

# **Leadership Dialogue 2015**

## **Fulfilling our Mission: Taking Individual Responsibility**



**Leader's Guide  
and Programme Materials**



# INTRODUCTION TO THE 2015 LEADERSHIP DIALOGUE GUIDE

Thank you for participating in the 2015 United Nations Leadership Dialogue.

The programme began in 2013 with conversations about our oath of office and what it means to be an international civil servant. In 2014, the programme highlighted the importance of respect and tolerance in the workplace.

This year's theme is "Fulfilling our Mission: Taking Individual Responsibility". This topic asks you to think about your own accountability for delivering results that advance our mission and promote the best interests of the Organization.

Individual responsibility is part of the foundation on which an effective and trustworthy organization is built, and must be a priority for us all.

I will count on all UN Secretariat staff to participate in this exercise. Let us work together to keep ethics and our core values at the forefront of our work as we serve "we the peoples".

**BAN Ki-moon**

Secretary-General of the United Nations



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# GETTING STARTED

Welcome to the 2015 Leadership Dialogue.

We chose this year's Leadership Dialogue topic "Fulfilling our Mission: Taking Individual Responsibility" based on overwhelming interest in discussing personal accountability. We believe that how we make decisions and are answerable for consequences, both positive and negative, is critical to the UN's success.

As stated in the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service, international civil servants have a special calling: to serve the ideals of peace, respect for fundamental rights, economic and social progress, and international cooperation. In line with this, we are all responsible for contributing to the broad ideals to which we dedicated ourselves in joining the United Nations.

Taking responsibility means assuming ownership for decisions and actions necessary for achieving desired results. It is about being ready to accept and answer for the consequences of our actions. And sometimes, it also means being willing to admit to mistakes. We hope that this dialogue will help you and your colleagues discuss how to best focus on taking responsibility and making the tough choices.

This Guide provides you with everything you need to lead a dialogue with your colleagues. In consideration of your time and schedule, this guide provides step-by-step instructions and specific materials for you to use. Your team members will expect you to use the same materials that are used throughout the Organization. If you require support for this session, or wish to supplement these materials, please contact the Ethics Office at [ethicsoffice@un.org](mailto:ethicsoffice@un.org) for guidance.

A feedback form is included as Appendix C. Once your session has concluded, please fill it out and send it to your Executive or Administrative Office who will forward it to the Ethics Office. Your feedback will help us improve future Leadership Dialogue materials and select new topics.

Finally, please remember that as a leader in this Organization, your colleagues and other stakeholders observe your words and actions and take cue from what you do. The more you make this dialogue relevant, the more it will build understanding of how taking individual responsibility contributes to the achievement of our mission.

Thank you,

Director,  
UN Ethics Office

## How the Leadership Dialogues Will Work Throughout the UN

The discussion you are about to lead with your group is one of hundreds that will take place throughout the United Nations Secretariat. Here is the order in which it will work:

1. The Secretary-General will launch this year's dialogue.
2. Under-Secretaries-General will host dialogue sessions with their own direct reports.
3. Assistant-Secretaries-General will host dialogue sessions with their direct reports.
4. Directors and P-5 level staff members will host dialogue sessions with their direct reports.
5. P-4 level staff members who manage teams will host dialogue sessions with their direct reports, if their direct reports were not already included in the Director/P-5 led discussions. And so on.
6. The goal is that all international and national UN staff globally will be part of a Leadership Dialogue session, every year.

By the time you lead your own session, you should have already completed the session with your own manager. This way, you will have a sense of how the dialogue works, and you will have had an opportunity to think through the activities, cases and questions that may arise. Please note that all managers are expected to complete their sessions by 29 January 2016. Thus, if you have managers who report to you, schedule your session as soon as possible after your supervisor has completed his or her session with you, to ensure all managers in your department or mission complete their sessions on time.

Respective Executive/Administrative Offices are requested to submit to the Ethics Office the overall, completion statistics for their Departments/Offices by 15 February 2016.

## Planning your leadership dialogue session

In practical terms, taking individual responsibility and being accountable for one's actions as a UN staff member means taking ownership of one's conduct and, in doing so, being answerable for the consequences. It means making decisions that are in the best interests of the UN and submitting to scrutiny. It also means adhering to UN regulations, rules and policies that govern our work and making decisions based on ethical principles. This dialogue will help you address these challenges.

The three main objectives of this dialogue are:

1. Deepen our understanding of what taking individual responsibility for our decisions means to the fulfilment of the mission of the UN;
2. Improve our ability to focus on achieving results, and;
3. Consider the moral and ethical values that define each of us, and which guide our decisions.

The materials in this guide are designed to be used in a single session with a group of 10 to 25 staff members. If you have more than 25 staff members, we recommend conducting two or more separate sessions. The programme is designed to take about one hour, but you are free to use more time as you deem necessary.



We recommend you conduct the dialogue session during a face-to-face meeting, unless this is not practical. Issues of ethics and integrity can be intimidating to discuss, and a more personal setting will help you and your staff feel at ease.




## Your role in the session

The leadership dialogue is designed to allow staff members to discuss what it means to take individual responsibility in order to fulfill the UN mission. You are the facilitator of the discussion. You will guide discussions, ask questions, and engage staff members. Staff members often leave a dialogue session remembering points that they and their coworkers made much more vividly than those made by you. Remember that your role is not to lecture, but to guide the learning experience in a way that allows your team to arrive at important understandings on their own.

Discussions like these often lead to more conversations afterwards. This is a good thing. Indeed, be prepared for one or more of your staff members to approach you to ask questions or report concerns. This is a difficult topic; what is important is that we have open discussions, not that you have all the answers.

