Abu Ramadan serves with the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Gaza Strip (UNV, 2018).

or consent in his or her country of citizenship. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defense. The exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favors or other forms of humiliating, degrading, or exploitative behavior, is prohibited. UN Volunteers are obliged to create and maintain an environment that prevents sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. The UN Secretary-General Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Abuse and Exploitation ST/SGB/2003/13, as updated from time to time, will apply to UN Volunteers. (see Annex 01)

- b. UN Volunteers must not engage in any form of harassment, including sexual harassment, whether such conduct is intentional or through the perpetuation of an environment where such conditions are reasonably considered to occur. This prohibition applies equally within the workplace and outside it.
- c. UN Volunteers must not engage in any form of abuse of authority. The use of authority or influence, or representation thereof, in relation to functions or status with the UN to improperly coerce others to act or fail to act is forbidden. This prohibition applies equally within the workplace and outside it.
- d. UN Volunteers shall not use their function for the United Nations or knowledge obtained therefrom for the private benefit of themselves or others, or to the detriment of others. Misuse of office, misrepresentation, forgery, false

certification, breach of confidentiality, and abuse of United Nations privileges and immunities are prohibited.

- e. UN Volunteers must report any misconduct to the officials whose responsibility it is to take appropriate action. They must cooperate with any duly authorized audits and investigations. They may not take retaliatory action against or interfere with a complainant or an investigation participant or take any other action in violation of the applicable Host Entity's policy or administrative issuance on the protections against retaliation and reporting of misconduct. In addition, making false accusations and disseminating false rumors is prohibited. (see Annex 02 for Whistleblower Protection)

5. OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES

- a. UN Volunteers' outside activities must not detract in any way from their formal work assignments, be contrary to the purposes or principles of the UN, or a violation of local law. UN Volunteers must not engage in any activity that is detrimental to the United Nations or UNV. Any outside activity must also be consistent with the UN Volunteer's visa status.
- b. UN Volunteers must obtain authorization from UNV or the Host Entity for any outside activity, employment, business, voluntary activity, office, or membership in governmental and non-governmental bodies, whether remunerated or not, including those that commenced prior to their UN Volunteer assignment. The appropriateness of the outside activity will be determined by the Resident Representative or Head of Office of the Host Entity in accordance with applicable Ethics Office guidance, as necessary. UN Volunteers may not, under any circumstances, accept any supplementary payment from a government or any other source, outside of agreements that UNV has explicitly entered into with specific governments.

6. STANDARDS OF CARE AND FIDUCIARY OBLIGATIONS

- a. UN Volunteers must act in good faith and exercise due care, diligence, and integrity in performing their duties for the United Nations. UN Volunteers must discharge their functions with due care for their fiduciary obligations and must act in a manner to protect the Host Entity and UNV, as well as their assets, from loss, damage, misuse, theft, and waste. Misuse or mishandling of official property, assets, equipment, or files, including electronic files or data, is prohibited.