

Code of Conduct for Governance

Approved by LWF Council, June 2022



THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION

A Communion
of Churches

I. Introduction

The purpose of the document is to provide guidance and direction for the appropriate conduct of individual members of LWF governing bodies as specified in the LWF Constitution.

In all of our work we are guided by and adhere to the LWF's values, as expressed in the LWF Strategy 2019 -2024 *With Passion for the Church and the World*: dignity and justice (Am 5:24), compassion and commitment (Lk 10:33), respect for diversity (1 Cor 12:12), inclusion and participation (Mt 22:9), transparency and accountability (Mt 25:40). The values derive from our faith and are informed by biblical texts that are central to Lutheran churches and have continuously shaped the Lutheran theological identity.

Members of governance engaged in the work of the Lutheran World Federation, are required to comply with these values, both in and outside governance meetings.

This Code of Conduct builds on the self-understanding of the Lutheran World Federation as expressed in its Constitution, By-Laws, vision, mission and strategy as well as other documents relevant to the behaviors of the members of the governing bodies of the LWF. These include the *Terms of Reference LWF Council*, approved by the Council 2018, *Understanding Membership in the LWF Council*, approved by the Council 2018, *LWF Code of Conduct for Participants in Events Organized by the Lutheran World Federation*, adopted by the LWF Council June 2015. It also draws from the commitments and responds to the expectations of the stakeholders and partners with whom LWF works in its different capacities.

II. The Code of Conduct

Overall Principles

The following overall principles guide the work of LWF governing bodies and the conduct of the members of these bodies.

The Members of the LWF governing bodies

- commit to the highest ethical standards and to acting and communicating truthfully, guided by accountability, professionalism in leadership and integrity
- acknowledge their responsibility to the Lutheran World Federation and the role and powers of the LWF governing body / bodies they belong to
- acknowledge the commitment they have taken upon themselves by accepting to serve as the members of the LWF governance
- commit to uphold decisions that the governing body has made
- exercise due diligence and take appropriate responsibility for the tasks of the governing body
- promote inclusiveness, participation, transparency, accountability and respect for diversity
- do not discriminate based on gender, race, ethnicity, age, religion, disability, nationality or sexual orientation
- refrain from the abuse of power and authority, any exploitation, harassment or abusive behavior including sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation, bullying or intimidation
- never abuse their position in governance for their own benefit
- never consume, purchase, sell, possess or distribute any forms of pornography or illegal drugs
- will always report any concerns or breaches of the Code of Conduct for Governance

Fraud and corruption

The Members of LWF governing bodies

Must always

- strictly abide by LWF's zero tolerance for corruption, fraud and any misuse of funds
- exercise transparency in decision-making processes/Make decisions in a transparent way
- report any information relevant to potential financial irregularities
- actively cultivate a culture of feedback, briefing and debriefing member churches

Must never

- allow themselves to be influenced by personal interests or professional or personal relationships, any favoritism or nepotism but act in the best interest of the Lutheran World Federation
- seek financial or other disproportionate gain to the individual LWF member church they represent by using their role as a member of the LWF governance
- apply, receive or accept any advantage or gift (with more than a symbolic value) which is connected with their membership in the LWF Council. If such a gift is impossible to refuse, it is donated to the LWF through the General Secretary.
- accumulate unnecessary or unjustified expenses to the LWF

Sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment

Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) causes physical, sexual and/or psychological harm and suffering to individuals. All people can become subject to SEA but vulnerable groups are at a heightened risk.

LWF has a specific duty to protect these individuals.

The Members of LWF Governance

Must always

- treat one another with dignity and courtesy
- be sensitive to respect different customs and cultures
- respect each individual's definition of comfortable mental physical proximity
- respect a person's rightful private life and related individual choices and values
- seek to protect all stakeholders in all situations and take measures to prevent SEA
- report all witnessed or suspected cases of SEA

Must never

- sexually exploit or sexually abuse any individual
- engage in any sexual activity with a child under the age of 18, regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defence
- carry out any act of harassment, at any time or under any circumstances.
- try to justify offensive behaviour by it "being a joke" or that "it wasn't meant to hurt" or any other comment that is diminishing the pain or embarrassment caused to the recipient.
- make unwelcome sexual advances, or request sex, verbal or physical conduct or gesture of a sexual nature, or any other behaviour of a sexual nature.
- bully others by criticising through humiliating comparisons, withholding necessary information from individuals, by shouting to get things done, by picking on people in front of others or in private, or by any other ways.

Conflict of Interest

Employment or a position of trust in a LWF member church shall not create a conflict of interest as such.

The Members of LWF governing bodies must

- be prepared to discuss possible conflict of interest with the governing body
- not act in their own interest either personally or professionally at the expense of the LWF, and should recuse themselves in cases of conflict of interest
- fully disclose, at the earliest opportunity, any information, which may result in a conflict of interest to the Code of Conduct

The final determination of conflict of interest rests with the governing body. If the governing body **agrees** that there is a conflict of interest, the individual shall abstain from being present in a discussion and abstain from a vote within the LWF governing body if a decision results in a conflict of interest.