## Pre-session checklist

To ensure that all staff complete the dialogue sessions by 29 January 2016, you should plan to lead the session no more than a few weeks after your supervisor has completed his or her session with you.

DATE	TASK
 <b>1-2 weeks ahead</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read this guide and select one or two case studies which will be most relevant for your team <input type="checkbox"/> Invite your staff to the session, noting that attendance is mandatory <input type="checkbox"/> Reserve the room/location and equipment <input type="checkbox"/> Consult your supervisor or the Ethics Office if you have questions about the materials or the session
 <b>1-3 days ahead</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Send reminder to staff about the date and time for the session <input type="checkbox"/> Print materials you will hand out (sufficient copies of the selected case studies for everyone) <input type="checkbox"/> Obtain a copy of the Roadmap and Putting Ethics to Work guides, available from <a href="http://www.un.org/en/ethics">www.un.org/en/ethics</a> <input type="checkbox"/> Confirm availability of the room
 <b>Dialogue Day</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Conduct the dialogue session with your staff <input type="checkbox"/> Report the completion of your session to your Executive Office <input type="checkbox"/> Send feedback to your Executive Office or Administrative Office who will forward it to the Ethics Office.

## Session plan

You should lead the session as follows:

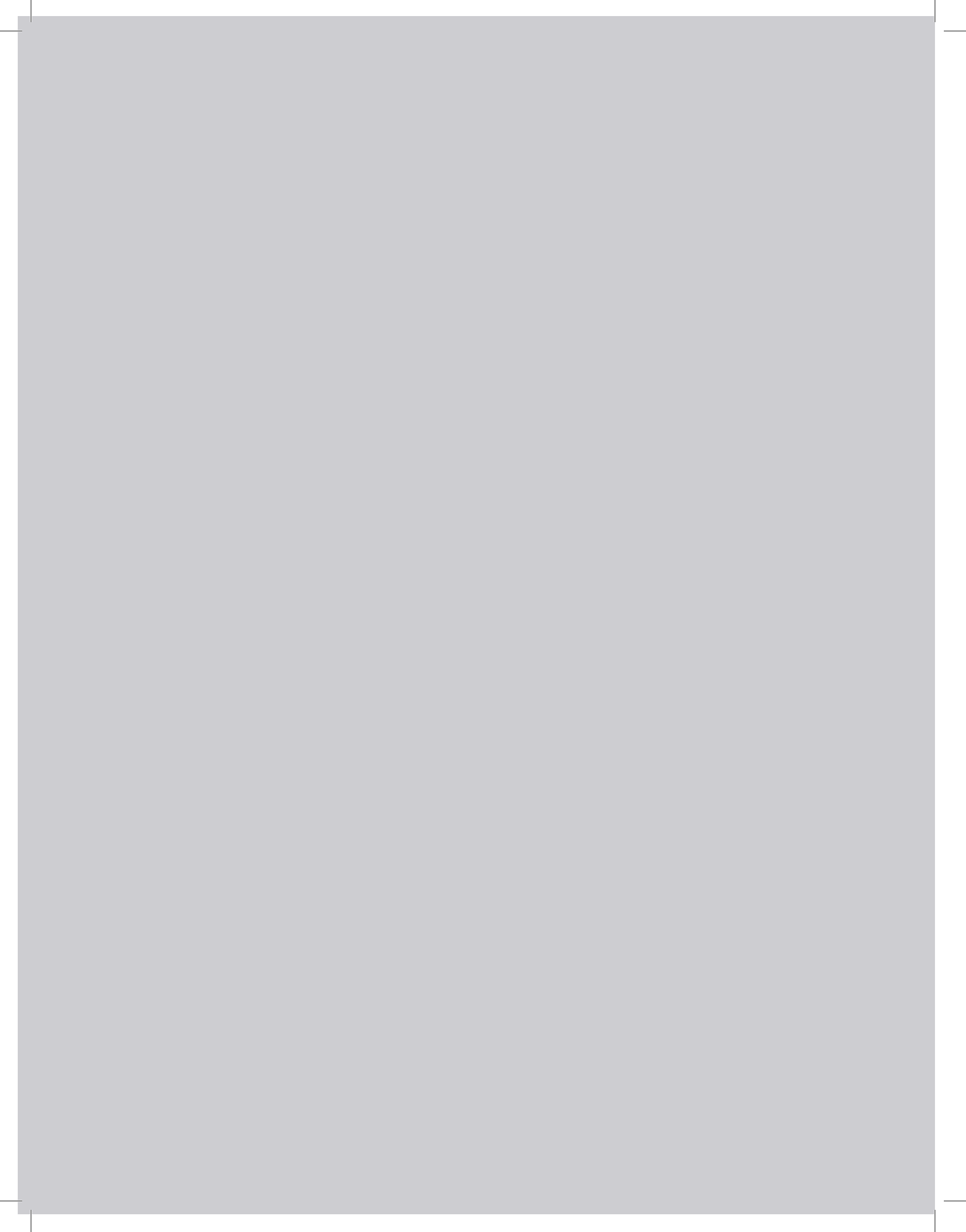
SECTION	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS	TIME
1. Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Staff members sign in</li><li>• Explain why the UN is conducting this dialogue</li><li>• Review the session agenda</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Participant sign-in sheet</li><li>• Opening Remarks</li></ul>	5 minutes
2. Opening Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tell a personal story about a tough ethical choice that you have made in your career</li><li>• Discuss with the group a significant decision made in your office over the last six months</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Highlights of personal story</li></ul>	20 minutes
3. Case study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review selected case or cases</li><li>• Discuss cases using questions provided</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Case studies – select one or two</li></ul>	30 minutes
4. Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make closing comments and ask for last questions</li><li>• Thank staff for attending</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Closing remarks</li><li>• Collect sign-in sheet (see Appendix)</li></ul>	5 minutes

### Post session checklist

Once the session is complete, please do the following:

- Managers** - Collect and send the completed sign-in sheet and evaluation form to your Executive Office or other designated recipient. See the Appendix for these forms.
- Executive Officers and Administrative Officers** - Once you have collected all sign-in sheets and evaluation forms for your organization, send a copy of the evaluation forms and the roll up form provided in the Appendix to the Ethics Office. You do not have to submit the sign-in sheets to the Ethics Office; they are for your records. Instead, a total participant count at the conclusion of all of your department's sessions (Appendix D) should be sent to the Ethics Office.

# LEADERSHIP DIALOGUE MATERIALS



# INTRODUCTION

- ➔ As staff members arrive, ask them to sign in using the form provided.
- ➔ At the scheduled time for the session to begin, welcome your staff, and thank them for attending.
- ➔ Read or summarize the opening script below:



**Welcome to the 2015 Leadership Dialogue session.** For this year's topic, we will consider the importance of individual responsibility and accountability, as international civil servants, in serving the public and achieving the mandates from Member States. This can be one of the most rewarding aspects of working with the UN but it also presents unique challenges. Today, we will discuss those challenges.

At the UN, we work in a very complex environment where decisions are made daily, often under difficult circumstances. Being accountable and taking professional responsibility as a UN staff member is about making choices and decisions that achieve results in the best interests of the UN.

Rooted in the UN Charter - which requires the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity - accountability is a standing priority of the Organization and has been on the agenda of the UN Secretariat, Agencies, Funds and Programmes for many years.

- **Definition - A/RES/64/259 :** "Accountability is the obligation of the Secretariat and its staff members to be answerable for all decisions made and actions taken by them and be responsible for honouring their commitments, without qualification or exception. It includes achieving objectives and high-quality results in a timely and cost-effective manner, in fully implementing and delivering on all mandates to the Secretariat approved by the UN intergovernmental bodies and other subsidiary organs established by them in compliance with all resolutions, regulations, rules and ethical standards."

Accountability involves all of us. It flows both to and from the Secretary-General, Senior Managers and individual staff members. We have many elements of accountability in the UN, including governance, internal systems and controls, oversight mechanisms, and tools to promote transparency and integrity. In the last few years,



*(continued)*

a number of initiatives have been undertaken to strengthen accountability at the organizational and personal levels. These include, among others,

- Establishment of the Ethics Office
- Development of Senior Manager Compacts
- Implementation of the Financial Disclosure Programme
- Introduction of the new Internal Justice System
- Improvements to the integrity of the procurement processes
- Development of a framework to address misconduct in peace-keeping missions
- Increased capacity relating to Results-Based Management and Enterprise Risk-Management, and, Review of the performance assessment system

For UN staff members, the challenge is to develop a clear understanding of what it means to take ownership of our decisions, and to be personally accountable. The Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service state: “International civil servants have a special calling: to serve the ideals of peace, respect for fundamental rights, economic and social progress and international cooperation.” To realize these values, the Standards of Conduct confirm that international civil servants “should feel responsible for contributing to the broad ideals to which they dedicated themselves in joining the UN system”.

The Secretary-General has asked us to engage in a formal discussion about important ethical issues like this, once per year. So, please participate and ask questions. If you don't feel comfortable talking in front of others, speak to me after this session. If you do not feel comfortable speaking to me, speak with someone else, like our Executive Officer (or Administrative Officer), Human Resources, or the Ethics Office. The Ethics Office has published a guide called the Roadmap to steer you to the right office when you have an issue. Feel free to consult their website for a copy.

Our colleagues at the Ethics Office have developed materials to guide our discussion. My supervisor has conducted a similar session with me, so I am familiar with the materials. I think you will find them interesting.

## ➔ Explain the plan for the session



Here is an overview of our session today:

- Have an initial discussion about this topic using a personal example as a starting point.
- Consider one [or two] case stud[ies] in which we will look at how taking individual responsibility and ownership for our decision-making is so important to our collective success as an Organization.
- Conclude with a summary of today's discussions.

# OPENING ACTIVITY

This part of the dialogue discussion consists of 4 steps:

1. Recount a story from your experience about a difficult decision that you have made. It can be as a UN staff member or from another time in your career. What made this situation difficult?
  - What did you decide to do?
  - How did you reach this decision?
  - What were the consequences of your decisions and actions?
  - Would you do anything different in hindsight?
2. Ask your staff if they have any comments or questions and encourage them to make suggestions if they had to make the same decision in the same circumstances.
  - Do they see any other potential consequences, both negative and positive?
  - Are there any other options they would suggest for you to consider?
3. Ask for volunteer(s) to identify several decisions that were made in your department in the last six months. Then ask the group to select one of these decisions to pursue further.
4. Ask the following questions to facilitate a discussion of the decision selected by the group.
  - How did we reach this decision?
  - How transparent were we in making this decision?
  - What were the consequences (both positive and negative) of this decision and action?
  - Did we achieve what we thought we would?
  - Were there any unintended consequences?

Make these key points as you conclude this first part of your dialogue session:

- Every staff member (whatever their role) makes choices and takes decisions on a daily basis.
- Individual staff members need to be able to explain and/or justify controversial, tough decisions.
- As International Civil Servants, we are obliged to adhere to the highest standard of ethical conduct when we make choices and decisions.
- We are also responsible for applying the UN rules and regulations fairly and consistently whether in good times or in difficult times.
- Staff may have observed instances where pressure to perform and achieve results has made treating people respectfully and fairly seem less important than getting the job done. In those cases, speaking up is an appropriate course of action.
- Taking responsibility is not about achieving results at any cost. If unsure about whom to approach, or if there has already been a conversation and there is still some unease about a situation, there are resources available to help.

