

SASBO

SALHA 24: SASBO

SASBO



TRADE UNION
LIBRARY AND
EDUCATION CENTRE

THE FINANCE UNION

P O L I C Y D O C U M E N T

SASBO CODE OF ETHICS

JUNE 2000

SASBO CODE OF ETHICS

INTRODUCTION

Formed as a trade union in 1916, SASBO's primary objectives are to improve the conditions of service and protect the interests of its members, individually and collectively, in relation to their employers and otherwise, and generally to raise their status.

Operating in the South African finance sector, SASBO identifies with the ethics and conventions of finance professionals and has always encouraged sound industrial relations with employers and/or their organisations, with the intention of regulating conflict as peacefully and constructively as possible by endeavouring to settle disputes by conciliatory methods. The union has always been, and continues to be, committed to fair and honest dealings, and integrity, in its interaction with all its stakeholders, this in the fundamental belief that SASBO's operation and business should be conducted honestly, fairly and within the parameters of labour and other laws.

ETHICS DEFINED

The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines "ethics" as:

"The science of morals in human conduct; moral philosophy; moral principles; rules of conduct."

The New Collins Concise Dictionary defines "ethics" as:

"The philosophical study of the moral value of human conduct, and the rules and principles that ought to govern it; a code of behaviour considered correct, especially that of a particular group, profession or individual; the moral fitness of a decision, course of action, etcetera".

SASBO'S CODE OF ETHICS

SASBO, in line with good business practice, and following a resolution adopted by delegates attending the union's 1998 national congress, now seeks to set out, formally, the principles of moral and ethical behaviour that are expected of its

employees and elected office bearers in the performance of their functions and duties, and in pursuance of SASBO's declared commitment to provide its members with a consistently outstanding and widespread range of labour relations services.

The following SASBO Code of Ethics is not a set of rules and regulations. It is a set of principles that has been designed to enable employees and elected office bearers to take part in the activities of SASBO in an ethical and transparent manner.

SASBO's Code of Ethics seeks to provide an ethical norm to the dealings of SASBO employees and elected office bearers and to create a professional milieu within which the union can fulfil its objectives and duties.

SASBO's Code of Ethics, then, is designed to enable the union to achieve the following objectives:

- Provide full-time employees and elected office bearers with a thorough understanding of their union's traditions, principles and objectives.
- Enable employees and elected office bearers to interact in a professional manner and direct their efforts towards benefiting all sections of SASBO's diverse membership.
- Adapt to ever-changing internal and external environments without compromising SASBO's goals and principles
- Empower employees and elected office bearers to deal calmly and professionally with emotive issues that may arise at meetings of the union's structures and during professional interaction with employers.
- Promote democratic decision-making by fostering the fact that a successful democracy requires both discipline and acceptance of the majority view by those in the minority on any particular issue.

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FOSTERING UNITY

SASBO's strength rests on two important pillars; the union's unwavering commitment to its credo "Unity is Strength", and its members' commitment to improving the welfare of all employees employed in the finance sector regardless of race, gender or seniority.

Even though, for geographical or practical reasons, SASBO branch committees sometimes have representational imbalances, members of these committees commit themselves to looking after, and representing, members in all spheres of the SASBO family. They accept that, in order to ensure the formulation of balanced views and strategies, it is often necessary to consult with the union's full-time officials and/or co-opt representatives from the under-represented race, gender or professional groupings. This insistence on optimum representivity - which had its origin during the apartheid era in defiance of unjust laws which barred employees of colour from belonging to a trade union - has become a cornerstone of SASBO ethics.

INTER-RACIAL AND GENDER CO-OPERATION

All SASBO employees and elected office bearers charged with representing the union undertake to uphold their union's constitution and proud record as a trend-setter in the achievement of inter-racial co-operation. In pursuance of this goal, they undertake to include all shades of SASBO opinion in their debates and avoid proposing and/or adopting resolutions which could disadvantage members of other race or gender groups.

SASBO MEMBERS FIRST

When SASBO employees and elected office bearers meet on official union business, they are meeting for the purpose of advancing the interests of the members they represent. It is, therefore, their duty to place the interests of SASBO – and all sections of its membership – ahead of personal or sectarian ambitions.

MUTUAL RESPECT

It is SASBO's view that any member prepared to give of his or her time to work for the betterment of all finance workers deserves respect, and that every viewpoint is worth a sincere hearing. Experience has shown that the most dynamic reforms often begin as unpopular concepts or clumsily expressed ideas. Without a fair hearing and unbiased debate, these ideas would have been stillborn. Members, therefore, undertake to treat one another with courtesy and respect, no matter how deep their differences might be on the issue under debate.

RESPECTFUL DEBATES

Pursuant to the above, it is the duty of those chairing meetings to ensure that internationally accepted debating procedures are followed at all times. This requires, inter alia:

- Respect for, and obedience to, the chair.
- Obeying standing instructions.
- Not interrupting, heckling or abusing the speaker.
- Avoidance of foul language and personal insults.
- Refraining from all forms of dishonesty, including the making of false and/or misleading statements.
- Not indulging in any action, which could bring the union – and its principals – into disrepute.

All union employees and elected office bearers accept these standards, as well as the fact that departures from them could lead to their temporary or permanent suspension from SASBO activities.

ADEQUATE PREPARATION

SASBO office bearers accept that the trust placed in them by the members they represent demands that they prepare themselves thoroughly to debate issues in a responsible and relevant manner, and that they will provide their branch executive committees and local membership with accurate feedback on the issues under debate.

ACCURATE MINUTE TAKING

SASBO requires accurate minutes of all the meetings of its structures. It is, therefore, incumbent on branch secretaries, and any other union member or employee charged with keeping minutes, to do so accurately and honestly. In the interests of accurate recording of minutes, all committee members are responsible for checking their minutes carefully before approving them.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Many SASBO debates – whether they are at branch level or at national forums – are confidential. The leaking of sensitive information on important issues under discussion could impair the union's strategies and effectiveness, with negative consequences for the members SASBO is representing. For these reasons, all committee delegates, whether elected or full-time representatives, undertake to treat the issues under discussion with the strictest of confidentiality when directed to do so.

Notwithstanding the above, all SASBO members are entitled to full information on the union's end results.

MEDIA STATEMENTS

In view of the need for unity of purpose and action, SASBO will ensure that its media statements present an accurate depiction of the facts of any issue and of the union's policy or stance relative to these issues. SASBO, therefore, will confine official media interaction, in the case of national issues affecting the entire union, to the general secretary or deputy general secretary; in the case of issues affecting a specific institution, to the appropriate assistant general secretary, and in the case of issues affecting a SASBO region, to the appropriate regional secretary.

Media statements not in compliance with the Code of Ethics will be regarded as unofficial, null and void, and are subject to revoke by the union.

DISCRETION

Conflicts of interest arise when managements attempt to interfere in a trade union's internal affairs by persuading individual office bearers to disclose confidential information. This is usually done through insinuations that siding with management

would be career-enhancing (or saving), blatant attempts to divide and rule, or through direct offers of gifts and/or favours. To avoid becoming wittingly or unwittingly seduced into a situation where they might function as stooges and sell-outs, SASBO employees and elected office bearers undertake to refer any attempts to gain their favours to their branch committees and to the general secretary. Gifts and/or favours will not be accepted by any SASBO employee or elected office bearer without being cleared by an appropriate structure.

SUSPENSION

Temporary or permanent suspension may be applied to SASBO employees or elected office bearers guilty of the following infringements of SASBO ethics:

- Dishonesty of any nature.
- Breach of confidentiality, i.e., information obtained at meetings.
- Wilfully disobeying the instructions of the union's structures.
- Assault or physical attack.
- Bringing the union into disrepute.

Aside from any disciplinary action taken against SASBO employees in terms of this Code of Ethics, all of the union's staff are subject to the SASBO disciplinary procedure and code.

