

COVID 19

Communication guidelines for UN staff



Communicating within the Organization

- **Avoid “overcommunicating”**

Establish a communication protocol and communicate through the right channels and establish a protocol to share the correct information with all staff in a timely manner.

- **Maintain confidentiality**

Refrain from revealing identity of colleagues who might be in self isolation or travelling to protect their privacy and ensure their safety and security.



Communicating Outside the Organization

You can be a compelling advocate for UN through proper use of communication channels

UN personnel can be the best advocates for our work, because we speak with an authentic voice. In order to achieve that great potential we need to make sure we are effective and align with UN’s messaging and principles.

- **Share the right information**

As UN staff, each of us has the responsibility to share accurate and verified information.

Please refer to official sources of information like WHO and the IRMCT COVID-19 Information Portal for accurate sources of information. For any other information or content always verify

the source before sharing it forward. Guide people to the IRMCT COVID-19 Information Portal and WHO website and social media platforms to get the most relevant news and information.

- **Proactively address rumours, and ‘fake news’**

Inform your communication team immediately if you come across any rumours or fake news, especially if it is attributed to the UN so it can be addressed. Rumors attributable to the UN might impact the organization’s image as the leading and credible voice in times of crises. Also, as international civil servants it is each person’s duty to be an advocate and ensure correct and consistent COVID-19 information is available to the public.



- **Maintain positive communication**

All communication regarding COVID-19 should be fact based showing hope. Our communication should not in any way predict doom.



- **Understand your duties and obligations as UN personnel and your personal responsibility**

You are personally responsible for any content you publish on social media. Be mindful, even if you put up a disclaimer (such as “Views expressed here are my own”), the social media community could still view you as a representative of the UN. Seemingly harmless opinions about, for example, detail of a travel or dining experience, whether personal or professional, can be misconstrued as a UN opinion or a reflection of UN staff conduct. Avoid statements that are or could be seen as defamatory, libelous, or obscene. When using another person’s content, ensure you have consented to do so (read the terms of use or ask for permission). Acknowledge your source.



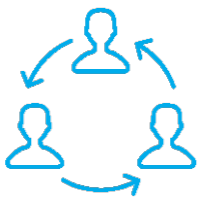
- **Think before you communicate**

Nothing is “private” on social media. Do make sure you have privacy settings in place, but be aware that even with these, or in a small network, anything you share can be forwarded by your community to a broader audience. If you feel angry or passionate about a subject, it’s wise to delay posting until you are calm and clear-headed. Post only pictures that you would be comfortable sharing with the general public (current and future peers, country partners, etc.).



- **Maintain confidentiality**

You must not share internal, confidential, sensitive or proprietary information about UN, its partners, those we support, or your fellow employees. This is a duty under UN staff rules. Breach of this rule could result in management action or even constitute misconduct. If there is any doubt on the nature of the information, do not post.



- **Sharing about UN**

Sharing UN news, events or promoting our mission work through social media tools is an excellent, low-cost way to engage the community and build our brand.

Do re-post and share information that is available by UN and your local Government to the public (press releases, internet news, etc.) with your networks. Link to the original UN and Government source (website, blog). You must not give the impression that you are speaking on behalf of the UN unless you have been authorized to post in an official capacity.



- **Safety**

Don’t let any communication harm you, your colleagues, beneficiaries or any other people you are working with: You must not share anything that reveals personal information or location of a UN colleague, beneficiary or affiliate without their permission. You may be inadvertently putting them in harm’s

way and you may be breaking staff rules as well as national laws relating to data protection.

Be extra careful while posting about a situation, location, names or pictures of individuals, including both your own and that of other people.



- **Cultural sensitivity**

Show proper consideration for topics that may be considered sensitive — such as gender, sexual orientation, politics and religion. Keep that world view in mind when participating in online conversations. Express yourself with tact and discretion. Show proper consideration for other people's privacy including their private views, beliefs or status and do not post such information without their permission. Be even more sensitive of your surroundings and environment in conflict-affected countries.



- **Maintain integrity**

The line between professional and personal business is sometimes blurred, therefore: In personal posts, if you decide to identify yourself as a UN employee, be clear that you are sharing your views as an individual. Use a disclaimer such as “This reflects my personal views and opinions and does not necessarily represent those of my employer”. You must not use ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in UN's community. This includes following, liking or re- posting such materials. Be thoughtful about your posting's content and potential audiences. Do not impersonate anyone. Do not plagiarize. Do not post photographs of anyone (including any member of a beneficiary community) unless you have their prior permission. Do not use the UN logo.



- **Correct mistakes**

Be respectful of beneficiary communities and of partners. Make sure that your message is accurate and complete before you

post. If you make a mistake, admit it. Be upfront and be quick with your correction.



Digital and Social media is by nature not private and the Internet is permanent

Digital and Social media includes email and a broad range of internet-based platforms that allow you to interact with others online, including applications, forums, blogs, wikis and websites (such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat, YouTube, Weibo, Trip Advisor, Yelp, etc.).

Social media, by its very nature, is not private. Content that we post and actions we take in a limited community social media space may be shared or copied by others in that community. Even “protected” or “private” social media channels can change their privacy settings in the future.

Our online activities create a permanent record. Deleted content can often be searched for and located. Prospective employers and others are more and more accessing social media accounts to make decisions about individuals; it is very important to keep that in mind.

Every action on digital and social media, no matter how innocent, may have unintended consequences

When using digital and social media, it is important to assess the implications of communicating (whether your own original content or third party content or information), “commenting” and “linking”, and even of “friending,” “liking,” or “following”.

YOUR OBLIGATIONS AS A UN EMPLOYEE

You are subject to the UN Secretariat's core Values of integrity, professionalism and respect for diversity, as well as other related behavior codes, standards and policies, including, but not limited to:

- [Charter of the United Nations](#)
- [UN Staff Rules and Regulations](#)
- [Status, basic rights and duties of UN Staff Members](#)
- [Standards of Conduct for International Civil Servants](#)

In particular, the **Status, basic rights and duties of UN Staff Members** explicitly states: While staff members' personal views and convictions, including their political and religious convictions, remain inviolable, staff members shall ensure that those views and convictions do not adversely affect their official duties or the interests of the United Nations. They shall conduct themselves at all times in a manner befitting their status as international civil servants and shall not engage in any activity that is incompatible with the proper discharge of their duties with the United Nations. They shall avoid any action and, in particular, any kind of public pronouncement that may adversely reflect on their status, or on the integrity, independence and impartiality that are required by that status.

This document is based on the UNICEF Communication guidelines.