➔ **After participants have had a chance to discuss these questions and points, it is time to move on to the next phase of the dialogue:**

Now we will discuss some case situations where we are challenged to look at issues around transparency, taking responsibility in the context of decision-making and explaining and/or justifying our decisions.



# CASE STUDIES

There are four case studies on the following pages. You should select one or two to use in your dialogue session. We suggest the following approach:

- Select one or two case studies, time permitting, for group discussion.
- You should lead the conversation.
- Solicit advice and opinions from participants.
- Be aware that some participants will be more comfortable than others speaking in front of the group.
- You should encourage the quieter members to participate by asking them to offer their views on the case being discussed.

Each case study is designed so that it can be discussed within 15 - 20 minutes. You may choose to spend more time. And if you do not finish all the material by the time your session must close, this is not a problem. The point is to have a meaningful dialogue with your staff, not to cover all of the material in detail and find the right answers. Indeed, while talking points are provided, there are no “perfect” answers to these case studies. These are not easy issues for most people.

The table below provides a brief synopsis for each case study.

CASE	NAME OF CASE	KEY ISSUE
1	Police Protection	Being personally accountable
2	Shopping Excursion	Admitting a mistake
3	Well Water	Determining what is in the best interests of the UN
4	Project Upset	Resolving interpersonal conflicts

## Case Study Instructions

Select one or two case studies well in advance of the session that you believe will be of greatest interest and relevance to your staff. You should have several printed copies of the cases and discussion questions available to hand out, as required. Follow the steps below:

1. **Introduce the case:** Each case includes a small introduction you can read or paraphrase to the group. The case should be projected or posted on the wall, or passed out to staff members.
2. **Read:** Read the case study aloud to staff, or have someone read it aloud.
3. **Ask questions:** Each case study has several questions. Ask a question, and allow staff to discuss it fully before moving on to the next one. You should ask these questions in order, as they are designed to guide the discussion. However, you are not required to ask every question.
4. **Wait:** Give staff members time to consider each question and potential answers. It can take several seconds for a person to hear a question and formulate an answer. Ask for volunteers to offer their thoughts.
5. **Conclude:** Once you have discussed each of the questions, conclude by reviewing the key discussion points provided. If people are still actively discussing, say, “Let’s hear one more comment before we close out this case.”

## CASE STUDY 1: POLICE PROTECTION

- ➔ Read or paraphrase this introduction to the case study



This case looks at the challenges of being accountable for making the right decision.

- ➔ Read the following case study



Atta has just opened a field office in an isolated region of Jerolea, a country which has recently emerged from a 10 year civil war. Atta's responsibilities include monitoring and reporting on the human rights situation in her area. While Atta is the first staff member to be posted to her small town, a few local human rights NGOs are also present.

A small number of young, male residents approach Atta and allege that the police are intimidating, abusing, and stealing from the local population. Atta contacts the local NGOs and records similar concerns. Believing there could be substance to these allegations, she reports this to her supervisor based in Jerolea's capital. Atta's supervisor informs her that he is developing excellent relations with the national police command, that the police are competent to deal with the situation, and that anyone who raises concerns about the police should be told to report them to the local police chief. Her supervisor further speculates that these young men may be former combatants seeking to undermine the government's efforts to restore security, and again suggests that the matter be left to the local police authorities.

## ➔ Discussion

After you finish reading the case study, give staff a few moments to think about it. Then, ask the following questions:

**Q.** What is happening in this case? What are the relevant facts?

**A.** Atta works independently in a field office in an isolated area. She is made aware by a group of young men that abuses are possibly being perpetrated by the local police. She follows up with local NGOs, and concludes that the allegations could be true. She advises her supervisor and is told to direct any complainants to the local police chief. The country has just emerged from a prolonged conflict. Referring complainants back to the police force alleged to be committing abuses may not be the best answer.

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**Q.** What should Atta do in this situation?

**A.** Atta should hold a second discussion with her supervisor, presenting all of the information obtained from the local NGOs, and try to convince him of the need to conduct further inquiries. If the supervisor is not receptive to her arguments and the information presented, she could take the issue to the head of office or other relevant UN official.

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**Q.** What makes this situation difficult for Atta?

**A.** Atta is isolated from other colleagues and her supervisor. She is also new to the region. Atta knows that she has an obligation to identify, monitor and report on human rights concerns in her area, and that she needs to build trust in the community. Her effectiveness and the effectiveness of the Organisation could be impacted if she does not appropriately address the concerns brought to her attention. She may also be reluctant to oppose the position of her supervisor, and may fear potential consequences if she does.

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**Q.** What are Atta's rights, duties and obligations in this situation?

**A.** She is obligated to advise her supervisor of the situation and seek his advice. If she cannot convince him to do anything other than refer the complaints to the local police, she should seek further consultations within her line of supervision. She also needs to get back to those who made the complaint to show that she can be trusted to respond to their concerns.

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- ➔ After allowing participants a chance to discuss the major issues, summarize the points they made.

**As the discussion comes to a close, make sure to address the following key points:**

- ❑ When faced with a difficult situation and you are unsure of what to do, speaking up and asking for advice is an important first step.
- ❑ It is always best to address issues once facts have been obtained and the situation has been assessed from all perspectives.
- ❑ If a supervisor's support cannot be obtained in relation to carrying out the fundamental responsibilities of the Organisation, one may have to seek further management input, to determine the most appropriate course of action.
- ❑ Always remember that the work of the UN is visible to the communities and people whom we support.
- ❑ In the final analysis, sometimes there is no best or even good resolution to tough situations. What is important is that we understand that our loyalties lie with the UN, and that our actions must always be consistent with the interests, values, and objectives of the Organization.