APPEAL PROCEDURE

Any SASBO employee or elected office bearer dissatisfied with corrective action taken against him/her has the right to appeal to the union's president within five (5) working days. The general secretary and either the president or deputy president, will appoint a chairperson/s (maximum of two) and convene a formal appeal meeting within 30 days. Should the president be the appellant, the General Secretary will appoint a chairperson/s (maximum of two). The accused may be represented by another office bearer or by a SASBO employee and has the right to state his/her case. The decision of the chairperson/s confirming or overriding any previous actions will be final and binding.

SASBO MEMBERS' UNIQUE APPROACH TO WORK

Overarching all other ethics has been SASBO members' unique approach to work. SASBO members regard employment in the finance sector as a career – not merely

as a job. In the finance sector, it is its dedicated employees – not any passing management style – who are forever. Because most SASBO members have committed their working lives to their banks, insurance companies and other financial institutions, they are cautious about taking actions designed to weaken their employer, their industry, or the greater South African economy on whose welfare the South African finance industry depends.

SASBO is the most enduring and experienced component of the finance industry in the fields of human resources and industrial relations. Individual managements respect this status and regard SASBO as an important strategic partner. For more than 80 years, SASBO's far-sighted approach has been instrumental in achieving the enviable salary levels, working conditions and job security enjoyed by most SASBO members.

INTRODUCTORY DATE

The introductory date of the SASBO Code of Ethics is 4 June 2000, the date on which the management committee resolved its acceptance on behalf of the union's employees, and the date on which the executive council resolved its acceptance on behalf of elected office bearers.

SALHA 21j: SASBO



Problems / Concerns facing Bank Workers:

As Finance workers, like others, we are always faced with threats to our Job-Security. Today, in this modern world of banking, billions of rands are exchanged with the push of a computer button. The world of international finance is like a huge casino for the rich. Do you remember the 200 year old Barings Banks of Englands' collapse a few weeks ago. What happened to all the workers of the bank?

The finance sector is also prone to constant technological pressure to "improve banking". But in most cases this ends up with bank workers becoming redundant. Also, banks and financial institutions often ends up in mergers as a result of competition amongst them. As workers we are hardly ever, if at all, considered when the rich and greedy bosses make decisions to restructure.

All these developments pose a constant threat to our JOB - SECURITY. Remember the formation of ABSA not so long ago. Many were retrenched. **THE SITUATION IS LIKELY TO WORSEN IN FUTURE!**

Our salary increases have also not kept pace with inflation. This simply means a constant loss of income for us and a drop in our living standards. Yet as finance workers we know that our companies always ensure that when ordinary people borrow money from them they make sure that they recover inflation, plus a huge profit in interest. Why do we continue to allow ourselves to be robbed by our employers when they are making huge profits yearin, year out???

We need to defend ourselves!

There is a perception that our union, SASBO, has traditionally been weak and soft when confronted by these problems. Many of the union leaders and officials have become comfortable in their positions, not feeling the problems as we ordinary members do. **WE MUST CHANGE THIS!**

Since the 1980's other workers in COSATU have proved to us that simply to talk and be nice to the bosses does not make any gains for us. It is only strong and democratically controlled productive unions which make a difference. This is what our union SASBO must become. **HOW?**

Members must unite and take control:

- * We as SASBO members must meet at our workplaces to discuss our problems and elect leaders who directly represent us (Shopstewards).
- * All members must attend union meetings regularly. Only in this way can you improve your unions organisation and be able to elect leaders who will represent your interest and be accountable to you!

The union must become your organisation!

Make the change now for a better future.

**All members are to attend the Western Cape Region
Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 26 October '95 -
5.15pm**

**VENUE: CAPE TOWN CIVIC CENTRE
PODIUM HALL, FORESHORE
CAPE TOWN**

Key Issues:

- * Salary and benefits improvement
- * Affirmative Action
- * Work stress
- * Building, strengthening SASBO
- * Election of Regional Officebearers