

# ***WHO Policy for the corporate use of social media***

## ***Preamble***

This document lays out the policy for the corporate use of social media by the Department of Communications, in particular the Flagship Communications Team (YouTube) and the Social Media Team (all other social media platforms). The policy is designed to build a trusted WHO brand from the inside out, starting with WHO's work and people. The objectives are to 1. communicate risks; 2. create content that is relevant to the general public and 3. build relationships based on trust so that people make safe and healthy choices.

### **1. Paragraphs 2 to 7 apply to:**

- a. All WHO entities (e.g. clusters, departments, programmes, units) featuring the WHO logotype.
- b. WHO-hosted partnerships and special programmes: Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research; the Secretariat of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC); Global Health Workforce Alliance; Health Metrics Network; the UNDP/UNFPA/WHO/World Bank Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction (HRP); Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH); Roll Back Malaria; Stop TB Partnership; the Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR); and UNITAID.
- c. Partnership-like programmes such as the Global Polio Eradication Initiative.
- d. Longer-term projects with an obligation to the United Nations General Assembly or World Health Assembly such as the Decade of Action on Road Safety and the Decade of Vaccines.

### **Paragraphs 8 to 15 apply to:**

- a. All WHO work units and programmes entities (e.g. clusters, departments, programmes, units) featuring the WHO logotype

*For all entities mentioned in paragraph 1:*

2. **"One WHO".** WHO headquarters maintains a single, corporate account on select social media platforms on behalf of the whole headquarters. Hence, clusters, departments, programmes and units at headquarters must not maintain their own, separate accounts on these or other social media platforms. The Department of Communications selects the social media platforms on which headquarters is to have a long-term presence (LINK). The *WHO Policy for the individual staff use of social media* stipulates that no WHO staff member at headquarters can represent the Organization, a cluster, department or unit on social media whatever their position except for the Director-General and official WHO spokespersons. Staff administering corporate social media accounts have to be WHO staff members, experienced in corporate social media or have undergone WHO social media training, must understand the Organization and have the authority to represent it; this excludes interns.
3. **WHO comparative advantages.** Social media work must support WHO comparative advantages whenever possible: (a) leading generator of reliable health information, data and guidelines; (b) trusted provider of support, advice, expertise and assistance to countries; (c) strong protector from risks to health.

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4. **Editorial calendar.** The Department of Communications maintains an editorial calendar for strategic, proactive posts/tweets/highlights on social media. Subject to available staff resources and strategic integration into the editorial calendar, the Department of Communications provides social media services to WHO clients that are featuring the WHO logotype (in particular clusters, departments, programmes and units at WHO headquarters) such as posting/tweeting on WHO corporate social media accounts. A technical officer from the client should be available during and right after posting/tweeting/highlighting to address feedback from social media audiences. On a continuous cost-sharing basis, the Department of Communications may provide social media consulting and capacity building services to WHO clients that are not featuring the WHO logotype (most in 1.b-1.d). This may include tweets/posts via WHO corporate social media accounts provided these entities do not have their own accounts.
5. **Timely dissemination.** Respect embargoes set by WHO and third parties. A heads-up (e.g. WHO report on XXX to be released tomorrow. Stay tuned) may be in order as long as new data or newsworthy information is not disclosed prior to the lifting of the embargo. Furthermore, it is preferable to tweet or post once supportive web materials have been published so that tweets, posts, highlights can link to the larger context on [www.who.int](http://www.who.int). Try to tweet or post newsworthy issues and events the same day. Tweet and post statements from the Director-General once delivered and checked against delivery.
6. **Reference to WHO Member States.** In the interest of independence and impartiality, do not mention countries in a tweet or post (e.g. when live-tweeting from governing board meetings) unless used in a neutral or favorable light, such as in corporate feature stories.
7. **Closed meetings and Chatham House Rule.** When a meeting is closed, blogging, tweeting and video-blogging/podcasting of sessions is not allowed. When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House rule, participants are free to blog, tweet, video-blog or podcast the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any participant, may be revealed. If you would like to quote a participant in an off-the-record session, you must get the clear and unambiguous agreement of the participant to be quoted.

