

UNFPA

Policies and Procedures Manual

Public Information and Communications Policy

Communication

Policy Title	UNFPA Public Information and Communications Policy
Previous title (if any)	N/A
Policy objective	The UNFPA Public Information and Communications Policy provides overarching governance and guidance for all of the Fund's external communications activities. Specifically, the policy aims to: ensure that UNFPA speaks with one voice and is clear, consistent and unified in its external communications; project and protect the UNFPA brand as a thought leader and catalyst for action; and help protect the reputation and integrity of the UNFPA and the United Nations as a whole.
Target audience	All UNFPA personnel
Risk control matrix	Control activities that are part of the process are detailed in the Risk Control Matrix .
Checklist	N/A
Effective date	January 2019
Revision History	Issued: February 2019
Mandatory revision date	February 2022
Policy owner unit	Media and Communications Branch, Division of Communications and Strategic Partnerships
Approval	Link to signed approval template

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UNFPA PUBLIC INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

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I. Purpose

The UNFPA Public Information and Communications Policy provides a policy framework to govern the Fund's communications activities. UNFPA communications support the programmatic goals of the Fund and are critical to its resource mobilization efforts.

The policy guides personnel on external communications and supports the goals and objectives of the corporate One Voice Global Communications Strategy. It is in line with the Secretary-General's [Media Guidelines for United Nations Officials](#) and the [Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service](#), as well as all media and communications-related UNFPA policies.

All communications activities and channels – including earned or paid traditional and digital media, as well as UNFPA corporate platforms (e.g., websites and social media channels) – are governed by this policy. All UNFPA personnel are required to adhere to the policy, which details objectives and responsibilities of personnel in various areas of external communications.

II. Policy

Effective communications will increase awareness of the work of the Fund and strengthen its reputation, partnerships and donor relationships.

The policy:

- ensures that UNFPA speaks with one voice and is clear, consistent and unified in its external communications;
- projects and protects the UNFPA brand as a thought leader and catalyst for action;
- helps protect the reputation and integrity of the UNFPA and the United Nations as a whole.

The policy is applicable to staff members as well as to non-staff personnel, including individual service contractors, individual consultants and interns. Staff members and non-staff personnel are referred to in this policy as “personnel”.

The Public Information and Communications Policy requires all UNFPA personnel to:

- **Communicate in a focused manner** to define our brand around UNFPA's three transformative results.
- **Tie messages to UNFPA's master narrative, its mission and mandate and specific and overarching objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals**, given the strategic value of using the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda as a foundation and context for all that we do, and our responsibility to help realize these goals.
- **Stay on message** for maximum impact and to avoid unnecessary distractions that could cause confusion from careless or unfocused statements.
- **Be professional** as you are representing UNFPA in all of your dealings. If you are speaking in the public arena about matters relevant to the United Nations or UNFPA, you should always act in accordance with your obligations as an international civil servant who is representing UNFPA, and not in your personal capacity. At no time is it acceptable for

UNFPA personnel, either in a professional or personal capacity, to criticize or try to discredit a Government. At the same time, it is understood that UNFPA personnel, as international civil servants, may speak freely in support of the Fund's policies. Your objective is always to further UNFPA's mandate and to protect and promote the rights of the people that UNFPA serves, particularly the women and girls of the most excluded and marginalized communities. When faced with obstacles to the mandate and/or violations of rights, your message should be focused on UNFPA's position rather than criticizing the Government or other duty bearers.

- **Advance UNFPA's credibility** as an honest and trustworthy source by relying on official United Nations data and UNFPA's established positions and messages in a disciplined manner, and by ensuring that reporting at all levels is accurate, ethical and of the highest quality.
- **Keep all messages based on UNFPA's media and communications policies.** Personnel are responsible for familiarizing themselves with UNFPA policies and positions by consulting internal briefing materials to guide remarks before talking to reporters or making presentations. Remarks may be customized to regional or country contexts as appropriate, but the broad messaging outlines should be conveyed and underpin all communications.
- **Use a tone and style** that reflects authority, determination and, when warranted, urgency – but also optimism. Communicators must show that they value individuals' dignity and agency, and that the Fund expects to effect positive change.
- **State UNFPA's positions affirmatively**, not defensively. All personnel should have pride in the work of the Fund and should speak accordingly. **Obtain the explicit permission** of the Chief of the Media and Communications Branch (MCB) or the Director, Division for Communications and Strategic Partnerships (DCS), before offering third parties the use of the UNFPA brand identity or logo.
- **Obtain the explicit permission** of either the Chief of MCB or the Regional Communications Adviser, as necessitated by the setting where the staff member works, before engaging public relations or similar consultants or firms.
- **Act in an ethical manner.** For example, at no time, at any level, are payments to journalists permitted. However, if allowable under the news outlet's ethical guidelines, actual travel costs for reporters attending press tours or covering UNFPA field stories may be reimbursed.

III. Procedures

A. *Working with the mass media*

While all UNFPA personnel are representatives of the Fund, only designated authorities or experts are in each instance authorized to speak to the mass media. Below is a list of key spokespeople and their scope of responsibility. The information below is to be used to coordinate communications between UNFPA spokespeople and the media.

