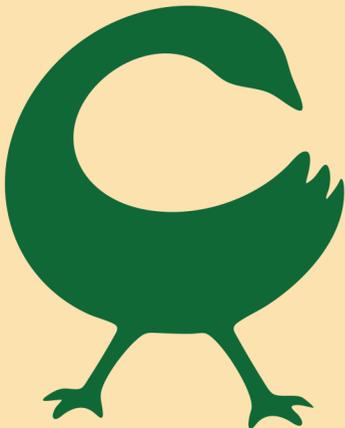




CODE OF CONDUCT 2025





H.E. JOHN DRAMANI MAHAMA

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA



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VICE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Good governance, transparency and accountability form the foundation of strong partnerships between state and society, as well as among citizens. They are interconnected principles that create a government that is legitimate, effective, and widely supported by citizens. It is under this umbrella that we, as public office holders, must constantly be mindful that public confidence in government institutions is vital to democracy. These principles should therefore guide our daily actions and decision-making processes.

This Code of Conduct clearly sets out my expectations of a government of integrity, honesty, impartiality, respect, decency, incorruptibility, competence, professionalism and standards of conduct that can withstand the closest public scrutiny. For persons who value service to the nation and uprightness, these principles may already be ingrained in their minds and exhibited through their actions. It is, however, necessary for the sake of uniformity and the avoidance of doubt to attempt to capture in one document rules and procedures to guide those who may falter for one reason or the other.

I recognise that it is difficult to capture in one handbook every single rule that would help promote a government of

honour and respectability, but this handbook goes a long way in setting the pace for the kind of governance I intend to pursue and my expectations of my appointees and myself.

Emphasis has been placed on understanding and upholding the standards of appropriate conduct, preventing the misuse of official positions for personal gain and ensuring that any conflict between personal interests and public duty is resolved in favour of the public interest.

All political appointees must, among other things,

- adhere to the highest ethical standards of professional conduct,
- act in a manner consistent with the government’s agenda, upholding values of excellence, integrity and respect,
- safeguard government property and refrain from purchasing same either directly or indirectly,
- prevent waste and mismanagement in the interest of public accountability and national development,
- demonstrate loyalty, commitment, and dedication in the execution of ministerial duties and responsibilities.

I pledge to deal swiftly and decisively with any political appointee who breaches any of the standards set out in this Code of Conduct.

H.E. JOHN DRAMANI MAHAMA
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA



SECTION ONE –

CODE OF ETHICS

The purpose of this section is to guide the Minister on how to act and manage his or her affairs in order to uphold the highest professional standards and avoid conflict of interest.

For the avoidance of doubt, the term ‘Minister’ includes Deputy Ministers, Presidential Staffers, Chief Executive Officers and Deputy Chief Executive Officers of state and para-statal institutions, members of the Council of State and other political appointees in the executive arm of Government.

1.1 Ministerial Conduct

The Minister is held to the highest standards of conduct in his or her actions, including those directly related to his/her functions. Hence, the Minister must

- a. seek to advance the common good of the communities he/she serves, in recognition that public office involves public trust;
- b. ensure that his/her official position or official power is not used improperly to his/her personal advantage;
- c. ensure that any conflict between his/her personal interest and public interests is resolved in favour of the public interest;
- d. act honestly and in a manner that maintains Government's integrity, objectivity and impartiality;
- e. perform his/her duties and manage his/her personal affairs in a manner that can stand the closest public scrutiny;
- f. protect the integrity of the decision-making process of Government by placing on record any personal interest that might influence or be seen to influence his/her decision-making processes;
- g. avoid situations in which he/she gains remuneration or other advantage from information acquired only by reason of his/her office;
- h. safeguard government property, ensure its responsible use, and implement measures to prevent waste and mismanagement in the interest of public accountability and national development.

1.2

Statement of Ethics

In his/her ministerial, political or personal roles, the Minister must act lawfully and uphold, and be seen to uphold, the highest ethical standards in relation to the President, his/her duties and the people of Ghana. These standards include integrity, respect, probity, transparency, accountability, ethics, propriety, commitment and loyalty. Hence, the Minister must

- a. act honestly;
- b. uphold the highest standards of integrity, truthfulness and transparency in all dealings and decision making to preserve and enhance public confidence and trust in the integrity, objectivity and impartiality of Government;
- c. perform his/her official duties and manage his/her personal affairs in a manner that withstands the closest public scrutiny;
- d. prioritise public interest above personal or political interest in considering the merits of each case;
- e. comport himself/herself in a manner befitting the trust and confidence placed in him/her;
- f. be frank and honest in official dealings with his/ her colleagues;
- g. protect sensitive government information as required by his/her oath of secrecy;
- h. adhere to the 1992 Constitution, laws and regulations of the country as a holder of public office;

- i. protect government property, prevent waste and prudently apply public resources to achieve developmental goals;
- j. refrain from using public office for personal gain and promptly disclose any potential conflict of interest situation that may arise;
- k. share his/her opinions frankly and honestly without fear or favour and in a manner that will enhance national productivity and harmony;
- l. treat all citizens, colleagues and stakeholders with dignity, fairness and respect;
- m. perform his/her duties with dedication, diligence and professionalism.

