Operational Instruction Ref. OI.CG.2019.03
Crisis Communications

Authority:

This Operational Instruction (OI) is promulgated by the Director, Communications Group (CG), on the basis of a delegation of authority from the Executive Director under OD.ED.2018.03: Communications.

Purpose:

The purpose of this OI is to provide instructions regarding 'crisis communications', that is, when an official public statement is necessary to be issued on behalf of UNOPS by a duly authorized member of personnel relating to a concern or event.

Effective Date:

This OI shall become effective **immediately.**

Promulgation Date:

20 Dec 2019

Consequential changes:

This OI shall supersede and replace OI.CG.2018.04 - Crisis Communications. The purpose of this revision is to clarify who the Director, CG, shall consult with in case of crisis communications.

[signature redacted]

Peter Browne
Director, Communications Group

1. Introduction

1.1 In certain circumstances, UNOPS Executive Director, or a senior manager with delegated authority to speak on a topic under the scope of her/his responsibility, may be required to issue a public statement in order to manage the reputation and profile of the organization. These circumstances would typically be in response to a concern or an event which carries high reputational risk due to either the serious nature of the event or the potentially newsworthiness of the event.

1.2 This OI establishes a set of criteria for determining whether a concern or an event represents a significant risk to the organization's reputation and sets out the roles and responsibilities in reaching an assessment of said risk.

1.3 This OI enables the Director, CG , with the input of other relevant senior managers, depending on the nature of the concern or the event, to support and advise the Executive Office on the content, timing, distribution and delivery of a public statement addressing the matter.

2. Principles

2.1 For the purposes of this OI, the Director, CG, shall categorize the concern or the event which may necessitate the issuance of a public statement according to two criteria:

a. Risk level : This indicates the severity of the concern or event that may require the issuance of a public statement by UNOPS (low/medium/high)

b. Probability : This refers to the likelihood that the above concern or event may require the issuance of a public statement by UNOPS (low/medium/high)

2.2 Types of events considered to be **high risk** :

- Loss of life / risk of loss of life of UNOPS personnel and/or of a third individual party due to UNOPS activities
- Illegality including all forms of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse by UNOPS personnel
- Contravention of other United Nations values by UNOPS personnel
- Legal liability of UNOPS in dispute or other official proceeding where the Director, Legal Group/ General Counsel has assessed that a concern or event is high risk
- Extreme financial risk to the organization

2.3. Types of event considered to also carry a **high probability** that a statement by UNOPS is required:

- Loss of life / risk of loss of life of UNOPS personnel and/or of a third individual party due to UNOPS activities
- The strong likelihood of global media interest in the event or concern in question
- The strong likelihood that local/national coverage which could escalate to global coverage

2.4 All UNOPS Regional Directors,Country Directors, and Group Directors must report a concern or an event which fall under sections 2.2 and 2.3 to the Director, CG .

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Executive Director or duly authorized delegated authority shall issue the public statement.

3.2 The Director, CG, shall advise on the content, timing, distribution and delivery of a public statement.

3.3 In the course of assessing the high risk, high probability criteria, the Director, CG, shall be guided by information, advice and consultation with the following officials:

In all matters:

- The Executive Director
- The Deputy Executive Director

In matters relating to their responsibilities:

- The Director, Regional Portfolios
- The General Counsel and Director of the New York Liaison Office
- The Chief Financial Officer and Director of Administration
- The Director, Implementation Practices and Standards
- The Director, Communications Group
- The Director, Internal Audit and Investigations Group
- The Director, Ethics Office

3.4 Effective communication between UNOPS and parties outside of the UN is only possible if the organization can communicate effectively internally. Robust internal information flow processes will better inform a credible public statement should it be required.

4. Outcome

4.1 Following a determination by the Director, CG after assessment and consultation that a concern or event necessitates a public statement by the Executive Director, the content, timing, distribution and delivery of the statement will be managed by the Director , CG with input from relevant stakeholders and supported by the Communications Group.

4.2 Where concerns or events have not been found to be both high risk and high probability, any relevant information or material will be recorded in the crisis communications log for reference purposes ensuring a continuity of knowledge and material for future reference by the Communications Group.