



*Hindustan Unilever Limited*

## **Code of Conduct**

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Company has adopted a Code of Conduct specifically for the Members of the Board of Directors and/or Members of the Senior Management of the Company, which sets out as follows:

- To act in the best interests of, and fulfill fiduciary obligations to the Company; act honestly, fairly, ethically and with integrity, conduct themselves in professional, courteous and respectful manner and not take improper advantage of the position of Director;
- To comply with all applicable laws, rules and regulations;
- To act in good faith, responsibly, with due care, competence and diligence, without allowing their Independent judgement to be subordinated;
- To act in a manner to enhance and maintain the reputation of the Company;
- To disclose any personal interest that they may have regarding any matters that may come before the Board and abstain from discussion, voting or otherwise influencing decision on any matter in which the concerned Director has or may have such interest;
- To respect the confidentiality of information relating to the affairs of the Company acquired in the course of their service as Directors, while continuing as such a Director and even after ceasing to be such a Director, for a reasonable period of say two years, except when authorised or legally required to disclose such information;
- Restrain from using the Company's property or position for personal gain;
- Avoid using any information or opportunity received in the capacity as Directors for personal gain, or in a manner that would be detrimental to the Company's interests;
- Abstain from discussion, voting or otherwise influencing decision on any matters that may come before the Board in which they may have a conflict or potential conflict of interest.
- Not to use confidential information acquired in the course of their service as Directors for their personal advantage or for the advantage of any other entity in which they have a direct or indirect interest, or where they occupy a position of Board or Executive responsibility with influence over their decisions;
- Help create and maintain a culture of high ethical standards and commitment to compliance.

No Director shall seek, or accept, any gifts or incentives in their capacity as Director of the Company, except what is duly authorised as acceptance under the Company's Gift Policy.

In addition, the Non-Executive Independent Directors shall also abide by the provisions of the 'Code for Independent Directors' as provided in Schedule IV of the Companies Act, 2013, enclosed herewith as Annexure 1.

A Director who has concerns regarding compliance with this Code should raise such concerns with the Chairman of the Board who will deal with the same. No waiver or suspension of any or all requirements of this Policy, or any modifications of this Policy, shall be valid unless approved by the Board and formally minuted with reasons for such action.

Directors will annually sign a confirmation that they have read and will comply with this Code.

This Code shall be in addition to the Code of Business Principles of the Company.

## **Code for Independent Directors**

Schedule IV – Section 149(8) of Companies Act, 2013

The Code is a guide to professional conduct for Independent Directors. Adherence to these standards by Independent Directors and fulfilment of their responsibilities in a professional and faithful manner will promote confidence of the investment community, particularly minority shareholders, regulators and companies in the institution of Independent Directors.

### **I. Guidelines of professional conduct:**

An Independent Director shall:

- (1) uphold ethical standards of integrity and probity;
- (2) act objectively and constructively while exercising his duties;
- (3) exercise his responsibilities in a bona fide manner in the interest of the company;
- (4) devote sufficient time and attention to his professional obligations for informed and balanced decision making;
- (5) not allow any extraneous considerations that will vitiate his exercise of objective Independent judgment in the paramount interest of the company as a whole, while concurring in or dissenting from the collective judgment of the Board in its decision making;
- (6) not abuse his position to the detriment of the company or its shareholders or for the purpose of gaining direct or indirect personal advantage or advantage for any associated person;
- (7) refrain from any action that would lead to loss of his independence;
- (8) where circumstances arise which make an Independent Director lose his independence, the Independent Director must immediately inform the Board accordingly;
- (9) assist the company in implementing the best corporate governance practices.

### **II. Role and functions:**

The Independent Directors shall:

- (1) help in bringing an Independent judgment to bear on the Board's deliberations especially on issues of strategy, performance, risk management, resources, key appointments and standards of conduct;
- (2) bring an objective view in the evaluation of the performance of Board and management;
- (3) scrutinise the performance of management in meeting agreed goals and objectives and monitor the reporting of performance;
- (4) satisfy themselves on the integrity of financial information and that financial controls and the systems of risk management are robust and defensible;
- (5) safeguard the interests of all stakeholders, particularly the minority shareholders;
- (6) balance the conflicting interest of the stakeholders;
- (7) determine appropriate levels of remuneration of executive Directors, key managerial personnel and senior management and have a prime role in appointing and where necessary recommend removal of executive Directors, key managerial personnel and senior management;
- (8) moderate and arbitrate in the interest of the company as a whole, in situations of conflict between management and shareholder's interest.

