Code of Conduct

The African Women’s Development and Communication Network (FEMNET)

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1. Background of the Code of Conduct
The African Women Development and communication Network’s (Herein referred to as FEMNET) code of conduct sets out standards of behavior that is expected to guide all employees in maintaining the professional conduct that helps protect and enhance both the employee’s and FEMNET ’s reputation. It supports the organization’s core values which bring together all the elements that will allow us to achieve our mission; to mobilize African women for achievement of gender equality and the realization of women’s and girls’ rights at all levels. This code of conduct and ethics applies to all employees working in or with FEMNET at any particular time.

2. Objective
• To set out the basic standard of conduct expected of all FEMNET employees and to ensure that staff do not engage in any activities that are incompatible with the proper discharge of their duties or the organization’s culture.
• To promote ethics, honesty and professionalism within the organisations and among its employees.

3. The Code
3.1 Personal Integrity
The core values of the organization are: commitment to women’s rights, gender equality and solidarity, integrity, respect for diversity and professionalism. Our conduct, whether in public or private forums impacts on our image. We must exhibit respectful, honorable and professional behavior in what we do or say and always.

3.2 Conflict of Interest
A conflict of interest arises when an employee is in a situation where their decision making may be impaired by personal, financial, or other business concerns that may not promote the best interest of the organization. A conflict of interest may be real or perceived. Both can have detrimental effects for the organization or its reputation.

3.2.1 Duty to disclose
Employees must disclose the existence of any interest, which may be relevant to the individual’s role in FEMNET at the earliest opportunity. This obligation arises regardless of whether FEMNET requests a declaration of interest or not. Likewise, in the event of a conflict arising during the course of a meeting, employees must notify the Chair of the meeting that a potential conflict of interest exists.
A declaration of interests form should be completed as follows:

- On appointment and updated each year, or when any changes occur, using Declaration of Conflict Interest (refer to the Conflict of interest policy)

3.2.2 Procedure for addressing a conflict of interest

An employee wishing to declare conflict of interest shall report to the immediate supervisor and or the Executive Director. The Executive Director will convene a management meeting to deliberate on the leave the possible conflict of interest.

After exercising due diligence, the management shall determine whether the organization can obtain, with reasonable efforts, a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.

The management meeting shall be minuted and reported. The report shall record:

- The nature and extent of the conflict
- An outline of the discussion
- Actions taken to manage the conflict
- Whether the excluded person will benefit from the agreed decision
- Whether the transaction or arrangement is FEMNET’s best interest, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and reasonable.

In conformity with the above determination, the management shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the specified transaction or arrangement or not.

3.2.3 Violations of the Conflicts of Interest Policy

If there is reasonable cause to believe that an employee has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, the individual shall be informed of the basis for such belief and shall be given the opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.

Having heard the individual’s response, and following any further investigation if deemed necessary, it shall be determined whether the individual has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest and the appropriate disciplinary and corrective action shall be taken.

3.2.3 Data Protection & Confidentiality

The information provided will be processed in accordance with data protection principles as set out in the Data Protection Act of Kenya. Data will be processed only to ensure that Board employees act in the best interests of FEMNET. The information provided will not be used for any other purpose.
All employees shall exercise due care not to disclose confidential information acquired in connection with such status or information the disclosure of which might be adverse to the interest of FEMNET. Furthermore a Board member shall not disclose or use information relating to the business or operations of FEMNET for the personal benefit or advantage of the Board member or a family member or connected person or company.

3.4 Discharge of Duties
Every employee shall discharge the duties entrusted to them with the highest degree of excellence, professionalism, intelligence, skill, punctuality, integrity and loyalty to FEMNET. Every employee shall comply with all lawful instructions regarding the work of FEMNET given to them by the Board, Executive Director or respective Manager as may be appropriate. Every employee shall devote working hours to the work of FEMNET, and may not undertake private work during working hours, unless duly authorized.

3.5 Organization and Personal Property
Employees are expected to take care of their personal property within FEMNET premises. FEMNET does not accept liability for loss or damage to any personal property whatsoever. Employees are advised not to leave any valuables unattended. Staff given access to any property of the organization should ensure that it is properly used for the purpose of conducting the organization’s business and managed well. Misappropriation of the property for personal use or resale is strictly prohibited.

3.6 Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure
Employees must maintain the confidentiality of proprietary information entrusted to them by FEMNET or its partners except when disclosure is authorized in writing by the Executive Director or required by laws or regulations. Proprietary information includes all non-public information that might harm FEMNET or be prejudicial to the interests of FEMNET.

