Operational Instruction Ref. OI.CG.2020.02
Media Relations, Publications and Website

Authority:

This Operational Instruction (OI) is promulgated by the Head of Communications, 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 to UNOPS personnel in their potential dealings with the media.

Effective Date:

This OI shall become effective **immediately.**

Promulgation Date:

24 Aug 2020

Consequential changes:

This OI shall supersede and replace OI.CG.2019.01 - Media Relations and Website. The purpose of this revision is to add a section on UNOPS external publications and clarify required authorizations.

[signature redacted]

Peter Browne
Director, Communications Group

1. Introduction

1.1 Many aspects of UNOPS work are of interest to journalists and the general public. External Communications and media coverage of UNOPS work is an important tool for sharing the organization's services and views with decision-makers and the general public.

1.2 To ensure our credibility, promote transparency and increase visibility, the purpose of this OI is to provide instructions to UNOPS personnel regarding corporate communication platforms and to guide and inform them in their potential engagement with the media.

1.3 This OI applies to all UNOPS personnel as defined in OI.PCG.2017.01: Personnel Management Framework.

2. Principles

2.1 UNOPS is committed to openness and transparency in matters of public and media interest. One of these partners is the media, with whom we seek to maintain a positive and ongoing close relationship.

2.2 UNOPS does not suppress, conceal or mislead information. Matters that may become of public and media interest should always be dealt with quickly, honestly and proactively.

2.3 UNOPS recognizes the ever-evolving media environment where social media may overlap with elements of media relations. For instructions on social media use, please consult OI.CG.2019.02: Use of Social Media.

2.4 UNOPS must also balance the need to be open with the need to respect vital confidentiality obligations. UNOPS must always uphold principles, including impartiality, neutrality and independence.

2.5 For instructions on information disclosure, please consult OI.LG.2019.02: Information Disclosure. For instructions on crisis communications, please consult OI.CG.2019.03: Crisis Communications.

3. UNOPS Website

3.1 UNOPS has one core corporate public website - http://www.unops.org . All public content should be shared through this resource or subdomains. Exceptions to this rule, to be developed with the approval of CG, are twofold; individual project websites and websites featuring the work of UNOPS and a single partner.

3.2 Whilst every effort will be made to incorporate the views and objectives of partners, including sharing texts to confirm accuracy and seeking no objection as necessary, UNOPS has editorial control over all material published on its website.

4. UNOPS external publications

4.1 All external publications must adhere to the UNOPS brand manual.

4.2 External publications representing UNOPS views with content that can be perceived as corporate in nature, must be authorized by relevant units in Headquarters including, inter alia, Communications Group, Implementation Practices and Standards Group, Partnerships and Liaison Group.

4.3 Regional Directors and Multi Country or Country Office Directors producing external publications documenting activities which fall under their respective responsibilities, are accountable for the accuracy of any content, including in regards to the alignment of any facts, figures and data to corporate publications.

4.4 External publications created by multi-partner/multi-country programmes or hosted entities, where UNOPS is not substantively owning the programmes, are not to be perceived as representing UNOPS view.

5. UNOPS personnel and the media

5.1 Only duly authorized personnel (see section 5) may deliver official messages representing the views of UNOPS. For the preparation of such messages, the CG shall be involved by email at communications@unops.org[1]. The CG will then liaise with relevant authoritative sources within senior management based on the nature of the inquiry, in order to provide an appropriate message.

5.2 Written information and formal interviews shall be given by duly authorized personnel only and shall be prepared with the support of communications personnel, including national, regional and global communications personnel where relevant.

5.3 In the absence of communications support, the UNOPS Country Director, Regional Director or Group Director or her/his assigned media relations focal point is responsible. As communications personnel cannot be experts in all subjects, they shall seek support from UNOPS specialists to provide them with information.

5.4 UNOPS personnel shall only engage with the media on an informed basis, to avoid providing misleading information. UNOPS personnel likely to be working in environments where media are present should keep themselves informed of the surrounding sensitivities, and keep awareness of issues that media are reporting.

5.5 In addition to official messages, UNOPS personnel seeking to profile their work shall seek the prior approval of their Country Director, Group Director or Regional Director, in coordination with CG, and inform the relevant communications focal point in their duty station or region. Sections 4.1 or 4.4 above apply. Using relationships with journalists for self-promotion purposes creates conflicts of interest that could be considered misconduct under UN Staff Rules.

5.6 In instances where approval for UNOPS personnel to engage with media has been granted, the following requirements must be met;

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1. mailto:communications@unops.org

- State that you are speaking in your personal capacity, not on behalf of UNOPS;
- Stick to your area of competence and responsibility;
- Provide facts, not opinions, comment or conjecture;
- Assume that anything you say is 'on record'.
- Report back to CG providing details of the nature of media enquiries

5.7 Particular attention should be paid to any information shared with the media of a factual nature or concerning statistics, which are likely to be interpreted as an official United Nations figure. Information of this variety should be based on public UN sources, or if not, expressly attributed as non-UN information, with citation(s) detailing the source (e.g., “according to x source, x fact or statistic”).

5.8 Personnel asked by external organizations to write articles or books, or appear in films or otherwise participate in public events beyond their official duties must seek prior approval from UNOPS. Please refer to OI.Ethics.2018.04: Outside Activities for more guidance.

5.9 In engaging with journalists, personnel should be open and transparent to the extent they can and subject to the provisions of this OI.

5.10. In all other circumstances, guidance, advice and support in dealing with the media can be obtained from the CG: communications@unops.org[2]

6. Duly authorized personnel

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

Members of the Senior Leadership Team may delegate authorization to speak to the media at their discretion depending on the nature of the enquiry in coordination with the Director of Communications.

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2. mailto:communications@unops.org