United Nations

PRESS RELEASE

UNITED NATIONS LAUNCHES GLOBAL 'PAUSE'
CAMPAIGN TO TACKLE SPREAD OF MISINFORMATION
UN Secretary-General calls on digital users to "Pause, take care before you share"

30 June 2020, New York -- The United Nations today launched a new initiative to foster behaviour change and counter the growing threat of misinformation online. The campaign, called *Pause*, asks digital users to take the time to think about what they share before posting it online.

"Misinformation is spreading faster than the virus itself, and is seriously disrupting public health efforts by dangerously distorting sound scientific guidance. It is designed to exploit our emotions and biases at a time of heightened fear," said UN Secretary-General António Guterres. "But there are ways users can learn to recognize bad information and slow the spread. We are aiming to have the phrase, 'Pause, take care before you share,' become a new public norm."

A range of media companies around the world, including Al Jazeera, Deutsche Welle, Euronews, France Médias Monde, MultiChoice Africa and StarTimes, are distributing Pause content on TV channels, online and via SMS.

Major social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, Google (YouTube) and TikTok, have also committed to promoting Pause, while indicating a willingness to scale up their ongoing efforts to suppress the circulation of misinformation.

"It is encouraging to see steps already taken by social media platforms, such as swiftly removing misinformation surrounding COVID-19, flagging harmful content, questioning sharing intentions and also promoting sound health advice, including from the World Health Organization (WHO)," said Melissa Fleming, UN Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications. "Just as social distancing slows the spread of the virus, behaviour changes around sharing will go a long way to slow the spread of

misinformation. But it can only be meaningfully halted if there is no place for misinformation on social media platforms."

Pause draws on research from psychologists, neuroscientists and behavioural scientists whose studies indicate that pausing to reflect before sharing can significantly help reduce the spread of unverified and misleading information. The campaign will challenge people to break the habit of sharing shocking or emotive content impulsively and without questioning its accuracy.

The campaign, launched on World Social Media Day (30 June), is part of a larger UN initiative called *Verified* aimed at increasing the volume and reach of trusted, engaging and accurate information, including with the help of more than 10,000 information volunteers who have already signed on to the effort.

Following its launch in May, Verified has received strong support from governments. In mid-June, more than 130 UN Member States issued a statement on the need to address the "infodemic" related to COVID-19, while welcoming the UN's pandemic response and the Verified initiative.

Verified is a collaboration between the UN Department of Global Communications and Purpose, one of the world's leading social mobilization organizations, in partnership with UN agencies and country teams as well as influencers, civil society and businesses.

Media Contacts:

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Visit our websites to learn more about the Verified initiative and the Pause campaign. Sign up for the daily Verified emails and download the campaign's creative assets. Join us on social media using ***#Takecarebeforeyoushare.***