The obligation to preserve proprietary information continues even after employment ends. All employees shall be required to sign a confidentiality clause as part of their contract of employment. Employees who improperly use or disclose trade secrets or confidential information will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment and legal action, even if they do not actually benefit from the disclosed information.

3.7 Organization Funds and Other Assets
Employees who have access to the organization’s funds in any form must follow the prescribed procedures for recording, handling, and protecting money as detailed in the Organization’s policies and procedures or other explanatory materials, or both. The Organization imposes strict standards to prevent fraud and dishonesty. If employees
become aware of any evidence of fraud and dishonesty, they should immediately advise their supervisor or seek appropriate legal guidance so that the organization can promptly investigate further.

When an employee’s position requires spending Organization funds or incurring any reimbursable personal expenses, that individual must use good judgment on the Organization’s behalf to ensure that good value is received for every expenditure.

3.8 Communication, Public Statements and Media

Unless authorized by the Executive Director, employees may not speak publicly on behalf of the organisation. FEMNET is the inherent copyright owner of all copyrightable content, including online articles (e.g., “blogs”) and photos, that any staff member produces gathers, reviews and/or analysis on behalf of FEMNET irrespective of whether or not such content has been externally published. Such content may not be published without the specific approval of the Executive Director.

3.9 Human Rights, Diversity, Inclusion and Violence in the Workplace

FEMNET is committed to conducting all its affairs with fairness and equity and to fostering a unique and inclusive culture that provides a safe and respectful work environment, free from harassment, intimidation, discrimination and violence. Every employee and potential employee, as well as any other person in partnership or engaging with FEMNET in whichever way must be treated with dignity and respect.

In support of this commitment, FEMNET will not:

- condone, tolerate or ignore any harassment or discrimination on any grounds protected by human or civil rights law, including (but not limited to) race, gender, religion, nationality, colour, sexual orientation, disability or age; and
- Condone, tolerate or ignore violence, threats of violence or breach of peace.

In this Code of Conduct, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

(i) Sexual harassment: the undesired sexual advances in the form of requests for sexual favours or other verbal, non-verbal or physical behavior.

(ii) Aggression and violence: bullying, harassing someone mentally or physically, threatening or attacking others.

(iii) Discrimination: expressing oneself in any form whatsoever on, performing acts towards or taking decisions with respect to persons that are insulting for these persons because of their race, religion, sex, philosophy of life and/or sexual inclination, or making any distinction on the basis of these factors (race, religion, etc.).
3.10 Official Working Hours, attendance and punctuality

Normal working hours shall be from 8:30am to 5:00pm, Monday to Friday, with a 1 hour lunch break to be taken generally between 12:30 hours and 14:00 hours. However, administrative arrangements [flexitime] can be made to observe earlier or later working hours, provided that the duration of normal working hours is observed and the Executive Director or FAHR is informed in writing about and approves such exceptional arrangements. Per week. Due to the nature of their work and their level of responsibility, all staff members may be required to work overtime beyond the normal working hours. To maintain a safe and productive work environment, FEMNET expects employees to be reliable and to be punctual in reporting for scheduled work. In the rare instances when employees cannot avoid being late to work or are unable to work as scheduled, they should notify their manager as soon as possible.

3.11 Outside Employment

Employees who wish to take up paid outside work, including those on a part-time basis, must seek the written (date and signed) permission and guidance from the executive Director before accepting the job. Approval will not be given if the outside work is considered to be in conflict with the interest and values of the corporation.

3.11 Health and Safety

We all share the responsibility of maintaining a healthy, safe and respectful work environment. In view of this, we are all expected to observe the established health and safety policies, regulations and practices and report accidents, injuries and unsafe equipment, substances, practices or conditions.

4 Compliance with the Code

Safeguarding the reputation of FEMNET in general, and complying with this Code of Conduct in particular, is the responsibility of every employee, in every location, every job, at every level, and at all times. Any problems encountered as well as any suggestions should be channeled to Executive Director for consideration and advice.
Annex 1: Declaration Form

Code of Conduct Declaration Form

I confirm and acknowledge that:

- I have received FEMNET’s Code of Conduct and understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the legal and ethical practices contained in the Code of Conduct.
- I understand and agree to comply with its requirements;
- I am aware that violations of the Code of Conduct and FEMNET’s policies and procedures may result in disciplinary action and/or lawsuit.
- I understand that FEMNET is a not-for-profit organization acting in the interest of its members

I have no personal or financial interest to declare in relation to any interest or involvement of persons connected to myself, including business interests, directorships, shareholdings, elected office, trusteeship, other public appointments, which may be relevant to FEMNET.

Employees Name: __________________________________________

Signed: ________________________________ Date ____________________