

UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

**AGENCIES: United States Information Agency,
Office of Government Ethics**

**International Conference on Government Ethics: Public
Service and Public Trust in Democracies**

58 FR 53994

Tuesday, October 19, 1993

ACTION: Notice--Request for Support.

SUMMARY: The United States Information Agency (USIA) and the Office of Government Ethics (OGE) are planning to co-sponsor an international conference titled: "The International Conference on Government Ethics: Public Service, Public Trust in Democracies."

This announcement seeks support for this endeavor from United States and foreign institutions including international business corporations, nonprofit exchange organizations, foundations, professional associations, universities, and other institutions and individuals concerned with government ethics and integrity. It further seeks support from foreign governments and leaders concerned with the development of organizational structures necessary to insure integrity in government administration.

Tentatively scheduled for May 1994, this international conference will compare, across cultures, organizational structures, laws and regulations, that support ethical behavior in government and between government and other sectors of society. It also addresses the impact of corruption on international commerce and the need for effective government to create a positive environment for

international investment.

The proposed conference is designed as a multilateral program in which U.S. leaders share their expertise and insights through case studies with representatives from other developed (United Kingdom, France, Germany, Australia, Sweden, etc.) and developing democracies. Follow-on regional workshops and consultancies overseas, study tours and internships in the United States are proposed.

Program Rationale and Thematic Focus: Public service is a public trust. Standards of ethical conduct are necessary for all public servants. For emerging democratic nations to succeed, citizens must have confidence in their new government's integrity. This principle is fundamental for global democratic development.

Political corruption undermines the ability of all nations to develop mutually beneficial economic relations and joint venture programs. Consequently, regulatory systems and codes of behavior are needed which hold nations to similarly high standards of accountability.

Many global regions are going through democratic revolutions whether in Africa, Asia, Latin America or most prominently in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. These transitions are critical to world peace. Having moved away from or rejected authoritarian and dictatorial systems and practices, how will each of these nations' leaders meet this challenge without replacing one corrupt and abusive system with another?

Program discussions and presentations will examine such abuses as conflict of interest by employees; manipulation of rules for political or personal gain; nepotism; bribery and payoffs; disclosure of insider information; waste, fraud and abuse; and other corrupt practices or even the appearance of improper conduct. It will also compare protective systems for employees which provide opportunities for redress, grievance and appeal.

While focusing on the executive branch of government, ethical issues concerning judicial and legislative behavior may arise as this conference compares and examines parliamentary as well as presidential systems.

Program sessions will address many interrelated issues, for

example:

What institutions, rules, laws and regulations have already been developed in these nations to address fundamental ethical issues and public corruption?

Which codes or regulations are needed to raise the standards of ethical conduct, and which regulations obstruct progress or may even stimulate abuse within newly democratic nations?

Which codes of ethics are only applicable within certain cultural and social contexts? When is a gift a bribe?

What systems of accountability have been put into place and what kinds of punishment have been legislated or enacted. Are these systems enforced, why or why not?

What kind of ethics training do government officials receive?

What type of civics education is there in support of ethical codes of conduct? When is it provided and for whom?

What role are the United Nations or other international organizations such as CSCE or NATO (NACC) playing in addressing ethics issues?

Can new ethical standards work in nations suffering from significant economic problems? Will the people and their leaders support new systems of ethics and accountability?

Structure and Development: OGE and USIA will manage this program. Key American and foreign nonprofit institutions (professional and exchange associations, universities), foundations, corporations and individuals will share in its analytical development; and USIA posts overseas (USIS) will facilitate and approve foreign leader participation. Given this conference's broad multilateral mandate, no initial U.S. Government funding is envisioned in its support. Rather, U.S. and foreign foundations, corporations and individuals will be carefully solicited.

This conference is dedicated to addressing real world problems with concrete, practical solutions. It is not envisioned as a passive exercise. Rather, all participants will be actively involved before, during and after the seminal event. It is expected to attract well over 100 prominent leaders and ethics practitioners.

Furthermore, this conference is envisioned as only a first step which could stimulate a coordinated program of follow-on regional workshops, overseas consultations, materials development, and internships in the United States and in other participating nations.

Related issues for this international conference program on government and ethics are government-business ethics and corruption, government accountability and systems for enforcement, and the creation of a "rule of law" concept among the people.

Action Requested: This announcement is not a request for proposals. Rather, it is a request for interest in and support for the planning and development of the proposed international conference on government and ethics. U.S. Government coordinators of this program are seeking assistance in the process of nominating prominent leaders as chairpersons for this program; developing the program's content; developing follow-on programs; and working together with the private sector (corporations, foundations, individuals) in the United States and overseas to include foreign governments to raise the initial funds necessary to hold this international conference under USIA's gift authority. The conference will also focus participant attention on practical follow-on programs and potential public as well as private funding sources for these programs.

Response Address: All communications concerning this announcement should refer to the International Conference on Government Ethics. Interested individuals and institutions may indicate their willingness to assist in this effort by contacting the program staff at the following address: Mr. Richard Werksman, Office of the General Counsel, United States Information Agency, Washington, DC 20547. Tel: (202)619-6827 FAX: (202)619-4573.

Dates: Deadline for expressions of interest and potential cosponsorship for this May 1994 event, in any or all facets of this program, is November 26, 1993. An Executive Committee will review all communication and intentions of support and respond promptly to these inquiries. Based on the level of interest and support for this program, the United States Information Agency and the Office of Government Ethics will make a formal determination on or about December 31, 1993 whether or not to proceed with this program as designed.

Expressions of interest will be reviewed according to several criteria including the quality of proposed support, a potential

cosponsoring institution's reputation and capabilities, relative commitment of project personnel to this endeavor, program planning contributions and follow-on program ideas, thematic expertise, cross-cultural and area affairs expertise, international outreach and cosponsorship, and willingness and ability to generate support directly or indirectly for this program's development.

United States Information Service (USIS) posts overseas will have final authority in approving the participation of international participants.

Issuance of this announcement does not constitute a commitment to allocate resources or conduct this program on the part of the United States Information Agency or the Office of Government Ethics.

Dated: October 14, 1993.

Michael Schneider,
Acting Associate Director, Bureau of Policy and Programs,
United States Information Agency.

Dated: October 14, 1993.

Donald Campbell,
Deputy Director, Office of Government Ethics.