1.3 Civility, Courtesy & Restraint

Public service and good governance cannot function effectively without courtesy, respect, and civility. Hence, the Minister must

- a. be humble;
- b. be willing to give and accept constructive criticism and advice from colleagues and the general public;
- c. use decorous language, even in the face of provocation;
- d. take reasonable care to maintain the integrity and reputation of the Ministerial office;
- e. avoid offensive or provocative language or conduct;
- f. conduct himself/herself with dignity, and refrain from engaging in acts of rudeness and disrespect.

1.4 Public Duty

The Ministerial office is expected to be a full-time occupation in which the Minister commits his/her full attention, time and energy to his/her ministerial duties. It is important to avoid situations where he/she gains remuneration or other benefits from information obtained solely by virtue of his/her office. Hence, the Minister must -

- a. prevent and avoid any conflict of interest situation;
- b. not engage in any private business, trade or commercial activity that has the potential of diverting his/her focus from his/her official duties or of creating a conflict of interest situation;
- c. not be an overt or active partner in or owner of a business or service-providing enterprise, which means that the Minister must not participate in the day-to-day management or routine operation of any business enterprise, whether for profit or not;
- d. not be an overt or active partner, or owner of any business or service-providing enterprise which contracts with the Government or his/her Ministry to perform works that fall under his/her Ministry's jurisdiction;
- e. where the Minister is a dormant or passive partner of a business or service providing enterprise that intends to engage with a Government Ministry, Department or Agency for profit (even if not the Ministry which the Minister superintends over), disclose his interest to the President.

1.5

Nature of Conflict of Interest

Conflict of interest may exist where a Minister's personal or private interest is likely to conflict with or be in conflict with the functions of his/her office. For example, a conflict may arise if a Minister holds a significant financial interest in a company with which the Government is contracting, has a personal interest in the outcome of a process, or receives a benefit, right or commission in return for providing a benefit.

Hence, a Conflict of Interest may be direct or indirect in nature, and

- a. may arise due to the influence and power a Minister holds, both in his/her sectoral responsibilities and as a member of Cabinet;
- b. may be pecuniary (arising from the Minister's direct financial interests) or non-pecuniary (involving a family member or close associate).

It generally does not arise from a broad or shared interest held by a large group of people or the public. For example, a Minister with school-going children may have an interest in educational policies; a Minister who owns a farm may have an interest in agricultural policies, or a Minister may have a general interest in taxation matters. In fact, government decision-making may benefit from a Minister's personal experience on such issues.

'Family member' includes the Minister's spouse, child, sibling, parent, grandparent, nephew, niece, cousin, aunt, uncle, grandaunt or granduncle.

1.5.1

The Minister & Conflict of Interest Situations

The Minister must -

- a. avoid situations which create the perception that his/her official actions are being influenced by personal, financial or business interest;
- b. conduct himself/herself with the awareness that his/her role is a public one where both actual conflicts of interest and the appearance of impropriety are equally important in determining the acceptability of his/her conduct.

1.5.2 Managing Conflicts of Interest

Conflicts of interest may occasionally arise between a Minister's public duties and private interests. If the conduct is substantial and enduring, it may be necessary to consider a permanent reassignment of some or all of the Minister's sector responsibilities.

a. General Decision-Making Conflicts

Where a Minister has a conflict of interest in the general decision-making context (e.g. at a meeting of Cabinet or a Cabinet Committee) but does not hold direct ministerial responsibility for the issue, a declaration of interest will generally suffice. After declaring the interest, the Minister should either withdraw from the discussion or seek the agreement of the person presiding (President or Vice-President) to continue participating. Where the discussion is at a Cabinet Committee, he/she should withdraw from the discussion or seek the agreement his/her colleagues to continue participating. The declaration of interest will be recorded. Withdrawing from a Cabinet or Cabinet Committee discussion due to conflict of interest does not absolve the Minister from collective responsibility for any decision resulting from that discussion.

b. Sector-Specific Conflicts

Where a Minister has a conflict of interest within his/her portfolio, he/she may, with the President's approval, transfer responsibility for that issue to another Minister. In such cases, the Minister should instruct officials to direct all departmental briefings and papers on the issue to the other

Minister. The Minister with the conflict should also declare his/her interest if the matter is discussed at Cabinet, so that a decision is made by the person presiding as to whether it is appropriate for the Minister to receive Cabinet papers on the issue or to remain at the meeting.

c. Significant & Pervasive Conflicts

If a conflict of interest is significant and pervasive, the Minister may need to divest himself/herself from the interest by disassociating himself/herself completely from it.

