

**OPERATIONAL INSTRUCTION REF. OI.CG.2018.01**

**MEDIA RELATIONS**

**1. Authority**

- 1.1. 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.

**2. Purpose**

- 2.1. The purpose of this OI is to provide instructions to UNOPS personnel in their potential dealings with the media.

**3. Effective Date**

- 3.1. This OI shall become effective **immediately**.

[signature redacted]

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. Many aspects of UNOPS work are of interest to journalists and the general public. 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 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 our dealings with external partners. 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.2018.03: 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. For instructions on information disclosure, please consult OI.LG.2018.04: Information Disclosure.
- 2.5. For instructions on crisis communications, please consult OI.CG.2018.04: Crisis Communications.

## **3. UNOPS personnel and the media**

- 3.1. Only duly authorized personnel (see section 4) 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](mailto:communications@unops.org). 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.
- 3.2. Written information and formal interviews shall be given by duly authorized personnel only and shall be prepared with the help of communications personnel, including national, regional and global communications personnel where relevant.
- 3.3. 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.
- 3.4. In addition to official messages, all members of personnel may speak to media representatives in a personal capacity, within limits:
  - 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'.
- 3.5. Let your supervisor know as soon as possible afterwards, or in advance where possibility exists to do so.
  - 3.6. 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.
  - 3.7. 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”).
  - 3.8. UNOPS personnel approached by journalists seeking to profile them or their work shall seek the prior approval of their Country Director, Group Director or Regional Director and let the relevant communications focal point in their duty station or region know. Using relationships with journalists for self-promotion purposes creates conflicts of interest that could be considered misconduct under UN Staff Rules.
  - 3.9. 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.
  - 3.10. Personnel should try to be helpful to journalists to the extent they can and subject to the provisions of this OI.
  - 3.11. In all other circumstances, guidance, advice and support in dealing with the media can be obtained from the CG: [communications@unops.org](mailto:communications@unops.org)

#### **4. Duly authorized personnel**

- a. The Executive Director
- b. The Deputy Executive Director – in all matters
- c. The Head of Communications – in all matters concerning corporate communications
- d. Regional Directors – in matters escalating from country offices and portfolios in their region
- e. Country Directors – in matters relating to their country office and portfolio
- f. The Director, Legal Group/General Counsel – in all matters involving legal liability and due diligence
- g. The Director, People and Change Group – in all matters concerning personnel
- h. The Director, Internal Audit and Investigations Group – in all matters concerning audit, investigation and related oversight

- i. The Director, Shared Services Centre – in all matters relating to serious health and safety risks where loss of life or serious injury occurred
- j. The Chief of Security – in matters relating to the safety and security of UNOPS personnel
- k. The Director, Finance Group – in matters relating to UNOPS financial statements and records
- l. The Director, Partnerships and Liaison Group – in matters relating to corporate relationship management
- m. The Chief Information Officer/Chief Information Security Officer - in matters relating to information security
- n. The Ethics Office