“All the happiness of the world comes from thinking of others (peoplecentric); All the sufferings of the world comes from thinking of oneself (government-centric)”

-A great Buddhist Master

FIGHTING CORRUPTION IS A COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY
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ETHICAL CODE OF CONDUCT

ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMISSION
ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF BHUTAN

Thimphu, Bhutan. July 2008
Significance of Cover Page

Though the sky is by nature clear and pure is obscured by clouds formed due to the temporary causes like water, heat, etc. The Chorten which appears against such a stormy sky is a cleanser of human’s defiled nature. It is an object of worship and deep reverence for all people irrespective of their positions.

Similarly, though all human beings inherently have Buddha nature, there is a risk of becoming corrupted due to causes such as attachment to loved ones, greed for materials and unhealthy competition. When such a risk arises, this ACC Ethical Code of Conduct will constantly remind us to be ethical in all our conduct. All ACC employees irrespective of the positions they hold shall always comply with and respect the Code.
PREAMBLE

As custodian of the nation’s conscience, we shall conduct ourselves with the highest ethical standards and leadership quality. We shall do this because we know that by conducting our affairs effectively, promptly, courteously and with total integrity we shall:

1. enjoy higher level of public trust and confidence;
2. achieve our mission and vision;
3. feel a greater sense of pride and satisfaction;
4. contribute to the professional excellence and ethical health of the nation; and
5. above all, at the end of the day, be able to sleep well and be at peace.

STATEMENT OF POLICY

We believe that integrity, honesty, transparency, equality, excellence, trust, teamwork and exemplary leadership are the cornerstones of a credible and effective ACC. These values are also critical to achieving the Gross National Happiness. They are vital elements for building trust and confidence in our relationships both within and outside the ACC. It is, thus, important for each of us in the ACC to know, understand and imbibe these values.

We shall uphold this Code and strive to imbue its values and we shall endeavor to constantly and consciously abide by and apply these ten principles:

1. Act in accordance with the law, in letter and spirit;
2. Maintain the highest standard of personal and professional integrity;
3. Display professional excellence in our conduct;
4. Conduct duties efficiently and effectively, without fear or favour, prejudice or ill will, avoiding all forms of discriminations;

5. Maintain the highest degree of confidentiality and use information ethically;

6. Declare all conflicts or potential conflicts of interest;

7. Take no undue advantage of one’s authority and position;

8. Be accountable for one’s action and instructions;

9. Refrain from seeking, receiving or offering any form of gratification; and

10. Exercise courtesy and restraint in words and action.

The management shall uphold and promote these principles by leadership and example.

STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this Code are:

1. to promote the highest standard of ethical conduct based on the ten principles listed above;

2. to establish a framework and guidance to the ethical behavior required of every employee (self evaluation and self discipline);

3. to assist the management in arriving at ethical decision-making in the event of moral dilemma; and

4. to enhance public confidence in the ACC by conducting ourselves in accordance with this Code.
SCOPE AND APPLICATION

This Code shall apply to the ACC employees at all levels. This Code outlines ACC’s approach when dealing with employees, clients, Government and society at large.

MANAGEMENT’S RESPONSIBILITIES

As our employees are central to the ACC’s performance, we shall:

1. treat everyone fairly, equally and with dignity;
2. create safe, healthy and conducive working environment, culturally and physically;
3. promote a culture of open and honest communication and team work;
4. provide fair opportunities for professional growth, organizationally and individually;
5. practise participatory and transparent decision making process;
6. provide fair opportunities for career advancement for all employees (within the organizational limitations);
7. ensure equal pay for work of equal value and fair service conditions (within the policy limitations); and
8. respect employees’ privacy and family needs.
EMPLOYEES’ RESPONSIBILITIES

We shall:

1. nurture a sense of belongingness to the ACC;
2. commit truly to making ACC the Nation’s Conscience;
3. uphold the ACC’s goals and work consciously towards achieving them;
4. abide by this Code, in letter and spirit;
5. persevere constantly to develop ourselves, professionally and ethically;
6. treat each other with respect and dignity; and
7. speak up on seeing or sensing any breach of this Code by any employee.

The ACC shall not tolerate:

1. any form of sexual or physical harassment by any ACC employee or to any ACC employee;
2. leakage of confidential information;
3. misuse of office resources like time, stationeries, office equipments, vehicles etc; and
4. breach of any principle of this Code, either directly or indirectly.
**To Government**

We shall:

1. support the government’s policy of ‘zero tolerance’ to corruption by formulating and implementing various anti-corruption measures;
2. strive to develop and maintain good relationship with all government agencies; and
3. be responsive to the government in providing frank, honest, comprehensive, accurate and timely advice without fear or favour on the government’s anti-corruption policies and programmes.

