

OPERATIONAL INSTRUCTION REF. OI.CG.2018.04

CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

1. Authority

- 1.1. This Operational Instruction (OI) is promulgated by the Head of Communications, Communications Group 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 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.

3. Effective Date

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

[signature redacted]

Peter Browne
Head of Communications, CG

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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 Head of Communications, Communications Group, 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 Head of Communications, Communications Group, 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 Head of Communications.

3. Roles and responsibilities

- 3.1. The Executive Director or duly authorized delegated authority shall issue the public statement.
- 3.2. The Head of Communications, Communications Group, 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 Head of Communications, CG, shall be guided by information, advice and consultation with the following officials and sources:
 - a. The Deputy Executive Director – in all matters
 - b. Regional Directors – in matters escalating from country offices and portfolios requiring Executive Office attention
 - c. The Director, Legal Group/General Counsel – in all matters involving legal liability and due diligence
 - d. The Director, People and Change Group – in all matters concerning personnel
 - e. The Director, Internal Audit and Investigations Group – in all matters concerning audit, investigation and related oversight
 - f. The Director, Shared Service Centre – in all matters relating to serious health and safety risks where loss of life or serious injury occurred
 - g. The Chief of Security – in matters relating to the safety and security of UNOPS personnel
 - h. The Director, Finance Group – in matters relating to UNOPS financial statements and records
 - i. The Director, Partnerships and Liaison Group – in matters relating to corporate relationship management
 - j. The Chief Information Officer/Chief Information Security Officer - in matters relating to information security
 - k. The Ethics Office
 - l. Media monitoring carried out by the Communication Group
- 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 Head of Communications, 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 Head of Communications, 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.