Lebanese Republic

Ministry of Finance
Customs Administration



CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CUSTOMS

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Foreword

Public administration is the backbone of the state, and the success and progress of this latter are linked to the recruiting of efficient, productive, ethical, honest employees who accomplish what is required as quickly as possible, at the lowest cost and with the best quality.

To serve the public is to foster an essential part of the citizens' relationship with the government and the accomplishment of its obligations towards them. The strength of public service is to be devoid of temptations and greed. Public service is not a means for social advancement, control, exertion of influence or becoming rich; it is an act in which the public servant performs to the highest levels of contribution by observing the needs and interests of citizens and providing security, safety and tranquillity.

To be a public servant, is to serve people, all people, to have the honour of representing the government, to be a caretaker of public administration, to preserve the public interest and public affairs.

Ethics of public service is a key to the success of the administration, because it reflects confidence in its employees and departments. The commitment to professional ethics contributes to presenting a good image of public service and reflects the employee's commitment in preserving the ethics of the position which are predominantly transparency and integrity.

Since customs administrations around the world carry out a number of functions of fundamental importance and contribute to national objectives such as providing the public treasury with financial resources for

development, protection of society and national economy, assisting and facilitating trade. Subsequently integrity within customs is a very important issue for States, and the existence of corruption will limit the ability to fulfil the mission. The Arusha Declaration of the Customs Cooperation Council dated July 7, 1993, sets out the practical framework for the term 'integrity' in customs work. Through the provisions of the Staff Regulations of the Lebanese Customs Administration (LCA) promulgated by Legislative Decree No. 112 of June 12, 1959, defining the rights and duties of staff, it became a necessity to develop a comprehensive Code of Conduct, to define in clear and practical terms the expected behaviour of all LCA employees.

This *Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct for Customs Employees* aims to develop the institutional culture and responsibility of customs staff, to support their professional ethical values when dealing with superiors, colleagues and assistants, and to provide the best service to enhance confidence and credibility in LCA in order to improve the functioning of LCA.

Our Mission:

"...protecting Lebanon's economic and social interests and enhancing the investment environment, in addition to collecting revenues, combating smuggling, commercial fraud and contributing to ensure the security, safety and prosperity of society and the environment..."

Our Values:

1. Affiliation
2. Integrity
3. Transparency
4. Equality
5. Professionalism
6. Innovation
7. Team spirit

Our Vision:

"...a modern customs administration that adopts international standards and best customs practices and is a pioneer in providing services in accordance with the finest ethical and professional standards..."

I. Employee rights

The employee is entitled to a healthy, safe and comfortable workplace where all equipment and means that facilitate work are provided. They are also entitled to a fair and supportive work environment, free from harassment and unjustifiable discrimination, a workplace that respect, diversity and variety, and where opportunities for cooperation and development of performance and capabilities are offered.

The employee shall be protected against any type of intimidation and efforts to influence them to perform a task against their will or the laws and regulations in force. Intimidation includes physical violence, threats to the employee, family and friends, damage to property, threats of loss of employment or any other statements and actions that can influence them. The Lebanese Customs Administration will take all necessary measures to ensure that those incidents can be reported, registered, investigated and prosecuted in order to protect staff.

The employee shall be entitled to be treated on the basis of competence and merit, to ensure the right to complain against any wrong measure or decision taken against them, to correct mistakes and to be provided with appropriate and continuous training to improve career prospects and path in way the employees' creativity and innovation can be allowed to flourish. The employee is entitled to receive a salary commensurate with the degree of difficulty and responsibility of their position, along with fair, equitable and effective incentives.

II. Duties of the Employee

1. General Employee Duties

The employee should prioritize the work in the public interest only, and to ensure that laws and regulations are in force without any transgression, violation or negligence regardless of personal opinions, therefore the Employee shall:

- Perform the assigned tasks willingly, while preserving integrity, accuracy, professionalism and neutrality, serving the job goals and objectives and not personal benefit.
- Effectively use official working hours to carry out duties, refraining from any activity not related to official duties.
- Adopt the highest ethical standards and principles of justice and impartiality in the performance of work.
- Strive to improve performance and develop professional abilities to keep up with the latest developments in personal work and the work of the unit to which they belong, and to submit proposals that will improve working methods and raise the level of performance, and help in providing a safe and healthy working environment.
- Act sincerely and honestly, in a manner that preserves or enhances the good reputation and professional status of LCA.
- Not seek personal gains or abuse of power granted by virtue of the position or arrange any legal or financial obligations on the administration, in violation of the law.
- Preserve public funds and spend them wisely and properly in accordance with legal and lawful transactions.
- Take responsibility for personal actions taken and decisions made.
- Preserve the property, general resources, materials and equipment, and use them properly for the benefit of the administration.
- Maintain confidentiality of information and documents acquired or

obtained, and not disclose them to others, whether in writing, or verbally, including in social media or any other environment, even after the end of service unless the administration authorizes him to do so.
- Completely abandon any responsibility in case he is a member of parties or bodies or boards or political associations or sectarian associations of political nature.