## CASE STUDY 2: SHOPPING EXCURSION

### ➔ Read or paraphrase this introduction to the case study



This case considers how taking responsibility for our actions sometimes means admitting to mistakes and taking corrective action.

### ➔ Read the following case study



Louis is newly arrived at his duty station as an international staff member. As an international staff member, he has access to a duty-free shop to buy imported goods at an affordable price. His colleague, Irinke, a locally recruited staff, asks if he could buy certain items for her at the shop. A few weeks later, Irinke again asks Louis to buy other imported items for her.

In appreciation, Irinke brings Louis a box of home baked sweets. Louis says that she should feel free to come to him whenever she needs anything, and lets her borrow his duty-free card whenever she requests it.

Some weeks later, Louis hears rumors that Irinke is selling items from the duty-free shop in a family kiosk at a local market. Louis angrily dismisses the rumors as he does not believe that Irinke would do this. On second thought, he decides to refuse to buy anything more for her. Although concerned about the consequences, he makes an appointment to see his supervisor.

### ➔ Discussion

After you finish reading the case study, give staff a few moments to think about it. Then, ask the following questions:

- Q.** What is happening in this case? What are the relevant facts?
- A.** Louis allows a local staff member to take advantage of his access to duty free goods. He learns that his colleague may be re-selling these goods. He decides to bring the matter to the attention of his supervisor and admit his mistake.

**Q.** Have you experienced similar situations where you made a poor choice and needed to recognize that you made a mistake?

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**Q.** What were the consequences of Louis' actions?

**A.** Louis is breaking the rules by loaning his duty-free card. Louis' actions could have negative repercussions for the UN, especially if Irinke is indeed re-selling duty-free goods in the local market. He also could face disciplinary action. By admitting his mistake, Louis accepts responsibility for his behavior and its potentially negative consequences.

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**Q.** What made this situation so difficult?

**A.** We don't know whether Louis knew the rules for access to the duty-free shop, or even thought to check them before he acted. He may have wanted to be nice to his new colleague. Irinke may have taken advantage of Louis. Louis did not take the time to consider the consequences of his actions. He may not even have recognized that he had an ethical dilemma.

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**Q.** How should Louis handle the meeting with his supervisor?

**A.** Louis should be honest with his supervisor about his actions, the rationale for his decision, admit that he made a mistake, apologize and cooperate with any subsequent inquiry, if the supervisor decides that it is necessary.

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➔ **After allowing participants a chance to discuss the major issues, summarize the points they made.**

**As the discussion comes to a close, make sure to address the following key points:**

- Ethics is about being accountable for your behavior.
- Anyone can make a mistake. Admitting that you did something incorrect is not easy but it is the right thing to do and it does take courage.
- A manager's role is to help staff feel that they have permission to raise and discuss ethical dilemmas and potential mistakes in judgement and action. They should also be open to staff raising honest questions and concerns.
- As staff in the UN, we are responsible for modelling the right behavior at all times, for ourselves, our teams and our colleagues.
- In determining what action to take, always remember that our loyalties lie with the UN and our actions must always be in the best interests of the Organization.

## CASE STUDY 3: WELL WATER

### ➔ Read or paraphrase this introduction to the case study



In this case, we consider how determining what is in the best interests of the UN can be very challenging.

### ➔ Read the following case study



For the first time in her career, Eloisa has been given the leadership role of a group of engineers. This group has been assigned the responsibility to build a new well in the country of Kaval. When they have completed their initial technical surveys, the engineers are approached by a group of villagers who ask for a second well. They explain that, in accordance with their culture and traditions, it is not possible for both women and men to use the same well. The villagers threaten to prevent the UN engineers from building the new well if a commitment is not made for the second one.

Eloisa is aware that Member States are concerned about cost overruns, especially in that region of the country. She knows that resources available to her are limited and expenditures must be kept to a minimum.

### ➔ Discussion

After you finish reading the case study, give staff a few moments to think about it. Then, ask the following questions:

- Q.** What is happening in this case? What are the relevant facts?
- A.** Eloisa, who is inexperienced in a leadership role, faces a difficult decision in determining whether and how to address the villagers' concerns. Given budget issues, her choices to act are limited. The villagers may cause a disruption that may impact on the safety of the team and create political embarrassment for the UN.

**Q.** Is this a minor issue or could it lead to a major conflict with the village and/or member states?

**A.** If not handled appropriately this situation could escalate and impair relationships with the villagers, potentially lead to safety and security issues, and cause embarrassment to the UN.

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**Q.** Does Eloisa have an obligation to build the second well? What is the best way for Eloisa to address the situation?

**A.** No, she does not have an obligation to build the second well. She should respectfully listen to the concerns of the villagers and consider all possible options to address the problem including their consequences. Once a decision has been made, she needs to be very transparent about her decision to all stakeholders involved. For Eloisa, the best course of action may be to sit down with the villagers and explore other potential solutions, including looking at how all members of the community could use the well at different times.

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**Q.** As leader of the team in this situation, what should Eloisa demonstrate to her staff?

**A.** Eloisa needs to model ethical behavior by taking a thoughtful and respectful approach to resolving the situation and finding a resolution that is just and fair for all. She needs to look at the facts including the cultural issues involved and understand who has an interest in the situation. She also needs to consider what is required of her by the UN, look at the options and their consequences, make the best possible decision, and take action.