d. Managing Financial & Organisational Conflicts

- i. A Minister with complex or extensive shareholdings is strongly advised to place his/her investments in a blind trust as a precaution against unintended conflicts of interest. A 'blind trust' is a trust established by the Minister giving another person (the trustee) full control of the trust, full discretion over assets and investments and full authority to manage the assets and any income generated without any interference from the Minister.
- ii. Provided no conflict of interest arises, the Minister is not required to dissolve any professional partnership, allow a practising certificate to lapse or dispose of any business interest. The Minister may continue to advise on matters relating to family trusts, or similar issues of personal interest.
- iii. Where a conflict is due to association with a non-governmental organization (NGO), the Minister may need to resign from that organization. For this purpose, 'NGO' broadly includes all profit-making businesses.

e. Timely Resolution

The Minister must promptly address any conflict of interest using one or more of the methods outlined above. The Secretary to the Cabinet, the Chief of Staff, (and, where appropriate, the Chief Director of the Ministry) should be informed of the conflict of interest, as and when it arises.

f. Presidential Notification

The Minister has a duty to inform the President, in writing, of conflicts that are of particular concern for further action and to report to the President any situation that contravenes or has the potential to contravene the law, cause misuse of public funds or assets, or which represents a danger to public health and safety.

If uncertain about the appropriate course of action, the Minister should consult the Chief of Staff or the Secretary to Cabinet.

1.5.3

The Interest of Family & Personal Friends

Public perception is a critical factor in maintaining trust and accountability in governance. A conflict may arise if a Minister's family member or personal friend derives, or is perceived to derive, some personal, financial or other benefit from a decision or action by the Minister or the Government. Hence, the Minister must -

- a. when acting in his/her official capacity, exercise caution to avoid a situation that provides some special benefit to a family member or personal friend. This includes, but is not limited to, interceding on his/her behalf in official matters or recommending them for government appointments or opportunities;
- b. avoid participating in decision-making processes that directly affect his/her family members or personal friends.

1.5.4

Investigations of Conflict of Interest

Article 218 of the 1992 Constitution mandates the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice to investigate all instances of alleged or suspected corruption and the misappropriation of public moneys by officials, and to take appropriate steps, including reports to the Attorney-General and the Auditor-General, resulting from such investigations.

1.5.5 Influence Peddling

Influence peddling is the illegal practice of using one's position in government, or leverage with persons in authority, to obtain favours or preferential treatment from others, often in exchange for payment.

The Minister must refrain from influence peddling and must at all times uphold the integrity and credibility of Government.

1.5.6 Transparency & Accountability

The Minister must uphold the principles of accountability and transparency and ensure that they are not compromised in the performance of his/her duties.

The Minister must make decisions and take actions that are in the best interest of the people of Ghana and must do so in an open, transparent and accountable manner.

1.5.7

Ensuring a Safe, Fair & Respectful Workplace

The Minister has the responsibility to -

- a. establish and uphold clear standards of appropriate workplace behaviour;
- b. monitor the work environment to prevent and address inappropriate behaviour;
- c. address instances of inappropriate behaviour swiftly and fairly;
- d. ensure that complaints of discrimination and sexual harassment are taken seriously, handled confidentially and resolved promptly;
- e. be fair and impartial to all individuals;
- f. ensure that no person in the workplace is subjected to victimisation.

1.5.8

Appropriate Use of Information

It is essential to protect the credibility and confidentiality of Government information. Hence, the Minister must -

- a. ensure that sensitive Government information is handled with care and safeguarded against unauthorised disclosure;
- b. not, knowingly or improperly, use privileged Government information that is not in the public domain for his/her personal gain or for the benefit of others, whether financial, political, business or otherwise;
- c. not, knowingly or improperly, use government information obtained in confidence in the course of his/her duties for his/her personal gain or for the benefit of others, whether financial, political, business or otherwise;
- d. not solicit or accept any benefit in relation to the exercise of his/her discretion whether for himself/herself or any other person, whether financial, political, business or otherwise;
- e. upon resignation, retirement or dismissal, and thereafter, maintain the confidentiality of information acquired during his/her tenure in office;
- f. provide truthful, clear and timely information to the public, avoiding misinformation, manipulation or misrepresentation of facts for political or personal interest.

1.5.9 Use of Budgetary Allocation

The government aims to utilise financial resources prudently and efficiently. Hence, the Minister must ensure that -

- a. public funds are spent responsibly in a manner that prevents waste, inefficiency and corruption;
- b. public funds are allocated based on national priorities and public needs in a manner that provides value for money;
- c. Government operations under his/her oversight are managed economically, efficiently, effectively and in compliance with applicable laws, regulations and public financial reporting standards;
- d. financial management laws, procurement rules and budgetary guidelines are strictly adhered to, to prevent misappropriation of funds;
- e. there is value for money in all government expenditures by promoting efficiency, reducing waste and spending responsibly.

1.5.10

Loyalty, Commitment & Dedication

The Minister must -

- a. ensure that his/her personal conduct upholds the dignity, reputation and integrity of the Government;
- b. make himself/herself as accessible and available as possible to those who need to meet or speak to them, in a manner that enhances national productivity;
- c. act solely in the public interest and strive to perform to the best of his/her ability and full potential.

