**Policy on Gifts, Honours, Decorations, Favours, Hospitality, or Remuneration (‘Gifts’) from Governmental and Non-Governmental Sources[[1]](#footnote-1)**

**Purpose**

1. The purpose of this policy is to assist UNDP personnel in regulating their conduct when offered gifts or other items in the course of their official UNDP duties or in relation to their UNDP status, and to clarify the procedures to be followed in such cases (seeparagraphs 50-51 of the [Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service](https://popp.undp.org/node/4481); [UN Staff Regulation 1.2](https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4002120?ln=en?web=1) (j, k, and l); and, [UN Staff Rule 1.2](https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4002120?ln=en?web=1) (l, m, n, o, and p).

**Policy**

1. All UNDP personnel are required to uphold the highest standards of integrity, and to act with independence and impartiality in discharging their official functions. Pursuant to applicable instruments, and to preserve their independence and impartiality, UNDP personnel cannot accept any gift, honour, decoration, favour, hospitality, or remuneration (hereafter “gift or other item”) from any governmental source, with strictly limited exceptions.
2. All UNDP personnel are also expected to decline gifts or other items from non-governmental sources.
3. All UNDP personnel may seek and receive approval from UNDP in exceptional cases.
4. There is a strict prohibition against accepting any gift or other item from any individual or entity doing business or seeking to do business with the UN/UNDP (including, but not limited to, vendors, implementing partners, responsible parties, and grantees). There is also a strict prohibition on accepting any gift or other item that could create a conflict, or the perception of a conflict, of interest with a personnel’s functions.

**Scope of application**

1. This policy applies to all UNDP personnel, including staff members, service contract holders, individual contractors, consultants, interns, UN Volunteers assigned to UNDP, and staff on a UNDP Letter of Appointment with service limited to another UN agency, fund or programme (hereafter “UNDP personnel”).
2. This policy concerns gifts, honours, decorations, favours, hospitality, or remuneration, as defined under paragraph 12 below, offered or presented to UNDP personnel by a governmental or non-governmental source, even if the gift or other item is offered outside of the UNDP workplace or UNDP work hours.
3. The receipt of ‘financial gifts’, including monetary items, cash, gift cards, or items convertible to a monetary value such as shares of stock from governmental or non-governmental sources is strictly prohibited.
4. As stated under paragraph 18 below, a gift, honour, decoration, favour, or hospitality from a non-governmental, non-vendor source must be disclosed by the recipient to their Head-of-Office or Resident Representative, and may only be accepted further to approval by the individual designated to administer this policy (“Gifts Administrator”).
5. Where stricter standards have been imposed in other UNDP policies or guidelines, such as for personnel involved in procurement or investment management, the stricter standard applies.
6. This policy does not apply to:
7. Gifts or other items received from family members or from other private persons whose relationship with the recipient are unrelated to the recipient’s official UNDP function or responsibilities;
8. Modest gifts exchanged with other UN/UNDP colleagues in recognition of a birthday, birth of a child, marriage, retirement, or other such celebration so long as they are freely given without coercion, are of nominal value, and are not offered to influence a colleague in his/her official decision-making;
9. Participation in *official* functions such as meetings, conferences, associated meals, and receptions organized by a governmental or non-governmental source (other than an individual or entity doing or seeking to do business with the UN/UNDP) for which UNDP personnel are invited in their official capacity. While such attendance is not considered receipt of a gift, honour, decoration, favour, hospitality, or remuneration within the meaning of the Staff Regulations and Rules, UNDP personnel are expected to exercise sound judgement and to refrain from accepting invitations that could be perceived as inconsistent, or raise a conflict of interest, with their obligations as UNDP personnel;
10. Participation in activities organized by governmental or non-governmental sources, other than an individual or entity doing or seeking to do business with the UN/UNDP, that have been authorized by UNDP in which the organizing entity covers the accommodation, travel and subsistence allowance in line with that payable by [UNDP Duty Travel](https://popp.undp.org/taxonomy/term/296) and [Daily Subsistence Allowance](https://popp.undp.org/node/10576) policies; or
11. Income or other compensation received from an outside source that has been authorized by UNDP pursuant to UNDP’s provisions on outside activities.