*For all WHO entities featuring the WHO logotype (in particular clusters, departments, programmes, units):*

8. **Social media etiquette.** For engagement with social media audiences, follow the *WHO Social media etiquette* (LINK) and *Tips for drafting tweets* (LINK).
9. **Quotes of WHO staff.** WHO social media tweets and postings may only quote the WHO Director-General and testimonials in corporate feature stories.
10. **Conference reporting.** For select conferences, WHO may act as a “Master of Ceremonies” reporting on select sessions and conference products. Conference speakers should not be quoted, unless their record has been checked prior to the conference and they do not contradict WHO policy. Link to the conference web site if co-sponsored by WHO.
11. **WHO-branded or co-branded products, events such as conferences, issues.** Overall, the Department of Communications strives for a balanced coverage and promotion of WHO-branded or co-branded products, events and issues in the social media editorial calendar, having the interests of WHO as a whole in view. In the case of simultaneous events or client requests, the following order of priority applies:

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- timely dissemination of information to protect people from acute risks to their health (e.g. Disease Outbreak News);
- immediate or real-time interventions to clarify rumors;
- WHO media products (news releases; statements; notes for the media; new from WHO);
- statements and speeches of the WHO Director-General;
- coverage of Executive Board and World Health Assembly (WHA) meetings;
- proactive and reactive issues featuring on the weekly editorial calendar;
- WHA-mandated World Days: World Tuberculosis Day; World Health Day; World Malaria Day; World Immunization Week; World No Tobacco Day; World Blood Donor Day; World Hepatitis Day; and World AIDS Day;
- all new or revised WHO guidelines when published;
- products (e.g. publication, video) and events, whether for free or paid, that are WHO-branded or co-branded (i.e. featuring the WHO logotype);
- products, events of non-WHO-branded entities (see 1.b-1.d);
- select UN official days such as International Day of Older Persons, International Day for the Elimination of Violence on which an editorial decision is taken by the Director of Communications for strategic reasons;
- others as decided by the Director of Communications.

The Department of Communications will abstain from reaching out on social media where the possibility exists that WHO's position on technical, ethical and/or political goals on a certain issue would be contradicted.

12. **WHO web site.** Only link to materials on WHO-branded or co-branded [www.who.int](http://www.who.int) pages to strengthen WHO's branding and minimize risks to its reputation. The following WHO materials are particularly good for social media platforms and audiences: fact sheets; event announcements; online Q&As; fact files; photo stories; news releases; notes for the media; photos; speeches; statements; videos. If such products are not available, a few paragraphs may summarize or detail the issue at stake, to be published on WHO-branded pages on [www.who.int](http://www.who.int). Only WHO-branded or co-branded [www.who.int](http://www.who.int) pages are authorized to embed the WHO Twitter feed.
13. **Third-party endorsements.** WHO will abstain from endorsing third-party tweets. This includes, but is not limited to, retweeting of third-party tweets, tweeting tweets containing the Twitter handle of third parties, "liking" third-party Facebook posts, or following third-party Instagram accounts, even if the third party is considered a WHO partner, NGO in official relations with WHO, UN sister agency, goodwill ambassador or key donor. As a standard-setting organization, WHO must safeguard its credibility, independence, objectivity, integrity and impartiality. In social media, there is always a risk to be associated with the "partners of partners". Retweeting the testimonials, experiences, stories of individual @WHO followers that provide a personal account of WHO evidence and advice may be appropriate on a case-by-case or campaign basis. These may help make WHO messages more accessible to lay audiences and peers. Where appropriate, WHO will proactively ask its partners, Goodwill Ambassadors and Member States to join WHO's corporate social media work in order to maximize public outreach and engagement.
14. **Editorial accountability.** The editorial accountability for social media outreach rests with the Department of Communications. While the benefits of using social media at this time far outweigh the risks, there might be exceptional circumstances where an outreach on social

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media requested by a client may not be appropriate. The final decision rests with the Director of Communications.

15. **Approvals.** Tweets and other social media posts require the approval of the Coordinator, Media Team. Video posts on YouTube require the approval of the Coordinator, Flagship Communications Team. Tweets and posts on issues perceived as controversial or risky by the Coordinator, Media, require the further approval of the Director, Department of Communications.

### ***Training and questions***

It is difficult to predict or cover here all the issues that the Organization may face when engaging on social media. Hence, this policy may be adapted to new challenges and opportunities, especially as WHO staff members are being trained in the use of social media for the benefit of the Organization.

The Department of Communications offers briefings and formal training to help WHO staff strengthen their understanding of the monitoring of and use of social media; identify rumors and reputational issues that should be brought to the attention of DCO; and increase their familiarity with relevant WHO policies.

Department of Communications:

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- Monika Gehner, Media Team (all other social media platforms), [gehnerm@who.int](mailto:gehnerm@who.int)
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