



21 May 2019

Secretary-General's bulletin

Institutional use of social media

The Secretary-General, for the purpose of providing a legal and operational framework governing the institutional use of social media by authorized staff members, promulgates the following:

Section 1 Definitions

1.1 For the purpose of the present bulletin, the following definitions shall apply:

(a) Institutional social media accounts: accounts on social networking platforms that are authorized by and belong to an entity of the Secretariat for official purposes. This definition does not include social media accounts created by and belonging to United Nations staff representative bodies. The personal social media accounts of staff members are not institutional social media accounts;

(b) Database: a central database held by the Department of Global Communications listing all institutional social media accounts;

(c) Head of entity: the head of a department or an office, including an office away from Headquarters, the head of a special political or peacekeeping mission, the head of a regional commission, a resident or regional coordinator or the head of any other unit tasked with programmed activities.

Section 2 Institutional social media accounts

2.1 Institutional social media accounts are a means by which the Organization performs its mandate and implements and communicates its policies and goals. The decision as to whether to permit the establishment and/or use of an institutional social media account is a strategic decision that is to be taken in the interests of the Organization.

2.2 All institutional social media accounts and their content shall be consistent with the aims, activities and purposes of the United Nations. The use of social media must abide by the Organization's core values, including integrity, independence, impartiality, respect for diversity and the equality and inviolable dignity of all persons irrespective of, inter alia, race, gender, religion, language or nationality. The posting of content on institutional social media accounts shall be governed by the Staff Regulations and Rules, in particular staff regulations 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 and staff rule 1.2,



and by the Secretary-General's bulletin on the status, basic rights and duties of United Nations staff members ([ST/SGB/2016/9](#)).

2.3 Multilingualism is a core value of the United Nations, in recognition of the importance of communicating to the people of the world in their own languages. When establishing institutional social media accounts, and where feasible, heads of entities should take into consideration paragraph 36 of General Assembly resolution [69/324](#), in which the Assembly underlined the importance, in the implementation of new communication tools, such as social networks, of taking into account the linguistic dimension in order to assure full parity among the six official languages of the Organization.

Section 3

Authorization of institutional social media accounts

3.1 Heads of entities are responsible for the following:

(a) Approving the establishment and/or continuing existence of institutional social media accounts;

(b) Providing guidance on the use of institutional social media accounts and overseeing compliance by staff members with the obligations and responsibilities set forth in the present bulletin, the Staff Regulations and Rules, pertinent administrative issuances and any other legal and applicable agreements and requirements;

(c) Ensuring that the information in the database held by the Department of Global Communications remains current and correct.

3.2 Heads of entities shall approve the establishment of new institutional social media accounts and, in the context of ongoing analyses of the impact and effectiveness of accounts, ensure that the following criteria are met:

(a) Demonstrated need, on the basis of surveys of existing accounts across the United Nations system, in order to avoid duplication of efforts;

(b) A clearly outlined purpose and strategy, including intended audience;

(c) Adequate expertise, staffing and resources to maintain accounts effectively;

(d) A risk analysis of the account, including with regard to potential reputational or security risks;

(e) High editorial standards and accuracy of information.

3.3 Heads of entities shall assess the accounts that exist as at the date of the present bulletin, in accordance with the criteria set forth in section 3.2, in order to determine whether to authorize their continuation.

3.4 Heads of entities shall, within 60 days of the issuance of the present bulletin, ensure that the following information regarding all existing institutional social media accounts is entered into the database held by the Department of Global Communications:

(a) The social media account name;

(b) The social media platform;

(c) The language of the content on the social media account;

(d) The name and contact details of the authorized staff member, who has login credentials and administrator privileges for managing the social media account, and those of an alternate authorized staff member;

(e) The purpose and intended audience of the social media account.

3.5 Within 10 days of the creation of any new institutional social media account, the head of entity shall ensure that the information outlined in section 3.4 is included in the database.

3.6 In the event that any of the information provided under section 3.4 is amended, the head of entity shall ensure that the database is updated within 10 days of any such changes.

3.7 Staff members may not establish or use institutional social media accounts unless they are expressly authorized to do so, in writing, by the head of entity.

3.8 Heads of entities shall withdraw approval of and close any institutional social media account that is no longer required by the Organization and/or does not comply with the standards set out in section 3.2.

Section 4

Use of institutional social media accounts

4.1 When posting content on institutional social media accounts, authorized staff members shall:

(a) Not disclose confidential information as defined in the Secretary-General's bulletin on information sensitivity, classification and handling ([ST/SGB/2007/6](#));

(b) Not post content under a pseudonym or false name;

(c) Respect the privacy of individuals;

(d) Report security threats to the Department of Safety and Security;

(e) Respect intellectual property rights.

4.2 Heads of entities shall establish secure procedures for managing and retaining the login credentials (user identification and password) for institutional social media accounts. Authorized staff members shall ensure that all login credentials remain in the custody of the United Nations at all times, including upon their separation from service or reassignment. Heads of entities shall withdraw the administration privileges of authorized staff members upon their separation or reassignment.

Section 5

Entry into force

5.1 The present bulletin shall enter into force on the date of its issuance.

5.2 The provisions of the present bulletin shall prevail over any inconsistent provisions contained in other administrative issuances currently in force.

(Signed) António **Guterres**
Secretary-General