**Definitions**

1. The following definitions shall apply for the purpose of this policy:

* *Decoration:* any object that is awarded to recognize/honour the recipient in a visible manner, including but not limited to plaques, certificates, medals, pins, or ribbons.
* *Favour*: a special privilege, treatment, or personal benefit granted to UNDP personnel by a governmental or non-governmental source as a result of their UNDP status. While favours include free or discounted goods or services, priority treatment and free upgrades, they do not include benefits that are generally available to all individuals within and/or outside UNDP or the UN system.
* *Gift*: any item of value which might generate a benefit to the recipient if accepted, regardless of whether it has a physical form. This includes, but is not limited to, gift baskets, jewelry, clothing, art work, tickets to events or items convertible to a monetary value such as shares of stock or lottery tickets.
* *Gifts Administrator*:the person designated by the UNDP Administrator to oversee the approval, registration, retention and disposal of gifts, honours, decorations, favours, hospitality, or remuneration as set out in this policy. As of the date of issuance of this policy, the Chief of the Office of General Operations, Bureau for Management Services, has been designated UNDP’s Gifts Administrator. The Gifts Administrator may be contacted via the following e-mail address: [gifts.administrator@undp.org](mailto:gifts.administrator@undp.org)
* *Government*:
* Any unit of governmental authority, including any national, state, local and municipal government;
* Any intergovernmental organization; or
* Any employee, official, agent or representative of a governmental authority, government-owned or controlled entity, or intergovernmental organization.
* *Grantee:* an entity that receives UNDP funds to support civil society work, including in the area of development and/or environmental protection.
* *Honour*: an award or recognition, including, but not limited to medals, plaques, certificates, or scrolls.
* *Hospitality*: provision of transportation, lodging, meals, entertainment and the like, not as part of participation in official functions such as meetings, conferences, meals and receptions organized by a governmental or non-governmental source (other than an individual or entity doing business or seeking to do business with UN/UNDP) for which UNDP personnel are invited in their official capacity.
* *Implementing partner*: an entity to which UNDP has entrusted the implementation of UNDP assistance specified in a signed document along with the assumption of full responsibility and accountability for the effective use of UNDP resources and the delivery of outputs.
* *Monetary item:* any financial gift, including cash, gift cards or items convertible to a monetary value such as shares of stock.
* *Non-governmental source*: any non-governmental organization, educational institution, or any other private source (excluding individuals identified under paragraph 11 above).
* *Remuneration*: any monetary compensation not associated with an approved outside activity, including occupation or employment.
* *Responsible party*: an entity contracted by an implementing partner to provide goods or services to a UNDP project, carry out project activities, and/or produce outputs using the project budget.
* *Vendor:* any entity that sells goods or services, whether it has a current contractual relationship with UNDP or not.

**Obligations of UNDP personnel**

*Prohibition against solicitation*

1. UNDP personnel shall not solicit gifts or other items in any form, or from any source, either in the course of their official UNDP duties or in regards to their UNDP status, or in any situation that may adversely impact the reputation of the Organization or reflect poorly on their obligations of impartiality and independence.

*Where gifts, honours, decorations, favours, hospitality, or remuneration are offered to UNDP personnel*

*General rule*

1. Should UNDP personnel find themselves in a situation where a gift (non-financial) or other item is offered by a governmental or non-governmental source, including any entity doing or seeking to do business with UNDP, they should politely decline the offer with the explanation that acceptance is inconsistent with their UNDP status and obligations.

*Gifts from – Governmental sources*

1. UNDP personnel cannot accept, and will promptly decline, any gift or other item, irrespective of value, from a governmental source.[[2]](#footnote-2)
2. If refusal of an unanticipated gift, honour, decoration, favour, or hospitality from a governmental source would cause embarrassment to UNDP, the recipient may receive it on an exceptional basis on behalf of UNDP. In such circumstances, the accepted item must be promptly disclosed to the recipient’s Head-of-Office or Resident Representative and offered for surrender to the Gifts Administrator, as per the procedures set out in this policy. A decision will be taken by the Gifts Administrator regarding the disposition of the item.
3. Where a gift or other item from a governmental source has already been delivered to a recipient and it would cause embarrassment to UNDP to return the item, the item must also be disclosed to the recipient’s Head-of-Office or Resident Representative and offered for surrender to the Gifts Administrator for a decision on disposition, as per the procedures set out in this policy.