1.5.11

Discipline, Diligence & Professionalism

The Minister must -

- a. act with diligence and integrity in performing his/her official functions;
- b. refrain from deliberately misleading the public on any significant matter related to the official functions;
- c. promptly correct or clarify any inadvertent errors or misconceptions;
- d. ensure that his/her decisions, directives and conduct in office do not encourage or induce other public officials, including public servants, to violate the law or disregard ethical codes;
- e. implement effective measures to prevent corruption;
- f. uphold and promote the principles of discipline, diligence and professionalism through leadership by example.

1.5.12 Gifts

To avoid the creation or appearance of an obligation, gifts in cash or kind are not to be solicited or accepted from commercial enterprises or any other organizations. An exception to this rule is the acceptance of a gift presented during an official visit to an institution.

The exchange of gifts during official government visits is an accepted practice and refusing such a gift may cause offence. Such gifts are considered tokens of the office rather than personal endorsements for the Minister.

- a. The Minister must submit any gift received, in Ghana or from overseas, to the Secretary to Cabinet for appropriate display;
- b. Where the Minister wishes to retain gifts received, he may do so only if the estimated value does not exceed GHC20,000.00;
- c. Where the estimated value of the gift is more than GHC20,000.00, the Minister may retain the gift during office but must declare it to Cabinet in the interest of transparency;
- d. Upon leaving office, the Minister must relinquish, to Cabinet, any gift estimated to be worth over GHC20,000.00, unless the Minister obtains the express permission of the President to retain it.

1.5.13 Hampers

Ministers must not use government funds to purchase gifts, including hampers, whether during festive occasions or at other times, unless the gifts are for selected members of their staff in reward of excellence exhibited in the workplace or as an end of service benefit. For the avoidance of doubt, 'government funds' include internally generated funds.

For government entities that must distribute hampers as part of their corporate commercial policy, express written permission for the budgeted expenditure must be received from the office of the Chief of Staff.

1.6

Declaration of Assets & Liabilities

Article 286 of the 1992 Constitution requires the Minister, to submit to the Auditor-General, a written declaration of all property or assets owned, and liabilities owed by the Minister, directly or indirectly, prior to taking office, at the end of every four-year term of the Government, and upon conclusion of the Minister's term of office.

a. Section 4 of the Public Office Holders (Declaration of Assets and Disqualification) Act, 1998 (Act 550) defines "properties to be declared" as including but not limited to -

- lands, houses, buildings,
- farms, concessions,
- trust or family property in respect of which the officer has beneficial interest,
- vehicles, plants, machinery, fishing boats, trawlers, generating plants,
- business interests,
- securities, bank balances, bonds and treasury bills,
- jewellery of the value of five million Ghana Cedis or above,
- objects of art of the value of five million Ghana Cedis or above,
- life and other insurance policies, and
- any other properties specified on the declaration form.

b. Ministers must therefore declare the following assets and liabilities -

- houses and other buildings,
- land (undeveloped),
- farms (coconut, cashews, cattle etc),
- concessions (minerals, timber etc),
- trust or family property in the Minister's possession (land, buildings etc),
- jewellery/objects of art,
- vehicles,
- plants and machinery (fishing boats, trawlers, generating plants etc),
- business interests as at date of making declaration,
- securities and bank balances as at date of making the declaration.

1.7

Fees & Other Payments

The Government has a responsibility to keep the public informed about important issues through media (print, visual or sound media) and/or appearances at conferences and other gatherings to explain and discuss government policies and plans. These appearances are an integral part of government functions, thus no appearance fee should be expected or accepted.

- a. The Minister must not solicit payment of appearance fee or other personal payment for work done in the course of his/her ministerial duties;
- b. If an appearance fee or any other personal payment is offered to a Minister for either official or unofficial engagements, the Minister may accept such payment only with the prior approval of the President;
- c. In cases where the payment is accepted, it must be declared as part of that Minister's assets;
- d. Unsolicited payments should be returned, however, with the President's approval, any such payment may be donated directly to a recognised charity.

1.8

Ministerial Travels

- a. Where a Minister incurs travel, accommodation and related costs for unofficial activities, the expenses must be covered by the organizers or by the Minister, using personal funds.
- b. Where travel and accommodation and related costs are incurred by a Minister for official activities, these expenses should not be reimbursed by Government if they are paid for by recognised third-party event organisers.
- c. The following rules apply to ministerial travels:
 - i. The Minister must seek permission from the Chief of Staff (CoS) before traveling outside the country, whether the trip is official or not. This is based on the premise that the CoS must always know where a Minister is, be it in the country or elsewhere.
 - ii. If the trip is official, the Request Letter must clearly state who is going on the trip, what the trip is about, the availability of budgetary provision and the appropriate account to charge the expenditure to, or who is sponsoring the trip if funding is not from normal budgetary sources.
 - iii. The Request Letter should be signed by the Minister. If the Minister is not in the country or on leave, it should be signed by the Minister acting in place of the substantive Minister or by the Deputy Minister.
 - iv. Where the request is for full sponsorship by Government, then the purpose of the trip should be very essential to the development of the country given prevailing circumstances and the Ministry's

budget should cover expenses (unless circumstances are exceptional). Exceptions may be made for MDAs with Internally Generated Funds (IGF).

