



Vereinte Evangelische Mission
Gemeinschaft von Kirchen in drei Erdteilen
United Evangelical Mission
Communion of Churches in three Continents
Mission Evangélique Unie
Communion d'Eglises dans trois Continents

Code of Conduct of the United Evangelical Mission against Corruption and for Transparency *(also available in French and German)*

Preamble

The United Evangelical Mission – Communion of Churches in three Continents shall be based on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and shall serve the purpose of co-operation in mission. It operates within a network of churches established in Africa, Asia, Europe and wherever it is called to be. Together they shall proclaim Jesus Christ to be the Lord and Saviour of all people and shall meet the present-day missionary challenges. In a world torn apart, they commit themselves to remain members of the one Body of Christ, and therefore

- grow together into a worshipping, learning and serving community,
- share gifts, insights and responsibilities,
- call all people to repentance and new life,
- bear witness of the Kingdom of God in striving for justice, peace and integrity of Creation.
(§2,1 & 2 of the UEM Constitution).

In reformed theological tradition the democratic constitution of 34 churches and institutions is rooted in the Christian understanding of mutual respect and esteem, which is exemplified in all of humanity being made in the image of God. This is the source of our stand against injustice and discrimination. Hence, the United Evangelical Mission (UEM) undertakes to take preventive structural measures to combat every form of corruption and promote transparency in the execution of its working and decision-making processes. In standing up for justice and peace, also within the Communion of Churches in three Continents, the UEM voluntarily undertakes to recognise this Code of Conduct (hereafter referred to as Code) as the guidelines for its working practices.

Corruption damages community. It damages the UEM community. Corruption is the gaining of advantages of any kind (for oneself or for a third party), through the abuse of public or private authority, which consequently damages the community.

1. Principles

The United Evangelical Mission (UEM) undertakes to respect the following principles:

- 1.1 The respect for human dignity:** The right of every woman, man and child to be protected against corrupt practices must be reaffirmed and respected.
- 1.2 The promotion of justice:** Justice encourages equity and equal opportunities for all, and helps to reduce the disparities between the different social strata. Corruption perpetuates and increases inequality and injustice.
- 1.3 The respect for moral integrity:** Moral integrity, consisting of trust, honesty and

openness, is a prerequisite for the development of healthy human and community nurturing relationships, and enhances the credibility of individuals and UEM institutions.

- 1.4 **The promotion of transparency:** It is the duty of every working area to disclose its goals, activities, results, use and allocation of resources, and to provide information.
- 1.5 **The promotion of participation:** The effective participation in, and formation of, unequivocal and consistent decision-making processes at all levels, within the framework of clearly defined responsibilities, necessitates a transparent, comprehensive and intelligible flow of information.
- 1.6 **Rejecting corruption:** Every corrupt act must be condemned. The UEM undertakes to abstain from directly or indirectly offering any kind of advantage to third parties, from directly or indirectly accepting gifts for itself or others, and from giving or soliciting other advantages, which are, or could be regarded as, illegal or acts of bribery.
- 1.7 **Abiding by the law:** Abiding by current national laws, the UEM constitution, as well as the internally agreed rules and regulations shall be obligatory, insofar as they are compatible with this Code of Conduct.
- 1.8 **The right and the duty to report and resist corruption:** All employees and all other individuals related to the UEM have the right to resist involuntary involvement in corrupt practices. Furthermore, if they have been a witness to, or a victim of, any corrupt practices, they have a right and a duty to report these to an independent person or authority, still to be designated. Each individual threatened as a consequence of his/her resistance or opposition to corruption, shall have the benefit of the protection and support of the UEM governing bodies.
- 1.9 **The precedence of public interest over individual or group interest:** Corruption - as abuse of public or private authority for private gain - places illegitimate self-interest before the common good. In line with the common task of the UEM, common interest takes precedence over individual self-interest.

2 **Implementation**

The UEM shall, through the following measures, commit itself to adhere to the principles of the Code of Conduct against corruption:

2.1 **Structure**

The organs of the UEM shall provide for a separation of powers, and guarantee that no individual or member church shall have any financial advantage over others. The UEM exclusively and directly pursues **public welfare, charitable and church-related purposes.**

The **General Assembly shall decide** on the principles and the general guidelines, which govern the work of the UEM, as well as the financial priorities for a four-year period, including the list of executive staff positions.

Council shall ensure that the programmes, together with the concomitant personnel, financial and legal matters, and all other decisions adopted by the General Assembly are carried out. In emergency, Council shall act on behalf of the General Assembly.

Council shall decide on all financial matters including the budget, programmes and the

list of non-executive staff positions.

The **Executive Committee** shall act on behalf of Council when the latter does not meet. **Council shall conduct its business** with the assistance of the **Executive Staff** at the Head Office.

The **Moderator**, elected by the General Assembly, and the General Secretary, in mutual agreement, shall represent the UEM in committees. Council represents the UEM at law. Council assigns this task to six members of the Executive Staff. Legally binding statements must be signed by **two** members of staff who have the required authorisation.

2.2 Transparency in the administration of finances

UEM funds (donations, church collections, door-to-door collections, members contributions and legacies) may be expended only for such purposes as laid down in the constitution. The employee responsible will check invoices for substantive and arithmetic accuracy and the credit transfer shall be signed by two employees who have the required authorisation.

Regarding the appropriate use of, and accountability for, funds allocated, agreements have been made with the member churches on guidelines (see appendix), which will be further developed in line with this Code of Conduct.

An independent accountancy firm shall carry out a regular audit of the Annual Accounts of the UEM. The certified Annual Report shall be presented to Council and sent out to the member churches. A regular tax audit shall also be carried out by the appropriate tax office. Similarly, the charitable status of the UEM shall be periodically verified.

The practice of auditing by independent and recognised auditors shall be extended. This necessitates transparency and mutual accountability within the UEM church communities.

2.3 Information about the Code

The UEM shall make this Code available to all members of committees, all member churches and employees, and monitor its implementation.

The UEM, together with other organisations, will participate in the fight against corruption, and demand transparency.

The UEM, in its working documents and publications, shall highlight the context of debt relief (Jubilee 2000) and the fight against corruption, and will take the necessary measures to make its employees and committees aware of these issues.

The UEM shall support its member churches in the fight against corruption.

2.4 Mandatory reporting

The UEM shall undertake to implement this Code against corruption, to evaluate transparency at regular intervals, to disclose infringements, to initiate sanctions through the Executive Committee/Council and present the results in a report to Council every two years and to the General Assembly.

2.5 Final provisions

The General Assembly adopts this Code and shall receive regular reports on compliance with the Code.