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➔ **After allowing participants a chance to discuss the major issues, summarize the points they made.**

**As the discussion comes to a close, make sure to address the following key points:**

- Each of us may face situations where applying the rules and instructions may be difficult or unpopular. Each of us has faced a time where the right course of action was hard to determine and the facts were complex.
- In this scenario, a simple solution may have been to ignore the concerns of the villagers and just start building the well, leaving the villagers upset and angry at the UN. It is important to recognize that many individuals and stakeholders could be affected by our actions. Assessing the consequences, both negative and positive, is essential.
- Gathering all of the information to make an informed and culturally appropriate choice, assessing the options and their consequences, and making tough decisions can be challenging. But that is what it means to take responsibility for our actions.
- In determining what action to take, it is important that we understand that our loyalties lie with the UN and our actions must always be in the best interests of the Organization.



## CASE STUDY 4: PROJECT UPSET

### ➔ Read or paraphrase this introduction to the case study



This case looks at the costs and impact of interpersonal conflicts in the workplace.

### ➔ Read the following case study



Marion and Dexter are working on an important project proposal with very tight timeframes. If the delivery deadline is not met, the project will not be funded and all work will have to stop immediately. This will have negative consequences for beneficiaries, and will cause embarrassment to their Office.

As of late, Marion has stopped speaking to Dexter and walks the other way when she sees him coming. Dexter hears that Marion has asked their team leader to remove him from the project since he is “never around” and “not pulling his weight”. Dexter complains to their team leader, who tells him to just work it out.

With tensions mounting, Marion and Dexter spend their time exchanging nasty emails instead of getting the job done. Dexter decides that he wants to file a complaint about Marion’s conduct and contacts a number of his colleagues asking them to sign a formal petition against her.

### ➔ Discussion

After you finish reading the case study, give staff a few moments to think about it. Then, ask the following questions:

- Q.** What is happening in this case? What are the relevant facts?
- A.** Marion and Dexter are working on an important project proposal which is time sensitive. Interpersonal conflict starts to interfere with their productivity and there is danger of the project being in jeopardy if they don’t begin working together more effectively. Their supervisor does not intervene to resolve the situation, and Dexter tries to involve his colleagues in filing a complaint against Marion.

**Q.** Have you experienced similar conflict situations with one of your colleagues which you have been unable to successfully resolve? How did you handle the situation and what were the impacts on the work you were doing?

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**Q.** What would you advise Dexter to do?

**A.** Dexter should make the effort to speak directly to Marion and express his concerns. If they cannot make progress, Dexter should go back to their team leader. If the team leader will not or cannot resolve the conflict, Dexter should consider going to HR or the Ombudsman for advice before filing an official complaint. By escalating the matter to colleagues, Dexter may have made a difficult situation much worse.

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**Q.** What should the team leader do?

**A.** The team leader should listen carefully to the concerns, get the facts from all perspectives, assess the situation, identify options, and take action.

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**Q.** Are there consequences if no action is taken to address interpersonal conflicts?

**A.** Yes, motivation generally decreases, productivity for the team diminishes and time consuming complaints may escalate as a result. In the end, after an official complaint is heard and recommendations made, the underlying issues may still not be resolved. All of these consequences may come at a high cost to the Organization in terms of dollars spent and time invested.

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➔ **After allowing participants a chance to discuss the major issues, summarize the points they made.**

**As the discussion comes to a close, make sure to address the following key points:**

- Staff members have the obligation to treat their colleagues with respect, courtesy and civility.
- Staff members also have a responsibility to effectively work together to ensure the work and commitments of the Organisation are accomplished in a timely and professional manner.
- Managers and supervisors are expected to provide timely advice and guidance to staff on appropriate conduct.
- Managers and supervisors are responsible for promoting a harmonious workplace where staff members are treated fairly and with respect, conflicts are acknowledged and steps are taken to resolve problems.
- Unresolved interpersonal conflict festers. When relationships are negatively impacted, it is very difficult to turn situations around and regain respect and tolerance in the workplace.
- Managers should seek advice when unsure of how to proceed.

# CLOSING ACTIVITY

➔ After concluding the case studies, read or paraphrase the following:



That was an excellent discussion. You made very interesting points.

Everyone talks about the importance of the ideals and mission of the UN. Each of us plays a role in supporting those ideals and fulfilling that mission. That said, when we think about our professional lives at the UN, we may often think of reports and meetings, our list of daily tasks and, perhaps, what is in it (or not in it) for me. Yet, working together at the United Nations means more than this. It is about achieving results that are in the best interest of the UN. And this means taking responsibility for decisions focused on the needs of our stakeholders.

Think back to the story that I told about a tough decision that I took. Think about the example we discussed together. Each of these situations involved owning the problem, looking at options, making a decision to act, and accepting the consequences. In making decisions, respectful, courteous and fair interactions are a necessity—not a luxury. UN rules and policies must be applied consistently.

No doubt there can be negative as well as positive consequences when we make decisions. We cannot permit fear of poor feedback, a complaint, or even an adverse ruling from a complaint, prevent us from taking difficult decisions when it comes to performance, productivity and integrity.

As staff members, you may have observed instances where pressure to perform and achieve results has made treating people respectfully less important than getting the job done. Taking responsibility is not about achieving results at any cost.

Finally, if you have concerns about decisions made or possible ethical misconduct, it is important to speak up. If you are unsure about whom to approach, or if there has already been a conversation and there is still some unease about a situation, there are resources available to help (e.g. supervisors, heads of office, Human Resource officers, the Ombudsman or OIOS). The Ethics Office has published a guide called the Roadmap to steer you to the right office when you have an issue. Feel free to consult their website for a copy.