- v. Where the trip is to be sponsored fully by an organization or entity other than Government, the application will be approved unless the purpose of the trip is frivolous or will lead to the Minister and Deputy (or Deputies) being out of the country at the same time.
- vi. Where the bulk of the sponsorship is from an organization or entity other than Government, and Government is paying part of it (e.g. per diem), it will be approved if the purpose of the trip is deemed useful to the development of the country.
- vii. The estimated cost of travel should be indicated if an Agency under a Ministry is sponsoring a trip (e.g. if the National Communications Authority is sponsoring a trip by officials of the Ministry of Communications). No blanket approval will be given if the cost to be incurred is not indicated.
- viii. Retroactive approval to requests for travels already made will not be granted unless the circumstances are exceptional.
- ix. At certain crucial times, e.g. during a budget debate period, requests for Ministers and/or Deputies to travel out of the country will not be approved unless the circumstances are exceptional.
- x. Upon return from a trip, the Minister and/or officer(s) must retire accountable imprest(s) and submit a report on the trip to the Office of the President no later than fourteen (14) days after returning from the trip. Ministers and/or their officer(s) will be made to refund accountable imprest(s) not retired.

1.9 Product Endorsement

No Minister shall endorse any product or service on television or other media, except when appearing in party political advertisements or in non-political public service type advertisements or announcements (e.g. promoting water safety). The Minister should not expect or accept any fee where the appearances and endorsements are permitted for the public good.

1.10

Relations with the Judiciary & other Government Agencies

Ministers are responsible for ensuring that both they and their staff understand and respect the need for non-interference and the maintenance of an arm's length relationship with the judiciary and other government agencies

Ministers, who are also Members of Parliament, have a duty to serve their constituents. However, they are limited in their capacity to act on behalf of constituents or themselves, when dealing with certain government agencies.

- a. The Minister and/or his/her staff must not, on behalf of anyone including his/her constituents, intervene, or even appear to intervene, with the judiciary in matters before the courts. The Minister for Justice and Attorney-General should be consulted for further guidance on interaction with the judiciary.
- b. The Minister and/or his/her staff must not, on behalf of anyone including his/her constituents, intervene, or even appear to intervene, in matters before quasi-judicial tribunals that require a decision in his/her quasi-judicial capacity, unless such intervention is expressly authorised by law.
- c. Although the Minister must engage with agencies within his/her sector on a wide range of issues, governing statutes grant certain bodies (such as some corporations) a degree of independence from Ministerial direction.

The Minister must be fully aware of the limits of his/her responsibilities and authority with respect to these agencies and maintain the appropriate relationship with them.

- d. Cabinet convention precludes a Minister from discussing or becoming involved in a colleague Minister's sector without that colleague's prior approval. This does not, however, prevent the Minister from speaking directly to the Minister responsible for the issue at hand, nor does it prevent the Minister's staff from conveying constituents concerns directly to the Minister or through designated channels within the ministry.
- e. In situations when a Minister receives requests for assistance from other members of his/her Ministry on behalf of his/her constituents, if an intervention with an agency is deemed inappropriate, particularly if the request involves judicial or quasi-judicial matters, the Minister should state clearly that the intervention sought cannot be granted, and advise the constituent to address the matter directly with the agency.

1.11 Invitations

Ministers frequently receive invitations to participate in or endorse events, community initiatives or publications, to meet with individuals or to travel internationally.

- a. Ministers must remain alert to invitations that may threaten state security or compromise their governmental commitments.
- b. Ministers are expected to exercise utmost discretion at all times. They are responsible for verifying the legitimacy and credibility of those extending invitations. If any doubt arises regarding the acceptance of an invitation, the Minister should consult the National Security Coordinator who will conduct further inquiries and provide appropriate guidance.
- c. Where Ministers are invited to interact with foreign missions, they must conduct themselves with courtesy and circumspection and must not discuss any matter that does not fall within their sector. If any doubt arises as to the Minister's participation in any such interaction, the Minister should consult the Minister for Foreign Affairs for guidance.



SECTION TWO –

MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY & ACCOUNTABILITY

Ministers are responsible and accountable to the President in two basic ways:

- Individually for their performance in executing the responsibilities of the sector assigned to them by the President, and
- Collectively in supporting Cabinet and its decisions.

2.1

Ministerial Accountability

- a. The Minister is accountable to both the President and Parliament for the administration of his/her ministry as well as the performance of the departments and/or agencies under his/her ministry.
- b. The Minister must take full ownership of his/her policies, decisions and actions of his/her ministry, ensuring alignment.
- c. the Minister must assess the impact of government programs and policies within his/her sector and adjust where necessary to improve efficiency and effectiveness.
- d. The Minister must account to the President and Parliament for funds authorised to be spent, invested or borrowed on behalf of the Government, as well as unspent balances, within the agreed time limit for such accounting.
- e. The Minister is required to provide the President and Parliament with clear, accurate and timely information on the exercise of powers by agencies and other bodies that report through him/her.
- f. The Minister is encouraged to seek the assistance of the Civil Service in providing information that supports the effective discharge of his/her duties.
- g. The Minister must take all necessary measures to ensure that information obtained for the performance of his/her duties is accurate and reliable.
- h. The Minister is expected to consult closely with ministerial colleagues, especially when ministerial responsibilities overlap due to the increasing complexity of issues.