- The Executive Director is UNFPA's communicator-in-chief. MCB is responsible for pitching, as well as screening and organizing his/her engagements and arranging relevant research or briefings on her/his behalf.
- The Deputy Executive Directors and the Director of the Division of Communications and Strategic Partnerships (DCS) may serve as spokespeople after media inquiries are screened by MCB and deemed appropriate.
- The Director of DCS and the Chief of MCB are the officially designated spokespeople of the Executive Director.
- At headquarters, MCB shall determine which person shall, in each instance, address media questions on behalf of UNFPA.
- UNFPA substantive or subject experts may be requested, as appropriate, by MCB for those at headquarters and by communications advisers at regional/subregional offices and representatives or equivalent in country offices, to respond to the media.
- Experts must in all instances consult with the communications advisers or officers in their offices before reaching out to or responding to the media.
- At the regional level, regional directors are spokespeople for regionally based global, regional or in-country media. They may also authorize and guide advisers and subject experts in their regional offices to speak, as appropriate, and ensure that all messages are consistent with the corporate position at all times. Regional Communications Advisers should determine how best to screen media inquiries and determine when and how to respond. Any regional and country personnel may also be requested by MCB to speak to the media, in consultation with the Regional Office and relevant regional focal points. Regional directors and communications advisers in turn shall consult with and keep MCB informed of inquiries by global media to ensure information about and engagements with mass media outlets can be well-coordinated.
- Country representatives or their equivalents should serve as spokespeople for local mass media inquiries, or as requested by MCB and the regional office. They may also authorize and guide their subject experts to speak to the media, as appropriate.
- At all levels, inquiries by mass media should be screened by communications personnel to determine the nature and perspectives of the issues to be discussed.

B. Social Media

All UNFPA personnel must adhere to the [UNFPA Social Media Policy](#) for all matters related to social media platforms. Other important guidance documents include the [Social Media Strategy](#) and [Social Media Guidelines](#).

C. Web Communications

All UNFPA personnel must adhere to the [UNFPA Website Policy](#), which stipulates the processes and conditions for creating and maintaining websites. Other important guidance documents include the [Web Writing Guidelines](#).

D. Publications

All UNFPA personnel must adhere to the [UNFPA Publications Policy](#) in all matters related to producing publications.

E. Op-Eds and Letters to the Editor

Posts to UNFPA global media channels, articles, op-eds and letters to the editor must be approved by MCB. Personnel are encouraged to consult MCB on content and strategy before investing time to draft such materials.

Regional directors, communications advisers and country representatives should determine clearance procedures for posts to media channels, articles, op-eds and letters to the editor they would like to publish in the areas under their remit.

Op-eds must be drafted by subject experts or substantive units for review and placement by communications officials, after clearance by office heads. They shall be consistent with the corporate position at all times.

F. Partnership Visibility

UNFPA has established policies, guidelines and procedures on its work with partners, such as governments, civil society groups, foundations and the private sector. Personnel should refer to these governing the management of these relationships. They must mitigate reputational risks, protect the UNFPA brand and preserve its dignity and independence.

G. Celebrity Spokespeople

All UNFPA personnel must adhere to the [UNFPA Policy for Celebrity Spokespersons](#) and the accompanying circular from the Executive Director with the same title, when seeking to enlist the voluntary services and support of prominent individuals to act as celebrity spokespeople in order to raise awareness of its aims and priorities. No designation or appointment can be made without the written permission of the Executive Director.

H. Communications around Events

Organizers of any prominent external UNFPA event shall consider the public information and communications potential that it may have. If the event's content has the potential to be interesting for traditional or social media, the event organizers should consult with the Chief of MCB or the Regional Communications Adviser, depending on whether the event is global or regional, to plan the messages that may be publicized relating to the event and any media outreach that may be carried out (social media, website, press relations, etc.).

Organizers should consult with relevant communications professionals about who may be designated as the event's spokesperson, if journalists want to interview someone about it, and ensure that they are correctly briefed.

Please note that most United Nations meetings, including those led by UNFPA, will not attract the interest of serious journalists or social media on their own, and are better covered by promoting relevant client-focused stories from the field which illustrate the issue.

I. Public Information Campaigns

Integrated campaigns, containing multiple communications activities, can be effective ways to generate and maintain public support for a cause. They must be based around a simple, powerful, memorable ask (or assertion) and contain a carefully prepared set of key messages. All campaigns require strategic planning, a defined duration and adequate human and financial resources to ensure their success.

If personnel are interested in running a campaign to support their activities, they are requested to plan it with the assistance of a communications professional. Once they have created a plan, this must be approved by the Representative, Regional Communications Adviser, Regional Director or the Chief of MCB, as appropriate.

J. Office Portraiture

All UNFPA offices shall display no other portrait of United Nations officials other than the official photographs of the Executive Director of UNFPA and of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

IV. Other – Compliance and ownership

A. Compliance

Global compliance with this policy is critical to ensure universal discipline around communications and messaging and simultaneously protect personnel from placing themselves or the organization's credibility at risk. Failure to abide by this policy may be considered wrongdoing and may lead to the imposition of sanctions.

B. Policy Owner

The Chief of the MCB is the owner of the UNFPA Public Information and Communications Policy.

Personnel are welcome to seek input from the MCB for clarification of this policy or to share specific ideas or submit requests regarding communications.

V. Process Overview Flowchart

No overview flow chart applicable.

VI. Risk Control Matrix

Control activities that are part of the process are detailed in the [Risk Control Matrix](#).