**To Society**

We shall:

1. commit ourselves to curb corruption, to build a just, happy, harmonious and corruption free society through fair, fearless and speedy investigation of corrupt conduct and prevention of corruption;
2. educate community, public and private sector about corruption and its effects;
3. lead by example, achieve excellence in fostering partnerships, and mainstream anti-corruption strategies/measures in public and private organizations;
4. respect the rights of fellow citizens; and
5. do what we say and say what we do.
Our Ethical Stand

Inducement

We shall not offer, promise, solicit or accept bribery, gifts, hospitality or other inducements, either directly or indirectly, overtly or covertly which influence or reward a decision or indecision. We shall neither tolerate nor engage in any form of corruption.

Asset Management

To manage our assets responsibly and with due care, we shall:

1. use our office equipment and machinery according to manufacturers’ instructions;
2. keep accurate records and inventories of our stocks;
3. keep our offices and facilities in good order; and
4. ensure appropriate security and care of our assets.

Resource Management

To manage our resources responsibly and judiciously, we shall ensure:

1. transparent and ethical conduct in all financial transactions;
2. prudent use of financial and other resources;
3. accurate accounting and record keeping;
4. up-to-date maintenance of inventories; and
5. best ethical procurement procedures based on value-for-money criterion.
**Declaration of Conflicts of Interest**

We shall declare our interest as per annexure I of ‘ACC Service Rule’ and withdraw from any decision making process where we have or potentially have a conflict of interest.

**Disclosure of Gifts**

We shall disclose all gifts in accordance with the ‘Gift Rules’.

**Declaration of Assets**

We shall declare our income, assets and liabilities including those of our spouses, children and dependants in accordance with the ‘Asset Declaration Rules’.

**Customer Service**

We shall serve all visitors to the ACC with respect, courtesy, and impartiality. Services shall be provided as per annexure II of the ‘ACC Service Rule’.

**POLICY AND PROCEDURAL COMPLIANCE**

The Director shall be responsible for monitoring compliance and enforcement of this Code. An annual performance appraisal shall be used as an instrument for monitoring compliance. Any breach of this Code by any employee, irrespective of the degree of breach, shall result in appropriate action.

**REPORTING BREACHES**

It shall be the moral responsibility of every employee to SPEAK- UP on the sight
of any breach of this Code by any employee. Report or information on the alleged breach of this Code by any employee shall be made to:

1. Chairperson;
2. Commissioners;
3. Director; or
4. Immediate supervisors.

The report or information on the alleged breach of this Code by any employee may be in the form of letter, e-mail, telephone, walk-in or anonymous. The identity and safety of the whistle-blower shall be protected by the management.

THE ETHICS COMMITTEE & ITS ROLES

The Human Resource Committee (HRC) shall be the Ethics Committee.

1. The main role of the Ethics Committee is to investigate matters reported/forwarded to it on the breach of this Code by anyone and take action accordingly;

2. The Committee shall be independent in its functions and shall not be subjected to overruling or objection from any ACC authority except by way of appeal. The Committee shall be transparent in its conduct and shall inform the reporter/informer about the action taken, if identity is known.

3. The Committee shall uphold this Code and accordingly maintain confidentiality with respect to the matter under consideration, adjudication and the whistle blower, if identity is known; and

4. The Committee shall also be the point of reference for employees when in doubt or when an employee or a group is faced with an ethical dilemma.
PENALTY FOR BREACH

1. An employee shall be reprimanded if he violates this Code for the first time, if proven in proper administrative proceedings, if such a breach is considered minor by the Ethics Committee.

2. An employee, who commits minor breach of this Code for the second time or major breach for the first time as determined by the Ethics Committee, if proven in proper administrative proceedings, shall be reverted or demoted to a lower position or grade level.

3. An employee, who violates this Code repeatedly irrespective of nature of breaches, if proven in proper administrative proceedings, shall be terminated from the service.

4. If any breach of this Code is punishable by a heavier penalty under another law, that law shall apply.

APPEAL

Any employee who is aggrieved by the decision of the Ethics Committee may appeal to the ACC Chairperson within ten days from the day of the receipt of disciplinary order by the concerned employee.

REVIEWING THE CODE

This Code may be reviewed by all the ACC employees as may be necessary.

UNDERTAKING

Pledge of Ethics

I hereby pledge to honour the ACC Ethical Code of Conduct. In the event of breach
of this Code, I agree that the ACC in its sole discretion may hold me accountable.

By signing hereunder, I declare my allegiance to this Code.

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