- i. The Minister is expected to represent the different perspectives and interests of his/her region and constituency, which often spans multiple government departments.
- j. The Minister must accept political and moral responsibility by resigning if his/her actions or leadership results in significant failure, corruption or breach of public trust.

2.2

Collective Ministerial Responsibility

- a. Ministers are collectively responsible for implementing government policies as determined by Cabinet.
- b. Ministers must understand that the collective decisions of Cabinet are binding on them individually.
- c. Where a Minister publicly challenges, rejects or is unable to support a Cabinet decision, he/she must resign from his/her position.
- d. Ministers must ensure that they, along with their officials, including civil servants, maintain the confidentiality and security of Cabinet business and Government documents.

2.3

Communication & Public Announcements

- a. Effective communication with the public is a vital responsibility of Government. Communication must be both timely, clear and unambiguous. Therefore, all Government communication must be properly co-ordinated to ensure that they are consistent with overall Government objectives and decisions.
- b. The content and timing of each public statement regarding a policy or the announcement of Government action, including appointments and agreements, should be co-ordinated by the responsible Minister, the Minister responsible for information and the Office of the President.
- c. The Minister must have a Public Relations Officer (or its equivalent) for the ministry who is responsible for cross-checking the content and timing of public statements or announcements with the Minister responsible for information and the Office of the President. However, in the case of any lapse on behalf of the Public Relations Officer, the Minister will bear the ultimate responsibility.
- d. The Minister must consult with the relevant Regional Minister before making any announcement that could impact the region in question.
- e. A Deputy Minister must not make any announcement that could affect his/her ministry or any other ministry without the express approval of his/her substantive Minister.



SECTION THREE -

SECTOR RESPONSIBILITIES & SUPPORT

Powers, duties and functions of Ministers, Departments and Agencies are vested in Ministers through mandate letters issued under the authority of the President.

3.1

Powers, Duties & Functions

- a. The Minister is individually responsible to the President and to Parliament for his/her own actions and the actions of his/her departments and agencies, regardless of whether the Minister had prior knowledge of such activities.
- b. Where an error or wrongdoing is committed by an officer within the ministry during the course of his/her work, the Minister is responsible for promptly taking the necessary remedial steps and for providing assurance that appropriate corrective measures are being, or have been, implemented to prevent recurrence.

3.2

Sector Ministers

- a. The Minister may have varying degrees of control and responsibility for the agencies that are part of his/her sector.
- b. The Minister must ensure that all agencies or organizations within his/her sector collaborate coherently while maintaining their necessary levels of independence.
- c. The Minister must ensure that agencies within his/her sector fully understand government policies and programs and consistently align their activities effectively with these directives.

- d. The President may assign additional responsibilities to a Minister. Consequently, Ministerial responsibilities may encompass a diverse range of activities, some mandated by statute, others provided through specific direction from the President.

3.3

Ministers of State without Sectors

- a. A Minister of State without a sector is appointed by the President to assist the President directly in carrying out special responsibilities assumed by the Office of the President and/or to support a sector Minister.
- b. The Minister of State may not oversee an independent sector but participates in collective decision-making and is bound by the doctrine of collective responsibility.
- c. Where the Minister of State is appointed to assist a Sector Minister, the President provides him/her with a mandate letter. The Sector Minister may then outline the specific role(s) of the Minister of State, bearing in mind that the Sector Minister is responsible and accountable for the entire sector and for implementing the broad priorities set by the President.
- d. A Minister of State who is appointed to serve in the Presidency directly receives instruction and support through the office of the Chief of Staff.

3.4

Chief Directors

- a. The Chief Director is a professional, non-partisan civil servant whose role is to provide expert advice and support to the Minister in fulfilling sector responsibilities, and to assist in the day-to-day management of the Ministry.
- b. The Minister is expected to interact professionally with the Chief Director, fostering a conducive working environment.
- c. The Minister is responsible to the President and to Parliament for his/her ministry, so where he/she has cause to doubt the accuracy or integrity of the Chief Director's advice or support, it is the Minister's responsibility to consult further for more accurate guidance.
- d. Where a Minister has consistent and persistent problems with the Chief Director, he cannot terminate the appointment of the Chief Director. The Minister may, however, write to the Head of Civil Service to have the Chief Director re-assigned and a new one assigned to his ministry in the interest of industrial harmony.

3.5

Civil Servants in the Ministry

- a. Civil Servants below the level of Chief Director must report to the Chief Director and the Chief Director must in turn report to the Minister, in a clear chain of command. The accountability of the Civil Servant is directed to the Minister through the Chief Director, while the Minister remains accountable to both the President and Parliament.
- b. Civil Servants must operate in accordance with the laws of Ghana and are expected to maintain political neutrality. The neutrality is essential for their ability to provide professional, candid, frank advice, and to engender trust with the Minister. The ministry's civil servants should not be requested to participate in partisan activities.

