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# UN-Habitat Guidelines on Media Communications

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- **UN-Habitat Guidelines on Media Communications**

## Overview

Effective media engagement is essential for UN-Habitat in disseminating pertinent information, enhancing public awareness, and garnering support for our initiatives. Press releases and media advisories are integral components of our communication efforts to convey major messages, provide important updates, and address crises to both the media and the wider public.

## Press releases

Press releases serve as crucial tools for communicating important information to the media and the public. They follow a structured format which includes a headline, dateline, body paragraphs, quotes, and contact information.

Press releases effectively convey key messages and engage the intended audience. Use them to announce significant news, respond to crises, promote events, share research findings, or highlight awards. Avoid using them for routine updates, internal communications, overly promotional content, or disclosing sensitive information. Additionally, avoid using press releases for topics that the media is unlikely to find newsworthy or relevant.

Press releases are not advertisements or guaranteed media coverage. They are not intended for internal communication or substitutes for personal relationships with journalists.

Topics that may be of interest to the media include:

- Partnerships or collaborations with governments, NGOs, or other stakeholders to improve urban living conditions.
- Research findings or reports on urban trends, challenges, and solutions.
- Successful projects or programmes making a tangible impact on communities.
- High-level events or conferences addressing urban issues with notable speakers or outcomes.
- Innovative solutions or initiatives addressing urban challenges and sustainable development.
- Policy developments or advocacy efforts aimed at improving urban governance, resilience, and inclusivity.

Understanding what topics are of interest to the media and aligning press releases with these areas increases the likelihood of coverage and effectively communicates UN-Habitat's mission and impact.

Before you start drafting, clearly understand the purpose of the press release. Is it to announce an event, report, initiative, or any other significant development? Understanding the objective will guide the content and tone of the press release.

- **Craft a compelling headline:** The headline is the first thing journalists and readers see. Make it attention-grabbing, concise, and informative. It should convey the essence of the news you're sharing and entice the reader to continue.
- **Focus on the key message:** Identify the main message you want to convey and ensure it is prominent throughout the press release. Avoid unnecessary details that might distract from the central theme.
- **Write in a clear and concise style:** Use clear, simple language that is easy for the audience to understand. Avoid jargon, technical terms, and excessive use of acronyms. Keep sentences and paragraphs short to maintain readability.
- **Inverted pyramid structure:** Follow the inverted pyramid structure, presenting the most important information first, followed by supporting details. This ensures that even if readers only skim the release, they still grasp the essential points.
- **Provide context:** Offer context or background information to help readers understand the significance of the news. Include relevant facts, statistics, and quotes from authoritative sources to strengthen credibility.
- **Include quotes:** Incorporate quotes from key stakeholders or experts to add credibility to the press release. Ensure that quotes are concise, relevant, and attributed correctly.
- **Include contact information:** Always provide contact information for media inquiries or further information. Include the name, title, email address, and phone number, if available, of a designated spokesperson who can address queries promptly.
- **Proofread and edit:** Before finalizing the press release, thoroughly proofread it for grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors. Also, ensure that all information is accurate and up to date.

- **Respect embargo dates:** If the press release is under embargo until a specific date or time, clearly indicate this at the top of the document. Respect embargo agreements to maintain credibility with journalists and media outlets.
- **Distribution channels:** Determine the appropriate distribution channels for the press release, such as websites, media lists, or social media platforms. Tailor the distribution strategy based on the target audience and objectives.

If you are preparing a joint press release involving other organizations or stakeholders, make sure to prominently mention UN-Habitat’s involvement and contributions and ensure clarity on the collaborative efforts. The recommended approach is to include UN-Habitat’s name early (and first, whenever possible) in the release, followed by a brief description of its role and objectives within the partnership, for instance.

## Media advisories

Media advisories play a vital role in facilitating media coverage of events, initiatives, and key developments at UN-Habitat.

A media advisory is a concise document designed to alert journalists and media professionals about upcoming events, initiatives, or opportunities for coverage. It serves as an invitation for media attendance or participation and provides essential details to facilitate journalists’ understanding and coverage planning. Media advisories typically include event information such as date, time, location, agenda highlights, key speakers, and contact details for media inquiries.

Use media advisories to invite journalists to events, brief them on significant initiatives, or provide access to exclusive information. Employ media advisories for events or activities that are likely to be of interest to the media and align with their coverage areas. Avoid using media advisories for routine updates, internal communications, overly promotional content, or topics that lack newsworthiness or relevance to the media.

A media advisory is not a comprehensive press release but rather a succinct invitation or notification intended to pique journalists’ interest and facilitate their coverage planning.

Before drafting a media advisory, clearly understand its purpose. Is it to invite journalists to an event, brief them on a significant initiative, or provide access to exclusive information? Understanding the objective guides the content and tone of the advisory.

- **Craft a compelling subject line:** The subject line is the first thing journalists see. Make it attention-grabbing, concise, and informative to entice journalists to open the advisory.
- **Focus on key details:** Include essential information such as event name, date, time, location, agenda highlights, key speakers, and any unique selling points. Ensure all details are accurate and up to date.
- **Use concise and clear language:** Use clear, simple language to convey information effectively. Avoid jargon, technical terms, and unnecessary details that might confuse or overwhelm recipients.
- **Inverted pyramid structure:** Follow the inverted pyramid structure, placing the most critical information at the beginning and providing additional context and details further down. This allows journalists to quickly grasp the key points.
- **Provide relevant context:** Offer background information or context to help journalists understand the significance of the event or initiative. Include relevant facts, statistics, and quotes from authoritative sources to enhance credibility.
- **Include contact information:** Always provide contact information for media inquiries or further information. Include the name, title, email address, and phone number, if available, of a designated spokesperson who can address queries promptly.
- **Proofread and edit:** Thoroughly proofread the advisory for grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors. Ensure all information is accurate, consistent, and aligned with UN-Habitat’s messaging.
- **Respect embargo dates (if applicable):** If the advisory is under embargo until a specific date or time, clearly indicate this at the top of the document. Respect embargo agreements to maintain credibility with journalists and media outlets.
- **Distribution channels:** Determine the appropriate distribution channels for the media advisory, such as websites, email lists or media databases. Tailor the distribution strategy based on the target audience and objectives.

## Contact and About UN-Habitat

At the end of your press release or media advisory, always provide contact information for media inquiries or further information. The corporate UN-Habitat contact and standard text is:

**For further information, please contact:**

*Katerina Bezgachina*

*Chief of Communications*

*UN-Habitat*

*[ekaterina.bezgachina@un.org](mailto:ekaterina.bezgachina@un.org)*

Also always provide background information on UN-Habitat (and other organizations, as applicable). The corporate UN-Habitat standard text is:

**About UN-Habitat**

*UN-Habitat is the United Nations entity responsible for sustainable urbanization. It has programmes in over 90 countries supporting policymakers and communities to create socially and environmentally sustainable cities and towns. UN-Habitat promotes transformative change in cities through knowledge, policy advice, technical assistance, and collaborative action. To know more, visit [www.unhabitat.org](http://www.unhabitat.org) or follow us on X @UNHABITAT*