



OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN FOR UNITED NATIONS FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES

Operating Principles of the International Advisory Board

Overview

1. The present document sets forth the key principles for the establishment and operation of the International Advisory Board of the Office of the Ombudsman for United Nations Funds and Programmes (Office of the Ombudsman). The International Advisory Board (IAB), composed of up to 10 members, including the Chairperson and Secretary, exercises three main functions. It:
 - (a) advises the Office of the Ombudsman on the work of the Global Mediation Panel of the Office of the Ombudsman. The Panel includes external mediators approved and overseen by the Office of the Ombudsman;
 - (b) conducts regular training sessions for the mediators of the Global Mediation Panel, in person or via technology; and
 - (c) addresses concerns or complaints expressed by mediation parties with regard to the work of the external mediators and advises the Office of the Ombudsman on the management thereof.
2. Members of the IAB shall attend annual meetings of the IAB in person or remotely. Members of the IAB shall comply with all standards applicable to the mediators of the Global Mediation Panel, including the Code of Conduct.

Appointment and Termination

3. In consultation with the Chairperson of the UNDP/UNFPA/UNWOMEN/UNOPS Staff Association and the Chairperson of the Global Staff Association of UNICEF (having at least one Member recommended by each of the Staff Association), the Ombudsman shall appoint Members of the IAB from among eminent alternative dispute-resolution (ADR) practitioners and academics, taking into account the principles of diversity, regional representation and the needs of the relevant United Nations organizations.
4. A candidate for IAB membership shall have:
 - a degree in law, conflict management or other relevant social sciences;
 - proven ADR experience (at least 15 years), of which at least five years in leadership roles; and
 - current or previous affiliation with a prominent ADR institution, educational institution, and/or international organization.
5. Each Member shall be appointed for a two-year term with the option of a one-time renewal by the Ombudsman, at his or her sole discretion in consultation with the Chairpersons of the UNDP/UNFPA/UNWOMEN/UNOPS Staff Association and of the Global Staff Association of UNICEF as needed; renewal is limited to one two-year term. Membership of the Board expires when the term of office of the Member ends. A Member become eligible for reappointment after the lapse of two years from the last term held.



6. The Ombudsman may remove a Member of the IAB at any time, at his or her discretion, in consultation with the Chairperson of the UNDP/UNFPA/UNWOMEN/UNOPS Staff Association and the Chairperson of the Global Staff Association of UNICEF as needed, by giving at least 30-day notice in writing; a Member of the IAB may resign at any time by giving at least 30-day notice in writing.
7. The Ombudsman or any Member of the IAB shall nominate a Chairperson of the IAB from among the appointed Members, and the appointed Members will decide on such nomination by a majority vote. The Chairperson will have the same rights and obligations as a regular Member of the IAB, as well as the responsibility to manage the work of the IAB.
8. In consultation with the Chairperson, the Ombudsman shall also nominate a Secretary to support the work of the Chairperson, and the appointed Members will decide on such nomination by a majority vote.

Confidentiality

9. The Members of the IAB shall keep all information arising from or in connection with their work as a Member confidential (whether such information arises from telephone conversations, meetings, email or other means) except when the disclosure:
 - (a) is compelled by law;
 - (b) the Office of the Ombudsman determines that there appears to be an imminent risk of serious harm, in which case it may waive confidentiality; or
 - (c) is needed to enforce a mediated settlement agreement.

Advisory Procedure

10. The Ombudsman has the discretion to seek an advisory opinion from the IAB on any matter relating to the mediation function of the Office of the Ombudsman. In such cases, the Chairperson, with the support of the Secretary, will establish a Committee of three IAB Members, which shall provide the requested opinion within 15 business days.

Complaint Procedure

11. Any concern or complaint raised in relation to a mediator of the Global Mediation Panel concerning a mediation conducted by such mediator is first addressed by the Mediation Specialist. If the decision or the response issued by the Mediation Specialist is considered unsatisfactory by the complainant, the concern or complaint can be submitted to the Ombudsman.
12. If the complainant remains unsatisfied with the response of the Ombudsman, he or she can refer the matter for final evaluation directly to the IAB via its Secretary. The Secretary will form an internal Committee consisting of three Members of the IAB to review the matter and inform the Ombudsman and the complainant of its confidential recommendation. The IAB issues a confidential recommendation to the Ombudsman by a majority vote.
13. The Office of the Ombudsman will take necessary measures to ensure that the mediators who receive justified complaints against their conduct will be subject to remedial procedures (depending on the nature of the complaint, these procedures may include delisting from the Global Mediation Panel).