- ➔ Do you have any additional thoughts on how we can use these ideas to better deliver on our own department's mission?
- ➔ Take suggestions, and offer encouragement to share more ideas going forward.

## Concluding the Dialogue

- ➔ Thank staff members for their willingness to engage in an important discussion
- ➔ Read or paraphrase the following final remarks

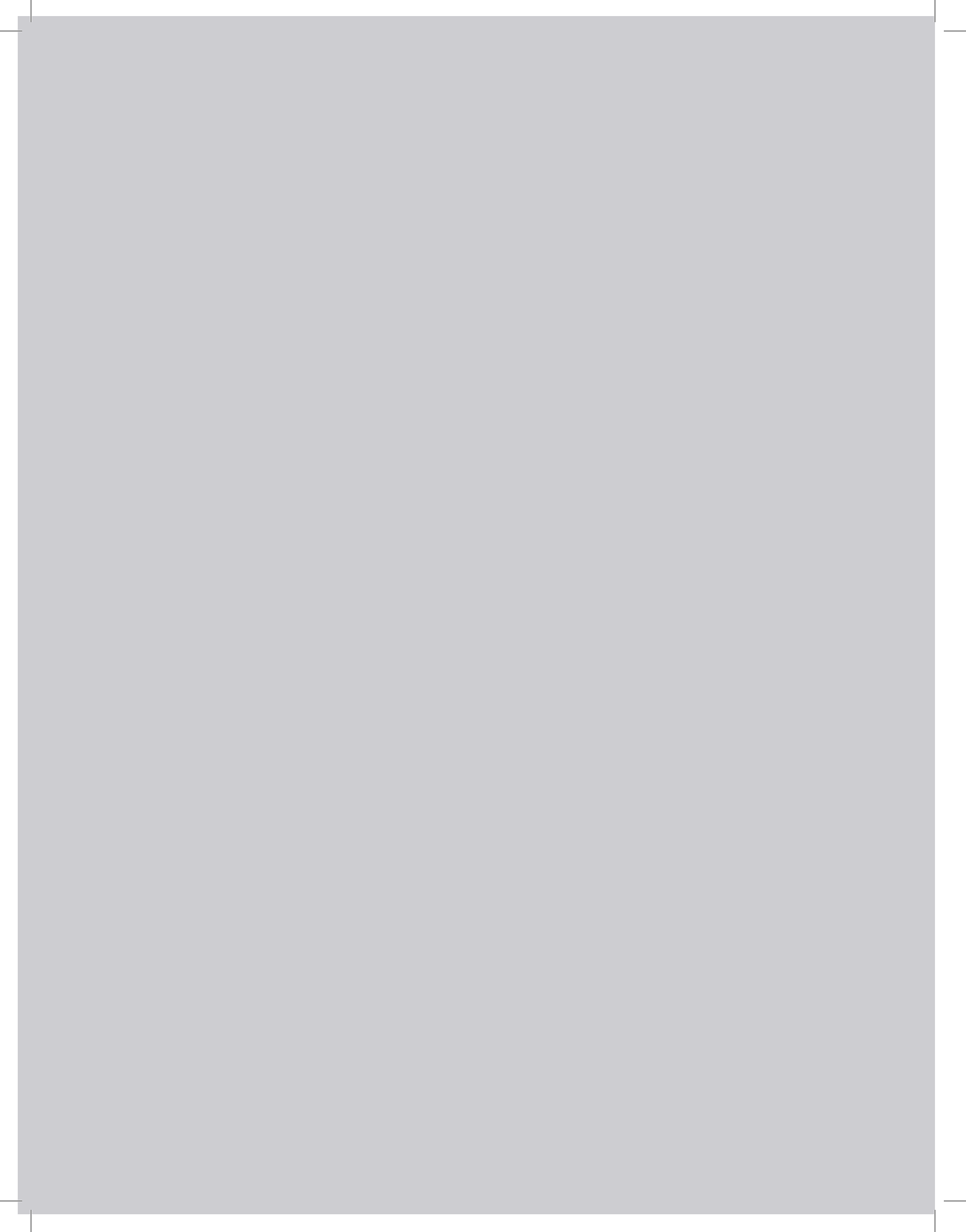


Thank you for your participation today. I hope it was useful. I very much appreciated your enthusiasm for the discussion and your ideas and comments.

Before we close the session, are there any final questions or comments?

- ➔ Take any final questions
- ➔ Close the session

# LEADERSHIP DIALOGUE APPENDICES



# APPENDIX A: LEADERSHIP DIALOGUE SIGN-IN SHEET

Date of Session:
Discussion Leader:
Department:
Office/Mission:

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# APPENDIX B:

## CASE STUDIES (FOR HANDOUTS)

See next pages for case studies to be used as handouts

### Case Study 1 – Police Protection

Atta has just opened a field office in an isolated region of Jerolea, a country which has recently emerged from a 10 year civil war. Atta's responsibilities include monitoring and reporting on the human rights situation in her area. While Atta is the first staff member to be posted to her small town, a few local human rights NGOs are also present.

A small number of young, male residents approach Atta and allege that the police are intimidating, abusing, and stealing from the local population. Atta contacts the local NGOs and records similar concerns. Believing there could be substance to these allegations, she reports this to her supervisor based in Jerolea's capital. Atta's supervisor informs her that he is developing excellent relations with the national police command, that the police are competent to deal with the situation, and that anyone who raises concerns about the police should be told to report them to the local police chief. Her supervisor further speculates that these young men may be former combatants seeking to undermine the government's efforts to restore security, and again suggests that the matter be left to the local police authorities.