2. Duties of the Employee towards his Superiors, Colleagues and Subordinates:

The Employee shall:

- Comply with the orders of superiors and their directives and instructions in a way not to violate the existing regulations and legislation. In the case where these directives and instructions clearly disobey the law, the employee has to inform his superior in written form of the infringement, and he does not implement the said directives and/or instructions unless confirmed in written form by his superior. He also has the right to send copies of administrative correspondence to the central inspection board.
- Treat superiors, colleagues and subordinates with respect, courtesy and honesty, maintain healthy and friendly relations without discrimination, and respect the privacy of others.
- Cooperate and share opinion professionally and objectively, and provide support and assistance wherever possible, to solve problems and overcome difficulties in the field of work, and be keen to contribute to a positive atmosphere thus helping improve the performance of work and its environment.
- Encourage the exchange of information and the transfer of knowledge and experience.
- Not hide any information related to work or to attempt to deceive or mislead colleagues or try to gain preferential treatment through methods of flattery or intermediary or favouritism.

3. Duties of the employee towards the client:

The public expects that when dealing with LCA, the process will be fair, professional, and confidential and with a high level of professionalism, therefore the employee shall:

- Respect the human rights and interests of clients without exception, and treat them with respect and without discrimination and harassment on the basis of race, sex, religious belief, political affiliation, social status, age or any other form of discrimination.
- Accomplish their paperwork and respond to their inquiries and complaints with required speed and accuracy.

4. Conflicts of Interest:

The employee shall:

- Refrain from carrying out any activity that would lead to a real or apparent or possible conflict between their personal interests on one hand and their responsibilities and functions on the other.
- Refrain from exploiting their job directly or indirectly for financial gain or anything of value to their family, and to have close relations with individuals or institutions whose interests are primarily based on their decisions or decisions of their unit.
- Refrain from practising any commercial or industrial or any other profession or paid trade except teaching in a higher educational institutes or secondary high schools within conditions specified by a decree taken by the Council of Ministers and except all other cases that are clearly stipulated by special laws. Also refrain from being a member of a board of directors of a closed or joint stock company or from having a direct or indirect financial benefit in an institution subject to his control or to the control of the administration that he belongs to.

5. Gifts:

The employee should not receive a reward of any kind, or seek, or accept directly or indirectly, gifts, gratuities or grants of any kind. However, if the employee is obliged out of courtesy and protocol to accept an expensive gift, he has to hand it over to the administration, in addition to being granted its approval for any privilege or discount of any type resulting from the job function.

III. Other Duties:

1. Dress code:

The appearance and clothing of the employee shall be appropriate for their function and position, and consistent with the expected standards of decency, cleanliness and neatness.

2. Refrain from drinking alcohol and smoking:

An employee must not attend work under the influence of alcohol and not drink alcohol while performing allocated tasks.

They should not smoke in places where smoking is prohibited or when he is on active duty in public places.

IV. Final Provisions:

- This Code applies to employees of all categories and levels.
- The employee must know the contents of this Code and abide by its provisions, and understand the implications of its noncompliance.

- Each employee must sign a document that pledges commitment to this Code. (Attached document)
- This Code is complementary to the laws that support public service, and to administrative regulations and instructions.
- Violation of the rules of this Code will expose the employee to legal and behavioural accountability.
- The administration should supervise the activation and implementation of this Code, and should provide training and guidance to employees in order to ensure good compliance.
- The administration should allow the citizens and the service recipients to have access to this Code.

Committing to the Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct for the Customs Officer

I am the undersigned ....., position .....,

Having examined the contents of the Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct of the Customs Officer and understood the legal and regulatory implications of not applying it;

I declare my commitment to its provisions, taking into account its importance in promoting a culture of transparency, integrity, professionalism, honesty, care for the public interest and adherence to the noble ethics in dealing with colleagues and citizens and providing them with the best services.

Date:

Signature: