

The following Code of Ethics was ratified at the 6th World Congress of Environmental Journalists held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on October 19 - 23, 1998.

Code of Ethics for Environmental Journalists.

1. The right to a clean environment and sustainable development is fundamental and is closely connected to the right to life and good health and well being. The environmental journalist should inform the public about the threats to the environment - whether it is at the global, regional, national or local level.
2. Often the media is the only source of information on the environment. The journalist's duty is to heighten the awareness of the public on environmental issues. The journalist should strive to report a plurality of views on the environment.
3. By informing the public, the journalist plays a vital role in enabling people to resort to action in protecting their environment. The journalist's duty is not only in alerting people about their endangered environment at the outset, but also in following up such threats and keeping them posted about developments. Journalists should also attempt to write on possible solutions to environmental problems.
4. The journalists should not be influenced on these issues by vested interests - whether they are commercial, political, and government or non-governmental. The journalist ought to keep a distance from such interests and not ally with them. As a rule journalists should report all sides in any environmental controversy.
5. The journalist should as far as possible cite sources of information and avoid alarmist or speculative reportage and tendentious comment. He or she should crosscheck the authenticity of a source, whether commercial, official or non-governmental.
6. The environmental journalist should foster equity in access to such information and help organizations and individuals to gain it. Electronic retrieval of data can provide a useful and egalitarian tool in this regard.
7. The journalist should respect the right of privacy of individuals who have been affected by environmental catastrophes, natural disasters and the like.
8. The environmental journalist should not hesitate to correct information that he or she previously believed was correct, or to tilt the balance of public opinion by analysis in the light of subsequent developments.