3.6

Conduct of Employers

- a. The Minister must fulfil the obligations of a good employer by ensuring that the terms and conditions of all staff members are fair and compliant with relevant policies.
- b. The Minister is responsible for all members of his/her staff and must ensure that the members of staff are fully aware of their ethical and professional responsibilities.
- c. The Minister should refrain from appointing close relatives to positions within his/her office or any other employment setting where the Minister's approval is required.

3.7

Non-Ministerial Bodies

- a. The Minister may be responsible for agencies funded through Government subvention, commission or other designated funding mechanisms. The extent of the Minister's control and responsibility over a non-ministerial body is defined in the legislation that establishes that body. Although the relationship with such agencies or commissions may be maintained at arm's length, the Minister must still provide the organization with general guidance on Government's objectives and expectations.
- b. The Minister must fully understand the details of his/her responsibilities as well as the limits of his/her powers in relation to these non-ministerial bodies. The Chief Director may offer advice to the Minister on these matters.
- c. Given the sensitive nature of the relationships with commissions or agencies that exercise independent decision-making or quasi-judicial functions, the Minister must endeavour not to interfere with the decision-making processes of these bodies.

3.8

Acting Ministers

- a. The President may establish a standing roster of acting and alternate Ministers to assume additional duties when their colleagues are unable to perform their official responsibilities. An Acting Minister will have overall control of the portfolio in place of the absent Minister.
- b. The Minister acting on behalf of a colleague may exercise the full powers of the colleague. However, they are advised not to make major decisions in their colleague's absence.



SECTION FOUR -

MINISTERIAL RELATIONS WITH PARLIAMENT

The Minister's accountability to Parliament is fundamental to responsible governance. Article 122 of the 1992 Constitution provides that any act or omission that obstructs or impedes a member or an officer of Parliament in the discharge of his or her duties or which directly or indirectly affronts the dignity of Parliament constitutes contempt of Parliament.

Since daily proceedings in Parliament are critical to the government's effectiveness, the President expects Ministers who are also Members of Parliament to place a high priority on their Parliamentary duties.

4.1

Ministerial Parliamentary Duties

- a. The Minister is responsible for introducing legislation in Parliament and participating in the appropriate committee debates.
- b. The Minister must fully and effectively account to Parliament for all funds authorised to be spent, invested or borrowed on behalf of Government as well as unspent balance.
- c. Where the Minister is invited to answer questions in Parliament, the Minister must co-ordinate carefully with the appropriate Parliamentary functionaries and, where necessary, with the President, to formulate clear and accurate responses that promote Government policy.
- d. The Minister must adhere to the principles of Ministerial accountability and responsibility when appearing before a parliamentary committee.



SECTION FIVE -

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

5.1

Financial Management

Ministers are subject to the laws governing the use of public monies. These laws govern matters such as budgets, salary levels, office facilities and expenditure authorization. It is the Minister's responsibility to ensure that all expenditures in the Minister's office are managed prudently and directly related to approved government business.

5.2

Prohibition from Purchasing State Assets

- a. Ministers are prohibited from purchasing state assets, whether directly or indirectly through surrogates or proxies, with a view to hiding their ownership of same. This includes lands, buildings, vehicles, farms, equipment, shares and any other moveable or immoveable property.
- b. Where a Minister is found to be in the process of purchasing, or to have purchased, any state asset, either directly or indirectly, he/she will have his/her appointment terminated immediately.

This policy is designed to promote transparency, fairness, and accountability in the management of state assets. It prevents political appointees from using their positions to gain undue advantage in the acquisition of government-owned properties, vehicles, land or businesses. By prohibiting appointees from purchasing state property, the government ensures that asset disposal remains open, competitive, and accessible to all Ghanaians.

Many citizens perceive asset sales to political figures as a form of corruption. This policy reassures the public that state resources are managed in the national interest. This policy reflects the government's commitment to good governance, anti-corruption efforts, and the responsible stewardship of national resources for the benefit of all citizens.

5.3

Assets Management

Government assets and properties such as offices, industrial premises & installations, residential, educational, health and other public buildings have increased significantly. However, limited reliable information on these assets and properties hinders proper evaluation of their performance resulting in management on ad-hoc and reactive practices.

The financial management laws of Ghana impose on the Government the responsibility for proper asset maintenance and management of public funds. These laws also mandate the Minister to improve asset management by promoting efficient and economical use of assets and ensuring that government properties are maintained in good condition.

The Presidential (Transition) Act 2012 (Act 845) provides for the establishment of a Presidential Estates Unit and the appointment of an Administrator-General. Some of the functions of the unit are to take and keep an inventory of the assets and properties of the Government which are not vested in the Lands Commission, to ensure that the assets and properties are maintained in good condition and tenantable repair, and that the assets and properties are transferred in good condition and tenantable repair. The unit is also responsible for the procurement of any assets or properties of Government which are not vested in the Lands Commission.

Ministers must cooperate with the Administrator-General and provide legitimately requested information in a timely manner.

5.4

Security of Cabinet Documents

The effective operation of the Cabinet and the confidentiality of ministerial discussions depend significantly on the proper handling of Cabinet documents. Any leakage of these documents constitutes a security breach and a violation of Cabinet confidentiality and may result in termination of the appointment of the affected Minister(s).

5.4.1

Cabinet Records

- a. The Minister must ensure that Cabinet Memoranda, Cabinet Committee reports and records of Cabinet decisions, are always kept in the custody of an authorised and security-cleared staff member or official.
- b. Once a Cabinet item has been addressed, the associated Cabinet papers must be returned to the Cabinet Secretariat. The Minister must designate specific staff members responsible for controlling the flow and storage of Cabinet papers.
- c. Cabinet documents that are clearly marked “for Ministers eyes only” must not be reviewed by staff.

5.4.2

Distribution of Documents

- a. Cabinet documents are strictly controlled and are distributed only to authorized recipients by the Cabinet Secretariat.
- b. The Minister must submit the final Cabinet Memorandum to the Cabinet Secretariat. The Cabinet Secretariat will then verify that the document meets all the formal requirements before distributing it to the Minister's Cabinet colleagues.

5.4.3

Designated Staff (Cabinet Liaison)

The Minister must assign designated staff (along with one designated back-up) to serve as the single formal point of contact for receiving Cabinet documents. The names of these designated staff must be forwarded to the Cabinet Secretariat. Cabinet documents will not be distributed to non-designated staff, nor will non-designated staff be allowed to take delivery of Cabinet documents.

5.4.4

Preparation & Handling of Cabinet Documents

- a. At all times, the word “secret” must appear on documents where appropriate, including on electronic media (compact discs and pen drives) and on envelopes used to transport these documents.
- b. When being developed, all versions of Cabinet Memoranda drafts should be dated and marked “Secret and Draft” at the top of each page.
- c. Strict controls must be exercised regarding the numbers of copies of confidential material produced.
- d. Draft copies of Cabinet documents should be distributed only to individuals who “need to know”.
- e. Ministers using computer terminals that contain or provide access to confidential records must log off when away from their desks and at the end of the day, confidential files must be closed to prevent unauthorised access.
- f. Electronic storage devices (such as compact discs, pen drives, electronic equipment) containing confidential information must be securely stored in a safe place.

5.4.5

Physical Security of Cabinet Records

- a. Ministers' offices and the MDAs must maintain a "clean desk" policy. No paper or confidential materials must be left unattended to. Papers must not be left on the desks of persons handling Cabinet documents, especially overnight. Desktops should be cleared of confidential information, and any drawers and cabinets containing such information must be locked.
- b. Confidential records must be kept secure at all times, with access limited to designated staff on a "need-to-know" basis. Special emphasis must be placed on ensuring their safekeeping overnight.
- c. Visitor access must be strictly controlled in areas where confidential records are being worked on or stored.
- d. Cabinet documents should not be taken off-site. If off-site transfer is unavoidable, extreme care must be exercised.

5.4.6

Transmission of Cabinet Documents

- a. All signed Cabinet Memoranda must be sent to the Cabinet Secretariat in a sealed envelope using the prescribed procedure. The envelope must be boldly marked 'Secret'.
- b. Cabinet documents must be transported only by designated officers and must never be left unaccompanied.
- c. Cabinet documents should be delivered directly to the Cabinet Secretariat.
- d. Telephone inquiries regarding Cabinet information must be handled with discretion. Secretaries should be trained to avoid inadvertently divulging sensitive information.
- e. Fax machines and electronic mail should be used only in exceptional circumstances for transmitting confidential documents. In such cases, a telephone call should be made, both before and after transmission, to confirm the safe arrival of the documents to the intended recipient.
- f. Cabinet decisions or directions should be summarised in a memo and conveyed to the appropriate units.
- g. All documents must be shredded before disposal in trash cans.

5.4.7 Confidentiality Expectations

Ministers must foster a culture of personal responsibility and accountability regarding the security and confidentiality of Cabinet documents. They should actively seek opportunities to underscore the importance of confidentiality with their staff on a regular basis.

5.4.8 Electronic Records/Electronic Mail

Electronic Cabinet documents are considered Cabinet records and must be handled with the same care and security as paper records.

5.4.9 Personal & Political Records

Documents that are primarily political rather than official in nature are maintained in separate ministerial files. Ministers typically remove these political records upon leaving office. In contrast, Cabinet records must be returned to the National Archives when a Minister departs from office.



SECTION SIX -

MEASURES AGAINST VIOLATION

- a. If a Minister engages in conduct that prima facie constitutes a breach of any rule in this Handbook, the President shall determine, at his/her discretion, the course of action that should be taken.
- b. Such actions may include, but are not limited to, requiring the Minister to render an apology (which may be public), imposing a formal reprimand, requesting the minister's resignation, suspending the Minister or terminating his appointment.



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