

Executive Board Annual Session 2025

Management Response to the Report on the Activities of the UN-Women Ethics Function for 1 January – 31 December 2024

I. Introduction

1. Pursuant to UN-Women Executive Board decision 2022/5, UN-Women management welcomes the report on the activities of the Ethics Function for the period 1 January – 31 December 2024.
2. In accordance with ST/SGB/2007/11 on the United Nations system-wide application of ethics to separately administered organs and programmes, the ethics function supports UN-Women in fostering a culture of integrity, accountability, and ethical conduct across the organization.
3. UN-Women acknowledges the work of the ethics team and their continued dedication to preventing, mitigating, and managing ethical, operational, and reputational risks, while contributing to the strengthening of the organization’s culture.
4. The organization notes with appreciation that the ethics function handled a total of 548 service requests in 2024, representing an 85% increase compared to the 295 requests received in 2023.
5. The management remains firmly committed to protecting the independence and impartiality of the ethics function, recognizing its role in sustaining organizational trust and credibility.

II. Activities

A. Standard-setting and Policy Support

6. UN-Women appreciates the Ethics Advisor’s review of the Protection Against Retaliation Policy to further strengthen UN-Women’s protection and accountability framework consistent with the Executive Board decision 2023/10, the development—together with Human Resources—of the Outside Activities Policy and Procedure, and the initiation of the review of the Hospitality and Gifts Policy in coordination with the Management and Administration Division.

B. Training, Outreach, and Awareness-Raising

7. The management values the outreach efforts of the ethics function, including the delivery of scenario-based workshops—both in-person and virtual— on ethical standards, conflicts of interest and protection against retaliation, which reached 670 personnel across the organization and supported enhanced awareness of ethical standards.
8. UN-Women welcomes the successful roll-out of the 2024 Leadership Dialogue on “Navigating Outside Activities” and appreciates the Ethics Advisor’s support. We are pleased to note the highest participation to date, which reflects strong organizational engagement with the Dialogue’s objectives of fostering a culture of ethical leadership. Other initiatives of note include the collaboration between the Ethics Advisor and the UNDP Ethics Office in launching the first joint Ethics Awareness Month on the theme “Navigating Impartiality in a Polarized World.”
9. The management takes note of the increased completion rate of the mandatory ethics and integrity training, reaching approximately 82% by the end of 2024, compared to 78% in 2023. We welcome this upward trend and

remain committed to further strengthening compliance. This commitment is further reaffirmed through the monthly orientation for new personnel, which highlights the role of the ethics function, reinforces core principles of integrity, independence and impartiality, and outlines personnel responsibilities in areas such as conflicts of interest.

C. Confidential Advice and Guidance

10. UN-Women acknowledges that, out of 548 requests for services received, 354 concerned ethics advice—representing a 121% increase from the 160 requests in 2023—and considers this growth indicative of the ethics function’s role as a trusted resource for personnel.
11. UN-Women further notes that the majority of ethics advice requests were related to outside activities, followed by institutional integrity, ethics-related employment concerns, and internal procedures for reporting misconduct. This trend highlights the range of issues on which personnel seek guidance and underscores the continued relevance of ethics advice.

D. United Nations Financial Disclosure Programme

12. UN-Women notes with satisfaction, the successful implementation of the 2024 Financial Disclosure Programme, with all 153 designated staff members submitting their financial disclosure statements as required. Three potential conflicts of interest were identified and addressed through appropriate mitigation measures.

E. Protection Against Retaliation

13. The management takes note of the information provided on the inquiries received under the Protection against Retaliation Policy. We welcome the Ethics Advisor’s guidance to personnel and the appropriate referrals made for concerns outside the policy’s scope.

III. The Ethics Panel of the United Nations and the Ethics Network of Multilateral Organizations

14. The management supports and encourages the continued engagement of the Ethics Advisor in United Nations system-wide efforts, including through the Ethics Panel of the United Nations and the Ethics Network of Multilateral Organizations.

IV. Conclusion

15. The management acknowledges the significant contributions of the ethics team in 2024 under its mandated areas of work and expresses sincere appreciation for their continued dedication.
16. UN-Women reaffirms its commitment to providing adequate resources to ensure the function’s effectiveness.
17. The organization will continue to support the ethics function in fulfilling its duties and reiterates the importance of a collaborative, values-driven, and principled approach to organizational ethics.