## Case Study 2 – Shopping Excursion

Louis is newly arrived at his duty station as an international staff member. As an international staff member, he has access to a duty-free shop to buy imported goods at an affordable price. His colleague, Irinke, a locally recruited staff, asks if he could buy certain items for her at the shop. A few weeks later, Irinke again asks Louis to buy other imported items for her.

In appreciation, Irinke brings Louis a box of home baked sweets. Louis says that she should feel free to come to him whenever she needs anything, and lets her borrow his duty-free card whenever she requests it.

Some weeks later, Louis hears rumors that Irinke is selling items from the duty-free shop in a family kiosk at a local market. Louis angrily dismisses the rumors as he does not believe that Irinke would do this. On second thought, he decides to refuse to buy anything more for her. Although concerned about the consequences, he makes an appointment to see his supervisor.

## Case Study 3 – Well Water

For the first time in her career, Eloisa has been given the leadership role of a group of engineers. This group has been assigned the responsibility to build a new well in the country of Kaval. When they have completed their initial technical surveys, the engineers are approached by a group of villagers who ask for a second well. They explain that, in accordance with their culture and traditions, it is not possible for both women and men to use the same well. The villagers threaten to prevent the UN engineers from building the new well if a commitment is not made for the second one.

Eloisa is aware that Member States are concerned about cost overruns, especially in that region of the country. She knows that resources available to her are limited and expenditures must be kept to a minimum.

## Case Study 4 – Project Upset

Marion and Dexter are working on an important project proposal with very tight time-frames. If the delivery deadline is not met, the project will not be funded and all work will have to stop immediately. This will have negative consequences for beneficiaries, and will cause embarrassment to their Office.

As of late, Marion has stopped speaking to Dexter and walks the other way when she sees him coming. Dexter hears that Marion has asked their team leader to remove him from the project since he is “never around” and “not pulling his weight”. Dexter complains to their team leader, who tells him to just work it out.

With tensions mounting, Marion and Dexter spend their time exchanging nasty emails instead of getting the job done. Dexter decides that he wants to file a complaint about Marion’s conduct and contacts a number of his colleagues asking them to sign a formal petition against her.

# APPENDIX C: SESSION LEADER'S FEEDBACK FORM

We value your feedback!

Please complete this evaluation form and return it to your Executive Office or Administrative Office. You can send the form from your printed guide, or cut and paste the form from the online version of this guide and email it as an electronic document. Feel free to provide additional comments and questions in addition to this form.

Please note that this is **NOT** a form for your staff members to use to evaluate the session.

Date of Session:
Discussion Leader:
Department:
Office/Mission:
Number of Staff in Session:

Please evaluate the Leadership Dialogue materials and your session. Indicate your responses by circling the number representing a low, medium, or high rating.

LEADER'S GUIDE OVERALL:	LOW				HIGH
Quality of Content	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of Use	1	2	3	4	5

➔ Which case studies did you use?

1

2

3

4

CASE STUDIES USED:	LOW				HIGH
Quality of Content	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of Use	1	2	3	4	5

➔ Please provide feedback in your own words to the following questions:

1. What went well during your session?

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2. What did not go well during your session?

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3. Were there any questions or issues that you could not answer during the session?

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4. What changes would you recommend for future Leadership Dialogues?

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5. What topics would you recommend for future Leadership Dialogues?

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# APPENDIX D: ROLL UP OF SECTION FEEDBACK FORMS — TO BE COMPLETED BY THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE OR ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

**Please complete this summary form and send it along with copies to your Executive Office.** This form has been designed to assist the Executive Office or Administrative Office in compiling and summarizing all of the feedback forms from the various Leadership Dialogue sessions conducted in your organization.

You can send this form from your printed guide, or cut and paste the form from the online version of this guide and email it as an electronic document. Feel free to provide additional comments and questions in addition to this form.

**For Executive Offices:** Please compile overall statistics for your department, and submit these to the Ethics Office by 15 February 2016. Peacekeeping missions should submit their inputs to the Executive Office of DPKO, DFS. Special Political missions should submit their inputs to the Executive Office of DPA.

**Leadership Dialogue 2015 — Name of Department:** \_\_\_\_\_

NO.	NAME OF UNIT	TOTAL STAFF IN UNIT/ SECTION	TOTAL # COMPLETED	PERCENT OF STAFF COMPLETED
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<b>sub-totals:</b>				

NO.	NAME OF UNIT <i>(continued)</i>	TOTAL STAFF IN UNIT/ SECTION <i>(continued)</i>	TOTAL # COMPLETED <i>(continued)</i>	PERCENT OF STAFF COMPLETED <i>(continued)</i>
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<b>Totals:</b>				









## Leadership Dialogue Contact Information

For more information, or to comment, contact:

**United Nations Ethics Office**

[www.un.org/en/ethics](http://www.un.org/en/ethics)

*(Available via iSeek or the public UN site)*

Email: [ethicsoffice@un.org](mailto:ethicsoffice@un.org)

Phone +1-917-367-9858

Fax +1-917-367-9861

Also, please consult these resources, available on our website:

*Putting Ethics to Work: A Guide for UN Staff*

*The Roadmap: A Staff Member's Guide to Finding the Right Place*

## To learn more about conflict resolution, please contact:

**Ombudsman and Mediation Services**

[www.un.org/en/ombudsman](http://www.un.org/en/ombudsman)

*(available via iSeek or the public UN site)*

Email: [ombudsmediation@un.org](mailto:ombudsmediation@un.org)

Phone: +1-917-367-5731 (New York)

Fax: +1-917-367-4211 (New York)

*(regional office contact information available on the website)*



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Better  
World.