### **III. Duties:**

The Independent Directors shall—

- (1) undertake appropriate induction and regularly update and refresh their skills, knowledge and familiarity with the company;
- (2) seek appropriate clarification or amplification of information and, where necessary, take and follow appropriate professional advice and opinion of outside experts at the expense of the company;
- (3) strive to attend all meetings of the Board of Directors and of the Board committees of which he is a member;
- (4) participate constructively and actively in the committees of the Board in which they are chairpersons or members;
- (5) strive to attend the general meetings of the company;
- (6) where they have concerns about the running of the company or a proposed action, ensure that these are addressed by the Board and, to the extent that they are not resolved, insist that their concerns are recorded in the minutes of the Board meeting;
- (7) keep themselves well informed about the company and the external environment in which it operates;
- (8) not to unfairly obstruct the functioning of an otherwise proper Board or committee of the Board;
- (9) pay sufficient attention and ensure that adequate deliberations are held before approving related party transactions and assure themselves that the same are in the interest of the company;
- (10) ascertain and ensure that the company has an adequate and functional vigil mechanism and to ensure that the interests of a person who uses such mechanism are not prejudicially affected on account of such use;
- (11) report concerns about unethical behavior, actual or suspected fraud or violation of the company's code of conduct or ethics policy;
- (12) 1["acting within his authority"], assist in protecting the legitimate interests of the company, shareholders and its employees;
- (13) not disclose confidential information, including commercial secrets, technologies, advertising and sales promotion plans, unpublished price sensitive information, unless such disclosure is expressly approved by the Board or required by law.

### **IV. Manner of appointment:**

- (1) Appointment process of Independent Directors shall be Independent of the company management; while selecting Independent Directors the Board shall ensure that there is appropriate balance of skills, experience and knowledge in the Board so as to enable the Board to discharge its functions and duties effectively.
- (2) The appointment of Independent Director(s) of the company shall be approved at the meeting of the shareholders.
- (3) The explanatory statement attached to the notice of the meeting for approving the appointment of Independent Director shall include a statement that in the opinion of the Board, the Independent Director proposed to be appointed fulfils the conditions specified in the Act and the rules made thereunder and that the proposed Director is Independent of the management.
- (4) The appointment of Independent Directors shall be formalised through a letter of appointment, which shall set out :
  - (a) the term of appointment;
  - (b) the expectation of the Board from the appointed Director; the Board-level committee(s) in which the Director is expected to serve and its tasks;
  - (c) the fiduciary duties that come with such an appointment along with accompanying liabilities;

- (d) provision for Directors and Officers (D and O) insurance, if any;
  - (e) the Code of Business Ethics that the company expects its Directors and employees to follow;
  - (f) the list of actions that a Director should not do while functioning as such in the company; and
  - (g) the remuneration, mentioning periodic fees, reimbursement of expenses for participation in the Boards and other meetings and profit related commission, if any.
- (5) The terms and conditions of appointment of Independent Directors shall be open for inspection at the registered office of the company by any member during normal business hours.
- (6) The terms and conditions of appointment of Independent Directors shall also be posted on the company's website.

**V. Re-appointment:**

The re-appointment of Independent Director shall be on the basis of report of performance evaluation.

**VI. Resignation or removal:**

- (1) The resignation or removal of an Independent Director shall be in the same manner as is provided in sections 168 and 169 of the Act.
- (2) An Independent Director who resigns or is removed from the Board of the company shall be replaced by a new Independent Director within a period of not more than one hundred and eighty days three months from the date of such resignation or removal, as the case may be.
- (3) Where the company fulfils the requirement of Independent Directors in its Board even without filling the vacancy created by such resignation or removal, as the case may be, the requirement of replacement by a new Independent Director shall not apply.

**VII. Separate meetings:**

- (1) The Independent Directors of the company shall hold at least one meeting in a year financial year, without the attendance of non-Independent Directors and members of management;
- (2) All the Independent Directors of the company shall strive to be present at such meeting;
- (3) The meeting shall:
- (a) review the performance of non-Independent Directors and the Board as a whole;
  - (b) review the performance of the Chairperson of the company, taking into account the views of executive Directors and non-executive Directors;
  - (c) assess the quality, quantity and timeliness of flow of information between the company management and the Board that is necessary for the Board to effectively and reasonably perform their duties.

**VIII. Evaluation mechanism:**

- (1) The performance evaluation of Independent Directors shall be done by the entire Board of Directors, excluding the Director being evaluated.
- (2) On the basis of the report of performance evaluation, it shall be determined whether to extend or continue the term of appointment of the Independent Director.

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