



UNITED NATIONS Ombudsman & Mediation Services

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Delivering in Latin America & the Caribbean - Portrait of the **Regional Branch in Santiago**

The United Nations Office of Ombudsman and Mediation Services (UNOMS) has seven regional branches that provide informal conflict resolution services to employees of the UN Secretariat including staff in peacekeeping missions. One of those branches is located in Santiago (Chile), mainly serving staff at ECLAC and other UN Secretariat staff based in the Latin America and Caribbean regions.

The branch in Santiago is headed by Regional Ombudsman Mr. José Martínez-Aragón (Spain). Prior to his appointment as Regional Ombudsman, Mr. Martínez-Aragón served as Principal Adviser to the European Ombudsman and is an accredited mediator in France, the UK and the USA. Mr. Martínez-Aragón is assisted by Ms. Isabel Godoy (Chile). The Office provides services such as conflict resolution, coaching, shuttle diplomacy and mediation.

“Thank you for your:

- professionalism,*
- insight,*
- conviction*
- and support.*

It is rewarding and refreshing!”

Anonymous feedback from a visitor

The nature of informal resolution

The Ombudsmen and Mediators use a collaborative approach to look at disputes from all perspectives with the objective to identify possible ways forward. The parties remain in control of the resolution process and determine the outcome that best meets their needs. Such an informal approach also allows for swift and sustainable solutions to disputes.

The work of the Regional Branch in Santiago



Mr. José Martínez-Aragón
Regional Ombudsman in Santiago

Mr. Martínez-Aragón notes: *“Since the establishment of the Office in Santiago much has already been accomplished: We have and are continuously reaching out to staff and managers explaining the benefits of informal resolution and have been successfully resolving cases and identified systemic issues that are often at the root of conflicts. The office is a good early step for staff and managers in resolving work-related issues and has thus played a significant role in preventing conflicts from escalation.*

Conflicts are a natural phenomenon in the workplace and should not cause us worry. In the face of conflict, we should instead concentrate on coming up with options which can solve the issue in a productive way. In that endeavor, staff can always count on the Ombudsman’s help”.

Types of issues

Since the Office's establishment in 2010, issues brought to the Ombudsman in Santiago for informal resolution were mainly related to: (1) job and career; (2) interpersonal relationships; and (3) compensation and benefits. Other issues relate to unfair treatment, abuse of authority, safety, health and work/life balance.

Guiding principles of an Ombudsman

Independent – An Ombudsman is independent in structure and function from all United Nations organs and officials and has direct access to the Secretary-General.

Neutral and Impartial – An Ombudsman does not take sides in a conflict. S/he reviews each situation objectively and treats all parties equally.

Confidential – An Ombudsman does not keep records for the United Nations or any other party. S/he holds all communications with those seeking assistance in strict confidence, and does not disclose confidential communications unless given permission to do so.

Informal – An Ombudsman does not participate in any formal adjudicative or administrative procedure relating to concerns brought to his/her attention.

Contact the Ombudsman if you have a work related concern and you:

- Don't know who to talk to
- Would like a confidential or "off-the-record" conversation
- Don't know how to address your concerns
- Have not yet decided on a course of action
- Are uncertain of possible consequences
- Have pursued formal redress and want to explore alternatives

Contacting an Ombudsman is always a good first step!

The Regional Office in Santiago is located at ECLAC Headquarters, Av. Dag Hammarskjöld 3477 in Santiago, Chile.

Central case intake:

Use the Secure Contact Form to contact one of the Ombudsmen or Mediators confidentially, send an email to ombudsmediation@un.org or call +1 917 367 5731 (New York).

Services are available in all six UN languages. Find out more at: www.un.org/ombudsman.



Mr. Martínez-Aragón and Ms. Isabel Godoy
on ECLAC premises

"Just as the United Nations addresses conflicts around the world, so must we also pay close attention to resolving and managing conflicts within the organization. I therefore encourage all of you to make use of the Ombudsman and Mediation Services".

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon