

Concept note of the international online workshop
“GOVERNMENTS’ CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS DURING THE PANDEMIC”
17 September 2020

Background: COVID-19 pandemic has become one of the greatest challenges faced by governments around the world. It has forced us to make fundamental changes both in the public as well as the private sectors. The circumstances have shifted us to a new reality, characterized by an emphasis on lives of people and digital communication.

It is a time when public institutions play an important role in responding to a crisis, mitigating its consequences while keeping the public confidence and awareness. The pandemic has shown the significance and importance of government communications as one of the essential elements of enhancing public trust during crisis management.

As reality has shown, government press offices in many countries turned out to be unprepared for operating in a crisis environment. Media space and messengers have been flooded with rumors, fake news, and myths, often misinforming and confusing the public. Ultimately, this has led to a public distrust in state information sources and contributed to an ignorance of the quarantine measures by many.

A number of countries were successful in harnessing innovation to contain the spread of the virus, further underpinned by strong communications and advocacy efforts to raise awareness and accountability of citizens. Others continue searching for effective solutions to fight COVID-19, and creating opportunities to join forces and share best practices.

Studying effective digital communication strategies, methods, tools, and channels used in countries around the world in the context of health crisis then comes in as of great value. In this regard, the Astana Civil Service Hub (ACSH)¹ with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is organizing a workshop "**Governments’ Crisis Communications During the Pandemic**" on September 17, 2020.

Objective: to contribute to improvement of communications strategies of the state bodies during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is expected that the participants will familiarize themselves with international best practices on deploying effective digital communication solutions, government-media interaction, and messaging and outreach to wider public. The event will also present OECD expertise in strategic and crisis communications in public sector. The following issues will be covered:

- Developing effective crisis communication strategies and identifying potential pitfalls (particularly, digital communications);
- Defining online information trends and patterns related to COVID-19 pandemic;
- Leveraging social media for wider public outreach;
- Creating content around COVID-19 backed up by research and data;
- Harnessing innovative approaches and tools in fighting fake news, myths and setting desired public agenda on COVID-19 pandemic.

¹ ACSH is a multilateral platform for continuous exchange of experience and knowledge in the field public administration and public service delivery among its 42 participating countries and more than 70 institutional partners from different parts of the world. It was established in 2013 at the joint initiative of the Government of Kazakhstan and the United Nations Development Programme.

Audience: This workshop is designed for employees of press services of state bodies, national companies, as well as those who interested in improving communication management skills in times of crisis.

AGENDA

Date: 17 September 2020

Time: 05:00pm-07:00pm, Nur-Sultan time

Moderator: **Mr. Murat Abenov**, Chairman of the National Chamber for Education and Innovation «Serpin»

Time by Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan	
04:50-05:00pm (10 min)	Registration, checking devices
05:00-05:10pm (10 min)	Welcoming remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Alikhan Baimenov, Chairman of the Steering Committee of the Astana Civil Service Hub • Mr. Vitalie Vremis, Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP Kazakhstan
05:10-05:25pm (15 min)	Ways of Enhancing the Effectiveness of Public Communication and Trust in Times of Crisis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Irakli Tabliashvili, Chairman of the Board of the NGO Voice from Georgia, editor of the Politics.ge
05:25-05:35pm (10 min)	Q&A
05:35-05:50pm (15 min)	Health Disinformation During the COVID-19 and the Role of Public Communication in Addressing the Crisis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Carlotta Alfonsi, Policy Analyst, Public Governance Directorate, OECD
05:50-06:00pm (10 min)	Q&A
06:00-06:15pm (15 min)	Crisis Communications of the U.S. Government in the times of Pandemic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Edward Shelleby, Deputy Chief of Staff for U.S. Senator, former Press Secretary, Communications Director
06:15-06:25pm (10 min)	Q&A
06:25-06:40pm (15 min)	Infodemia: Why is fact-checking important now? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Duman Smakov, Editor-in-Chief, Kazakh edition of the Factcheck.kz.
06:40-07:00pm (20 min)	Q&A, wrap-up

The official languages of the event are English and Russian (simultaneous translation will be provided).

The workshop will be held through the **ZOOM platform**. Advance registration is required to attend the event, via the following **link**:

<https://undp.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYsduGsqjgtHd03s6FnebsfeYEUOm5LpwhJ>