*Gifts from – Non-governmental sources*

1. UNDP personnel are expected to decline all gifts or other items from non-governmental sourceswhile working for UNDP. If circumstances do not allow for prior approval, or if refusal of an unanticipated gift, honour, decoration, favour, or hospitality would cause embarrassment to UNDP, acceptance of the item must be promptly reported to the Gifts Administrator as per established procedures, as well as the Head-of-Office or Resident Representative.
2. A gift, honour, decoration, favour, or hospitality from a non-governmental source valued at over US$30, other than from an individual or entity doing or seeking to do business with the UN/UNDP, may only be accepted if the recipient receives prior approval from the Gifts Administrator. Such a gift may not procure its recipient with any gain, financial or other.
3. A gift or other item of nominal value (US$30 or less) from a non-government source, other than an individual or entity doing or seeking to do business with the UN/UNDP, may be accepted without prior approval. The recipient must promptly report the gift or other item to their Head-of-Office or Resident Representative. If multiple, nominal items (e.g., pens, calendars, or other small items) are received from a single, non-governmental source, the total value in any 12-month period may not exceed the noted US$30 limit.

*Gifts from – Individual or entity doing or seeking to do business with the UN/UNDP*

1. As stated under paragraphs 2 – 5, UNDP personnel cannot accept any gifts or other items from any individual or entity doing or seeking to do business with the UN/UNDP. Other than for already delivered perishables (see paragraph 23), there is no exception to this prohibition. Even gifts of *de minimis* value can be perceived as an attempt to improperly influence the recipient’s objectivity in deciding whether to award, or continue to do business with, the individual or entity.
2. Gifts or other items that have already been delivered to UNDP by any individual or entity doing or seeking to do business with the UN/UNDP, or that have otherwise been received by UNDP personnel from such a source, must be returned to that source with a note explaining that acceptance is contrary to UNDP’s gifts policy.

*Perishable items received from a governmental source or from an individual or entity doing or seeking to do business with the UN/UNDP*

1. As an exception to paragraphs 15 – 22 above, where a perishable gift or other item such as flowers or fruit has already been delivered to UNDP from a government source or from an individual or entity doing or seeking to do business with the UN/UNDP and it would be impractical to return the item, the recipient may donate the item to a local charity or share and/or display the item in the respective UNDP office. The item must be immediately reported to the recipient’s Head-of-Office or Resident Representative and the Gifts Administrator with an explanation of how the item was received and handled. In such cases, the recipient shall also inform the source of the UNDP gifts policy and request that the source refrain from sending any future gifts or other items.

*Illegal or inappropriate items*

1. Regardless of source, UNDP personnel must immediately decline or return any gift or other item which is illegal or may cause embarrassment to UNDP such as, but not limited to, known counterfeit goods, endangered species products, sexually explicit materials, or illegal or controlled substances. UNDP personnel should immediately report to the recipient’s Head-of-Office or Resident Representative the declination or return of an illegal or inappropriate item.

*Remuneration or Monetary gift*

1. Any remuneration or monetary portion of any gift or other item from any governmental or non-governmental source must be declined or returned, and immediately reported to the recipient’s Head-of-Office or Resident Representative. The receipt of monetary gifts such as cash or gift cards from any source is prohibited.

**Policy advice and guidance**

1. Any UNDP personnel who have been offered or expect to receive a gift or other item from a governmental or non-governmental source may consult the Ethics Office for confidential advice on the application and requirements of this policy. Any advice provided by the Ethics Office is not binding on the Gifts Administrator. The Ethics Office may be contacted by email at [ethicsoffice@undp.org](mailto:ethicsoffice@undp.org)

**Compliance**

1. Failure to comply with the provisions in this policy may constitute misconduct and may result in administrative or disciplinary action.

1. This policy also implements similar requirements found in the [Regulations Governing the Status, Basic Rights and Duties of Officials other than Secretariat Officials and Experts on Mission](https://popp.undp.org/node/576), and the [UNV Conditions of Service](https://www.unv.org/become-volunteer/conditions-of-service). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The [Staff regulations and staff rules, including provisional staff rules, of the United Nations](https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4002120?ln=en?web=1) do not provide for prior approval of gifts or other items from a governmental source. The Gifts Administrator or the Ethics Office may be contacted for advice on proposed government gifts, honours, etc., and the applicability of the embarrassment exception. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)